

TSA Warns Travelers: Airport Chaos Growing as Shutdown Drags On

The TSA shutdown continues to strain America's air travel system, with officials warning of worsening delays and mounting financial pressure on security staff. As of Thursday afternoon, 4,146 flights within, into, or out of the United States were delayed and 420 flights canceled, according to . The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) implemented a plan reducing flight capacity at 40 major airports.

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Acting TSA Administrator Adam Stahl told Fox News Digital that travelers should prepare for longer lines and significant slowdowns if the government shutdown continues. "While [officers are] incredibly dedicated to the mission, security and the American public at large, we are seeing significant impacts of wait times – and that's expected to increase," said Stahl.

Recent wait times at Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport have exceeded two hours, a trend Stahl said could spread nationwide. "That's going to be consistent across the board if this shutdown continues," he said. The TSA is urging travelers to "arrive early at the checkpoint, consistent with long-standing procedures – two to three hours," and to remain patient with officers under strain.

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Airports in Houston, Los Angeles, and Orlando are reportedly among the hardest hit. Stahl expressed growing concern about upcoming holiday travel, warning, "This is going to get worse, particularly with wait times and significant inconvenience for passengers ... particularly with Thanksgiving and the holidays coming right around the corner."

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The TSA is deploying extra personnel to high-traffic hubs such as Atlanta, Houston, and Charlotte, but officials acknowledge the financial hardship many employees face without pay. "I heard a story recently...from a young TSA officer...She had \$40 in her bank account. She had to choose between paying for diapers for her child and paying for food," Stahl said.

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