Large Electronics Ban – 6 Weeks Later

Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly in an interview told CNN, "*A thing that keeps me up at night is the intent of terrorists to knock an airplane down in flight,*" and has through intelligence networks stated that this is "*real*" and "*specific,*" which causes the department to proceed with an "*abundance of caution*."

That caution includes the requirement for large electronic devices to now be carried in the cargo hold through checked baggage, creating logistical headaches for airline staff and passengers.

Kelly went on to say that he has been in talks with at least one of the 10 airports, and if the Department of Homeland Security was willing, he would consider allowing the electronics to stay with the passenger, if the passenger was willing to have the units opened and checked for explosive residue before boarding.

On April 25, news broke that President Trump was considering expanding the ban to flights from parts of Europe. On May 9th, CBS and the Associated Press confirmed that discussions are happening with domestic airlines with the real possibility of not only inbound but outbound flights from the U.S. to parts of Europe and the UK Could be included in the ban. According to Kelly, he added that if intelligence showed any other threats he would *"have no hesitation"* of expanding the limitation on airplanes bound to the U.S. from other countries in addition to the ones already subject to the large electronics ban.

Although an incredible inconvenience to business travelers as they tend to work while flying due to the duration of the flight or the real possibility of stolen or lost luggage, the business travel community has made a few recommendations as to how to protect the data during this period of uncertainty. The International SOS advises that travelers move sensitive information off their laptops and tablets and onto cloud storage. They also advised that travelers use TSA-approved locks on their luggage. Additional tips can be found via *https://thepointsguy.com/2017/03/faq-electronics-ban/.*

Although carriers are trying to reduce the impact to the traveler, only a couple of carriers are offering alternative services:

- **Emirates (affected by the U.S. ban):** At no charge, passengers may hand over devices at the gate to be packed in a box that will have priority unloading upon arrival.
- **Turkish Airlines (affected by both bans):** The carrier is allowing passengers in Istanbul to keep their devices at their gates until they are ready to board. At that point, they will hand over the devices and collect them at a designated place in the baggage claim area.

The airports affected by the U.S. ban are:

- Hamad International Airport in Doha, Qatar
- Dubai International Airport in the United Arab Emirates
- Abu Dhabi International Airport in the United Arab Emirates
- Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul, Turkey

- Kuwait International Airport in Kuwait
- Cairo International Airport in Cairo, Egypt
- Queen Alia International Airport in Amman, Jordan
- King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- King Khalid Airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- Mohammed V International Airport in Casablanca, Morocco

The U.K. ban is affecting flights from countries, rather than specific airports:

- Turkey
- Lebanon
- Egypt
- Saudi Arabia
- Jordan
- Tunisia

The large electronics ban does not apply to flights leaving the U.S. or the U.K. bound for these airports or countries. Corporate travel executives recommend rebooking flights to travel through different airports or different countries, if possible.