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Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

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3 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

Airline passengers in the US will once again be allowed to carry sharp objects onto airplanes. This reverses a law that led to their confiscation by airport officials in the wake of the September 11 tragedy. Transportation Security Administration chief Edmund Hawley announced the changes to the aviation laws yesterday. The re-revised rules now allow small sharp objects, including scissors less than 6 cm long, back onto aircraft. Airline staff expressed concern over the decision, which many feel is unwarranted and exposes passengers and crew to an increased threat of injury. Sherry Travis, a flight attendant of 23 years, said: "I'm not quite sure what the authorities are playing at. The possibility of another 9/11 is still with us. No one needs scissors on airplanes".

The change in policy concerning sharp objects is apparently part of a drive to increase customer service and aid America's numerous ailing airlines. Several of the country's largest carriers have already filed for bankruptcy and are operating on borrowed time until their finances move back into the black. Transportation spokeswoman Yolanda Clark explained the reversion to pre-9/11 safety regulations was part of "a number of new initiatives that will have both a positive security and customer service impact". Flight attendant Corey Caldwell disagrees that passengers can be allowed to carry implements such as razors in their hand luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to land the plane safely [because they have guns], but the aisles will be running with blood."

WARM-UPS

1. MY AIRPLANE HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with airplanes. Can you remember the first time you flew or went to an airport? How has air travel changed over the years? What are your best and worst moments flying?

2. SAFE TRAVEL: Look at the different modes of public transport below. With your partner(s), discuss how dangerous or safe they are. Have you had any near misses?

- Airplanes
- Trains
- Buses
- Taxis
- Ferries and boats
- Cable cars
- Subways
- Other

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Airlines / passengers / sharp objects / airplanes / September 11 / aviation laws / scissors / flight attendants / bankruptcy / customer service / security / pilots / blood

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. COMMENTS ON AIRLINE SECURITY: What do you think of these comments on airline security? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Terrorists will always find a way to hijack airplanes.
- b. People do not need to take scissors onto an airplane.
- c. The pilots have guns and there are air marshals on planes. No problem.
- d. I think there should be double the safety checks at check-in.
- e. The problem is explosives. Many screening machines can't detect them.
- f. Flying is still one of the safest ways of traveling.
- g. Airline chiefs should never forget 9/11. Passenger safety always comes first.
- h. Another 9/11 will happen because the government isn't tough enough.

5. SCISSORS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with scissors. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Have a quick debate with your partner about airplane security. Students A think passengers should be allowed to take scissors onto an airplane, Students B think this is a totally crazy idea.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. American airline passengers can now take sharp objects onto planes. T / F
- b. Passengers are not allowed to take scissors onto airplanes. T / F
- c. Flight attendants are not concerned over passengers having scissors. T / F
- d. A flight attendant wasn't sure what authorities are playing at. T / F
- e. A drive to increase customer service is one reason for the rule change. T / F
- f. Many US airlines are experiencing major financial difficulties. T / F
- g. Many US airlines are operating on borrowed time. T / F
- h. A flight attendant warned the aisles will be running with blood. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| a. confiscation | actions |
| b. wake | doing |
| c. reverses | unnecessary |
| d. unwarranted | push |
| e. playing at | objects |
| f. drive | impounding |
| g. ailing | airlines |
| h. carriers | turns over |
| i. initiatives | aftermath |
| j. implements | poorly-performing |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| a. in the wake of | authorities are playing at |
| b. announced the changes | which many feel is unwarranted |
| c. expressed concern over the decision, | ailing airlines |
| d. not quite sure what the | to the aviation laws |
| e. The possibility of another 9/11 | borrowed time |
| f. aid America's numerous | with blood |
| g. have already filed | the September 11 tragedy |
| h. operating on | customer service impact |
| i. a positive security and | for bankruptcy |
| j. the aisles will be running | is still with us |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

Airline passengers in the US will once again be allowed to carry sharp _____ onto airplanes. This reverses a law that led to their _____ by airport officials in the _____ of the September 11 tragedy. Transportation Security Administration chief Edmund Hawley announced the changes to the _____ laws yesterday. The re-revised rules now allow small sharp objects, including scissors less than 6 cm long, back onto aircraft. Airline staff expressed concern over the decision, which many feel is _____ and _____ passengers and crew to an increased threat of injury. Sherry Travis, a flight attendant of 23 years, said: "I'm not quite sure what the authorities are _____ at. The possibility of another _____ is still with us. No one needs scissors on airplanes".

The change in policy concerning sharp objects is _____ part of a drive to increase customer service and aid America's _____ ailing airlines. Several of the country's largest _____ have already filed for bankruptcy and are operating on borrowed time until their finances move back into the _____. Transportation spokeswoman Yolanda Clark explained the _____ to pre-9/11 safety regulations was part of "a number of new initiatives that will have both a positive security and customer service _____". Flight attendant Corey Caldwell disagrees that passengers can be allowed to carry implements such as razors in their hand luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to _____ the plane safely [because they have guns], but the _____ will be running with blood."

unwarranted

9/11

confiscation

aviation

objects

playing

wake

exposes

land

reversion

carriers

apparently

aisles

black

numerous

impact

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

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The change in policy concerning sharp objects is _____ part of a drive to increase customer service and aid America's numerous _____ airlines. Several of the country's largest carriers have already _____ bankruptcy and are operating on borrowed time until their finances move back into the black. Transportation spokeswoman Yolanda Clark explained the _____ to pre-9/11 safety regulations was part of "a number of new initiatives that will have both a positive security and customer service _____". Flight attendant Corey Caldwell disagrees that passengers can be allowed to carry implements such as razors in their hand luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to land the plane safely [because they have guns], but the _____ will be running with blood."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**sharp**' and '**object**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "AIRLINE SAFETY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about airline safety.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| • again | • apparently |
| • wake | • carriers |
| • aviation | • initiatives |
| • concern | • implements |
| • crew | • land |
| • playing | • blood |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of the decision to allow sharp objects on airplanes?
- c. Why do you think authorities have changed the rules about airplane safety?
- d. Would you worry more about flying if you knew other passengers might have scissors?
- e. What possible reasons do you think an airplane passenger might need a pair of scissors during a flight?
- f. Do you think checks on passengers and luggage can ever be too strict?
- g. What possible positive security impact regarding scissors could the transportation spokeswoman Yolanda Clark be talking about?
- h. How would you feel if the passenger next to you put a pair of scissors next to his/her lunch tray?
- i. Do you think having armed pilots and air marshals is enough to guarantee passenger safety?
- j. Do you think the "aisles running with blood" comment is over-reacting a little?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think customer service has been placed above passenger safety here?
- d. How would you feel about the new law if you were a flight attendant?
- e. Why do you think so many of America's airlines are operating on borrowed time?
- f. What do you think of the service on airplanes?
- g. Do you think another 9/11-type attack will happen again?
- h. What do you think America's aviation authorities are playing at with the introduction of this new law?
- i. Do you like flying?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

AIRLINE SAFETY: You are an airline safety expert. Your government has asked you to create new laws to make airports and airplanes safer. With the other airline safety experts in your group, think of two or three new rules for the things in the list below. Explain your reasons for these rules.

	RULES	REASONS
Passenger identity / background check		
Passenger's bag		
Body and clothes check		
Check-in luggage		
Flight attendant weapons		
Potentially dangerous on-board implements (cutlery for meals etc.)		

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas.
- Give each other feedback on how to improve on the ideas.
- Give presentations on your ideas to other groups / the rest of the class.
- In pairs / groups, discuss the content and quality of the presentations and vote on the one you thought was best.
- Which of the rules you heard do you think should be implemented?

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on airline and airport security in your country. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. SAFETY LIST: Make a poster outlining the everyday items that people normally take on board airplanes that might pose a security risk to other passengers. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

4. SECURITY PROCEDURES: Design a system that will ensure no passenger can be a danger to other passengers on an airplane. Make a security procedure plan that checks the passenger at every stage of the travel process. This starts when the passenger orders the air ticket and ends after the passenger has left the airport. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. F d. T e. T f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. confiscation	impounding
b. wake	aftermath
c. reverses	turns over
d. unwarranted	unnecessary
e. playing at	doing
f. drive	push
g. ailing	poorly-performing
h. carriers	airlines
i. initiatives	actions
j. implements	objects

PHRASE MATCH:

a. in the wake of	the September 11 tragedy
b. announced the changes	to the aviation laws
c. expressed concern over the decision,	which many feel is unwarranted
d. not quite sure what the	authorities are playing at
e. The possibility of another 9/11	is still with us
f. aid America's numerous	ailing airlines
g. have already filed	for bankruptcy
h. operating on	borrowed time
i. a positive security and	customer service impact
j. the aisles will be running	with blood

GAP FILL:

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

Airline passengers in the US will once again be allowed to carry sharp **objects** onto airplanes. This reverses a law that led to their **confiscation** by airport officials in the **wake** of the September 11 tragedy. Transportation Security Administration chief Edmund Hawley announced the changes to the **aviation** laws yesterday. The re-revised rules now allow small sharp objects, including scissors less than 6 cm long, back onto aircraft. Airline staff expressed concern over the decision, which many feel is **unwarranted** and **exposes** passengers and crew to an increased threat of injury. Sherry Travis, a flight attendant of 23 years, said: "I'm not quite sure what the authorities are **playing** at. The possibility of another **9/11** is still with us. No one needs scissors on airplanes".

The change in policy concerning sharp objects is **apparently** part of a drive to increase customer service and aid America's **numerous** ailing airlines. Several of the country's largest **carriers** have already filed for bankruptcy and are operating on borrowed time until their finances move back into the **black**. Transportation spokeswoman Yolanda Clark explained the **reversion** to pre-9/11 safety regulations was part of "a number of new initiatives that will have both a positive security and customer service **impact**". Flight attendant Corey Caldwell disagrees that passengers can be allowed to carry implements such as razors in their hand luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to **land** the plane safely [because they have guns], but the **aisles** will be running with blood."