

# Know Your Rights and Limitations When You Fly

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*Article by: Carolyn Wright*

The Transportation Security Administration's ("TSA") mission is to "protect [ ] the Nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce." The TSA, not the airlines, determines what can pass through the secured area of an airport.

So it's great that the TSA allows photographers an extra bag of "photographic equipment in addition to one (1) carry-on and one (1) personal item through the screening checkpoint. The additional bag must conform to your air carrier's carry-on restrictions for size and weight." The guideline can be found here: <http://www.tsa.gov/public/display?content=090005198006b11c>

The catch is that your airline, not the TSA, has the right to disallow the third bag. While you can get it through security, you may be forced to check it at the gate. Since many photographers need two bags for photography equipment plus a briefcase for their laptops, you may not want to have to choose which bag is thrown below when the third bag is disallowed.

E-mail messages to Delta, Northwest, Alaska, United and American Airlines asking whether they allow the extra photography bag either were not returned or the responses quoted/referred to baggage guidelines from their websites that allow only two pieces of carry-on luggage. Even if any of the replies had been positive, the rules may be applied differently at the gate.

The safest plan is to go with two carry-on bags, at least for now.

Take my advice; get professional help.

PhotoAttorney

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Carolyn E. Wright, Esq., has a unique legal practice aimed squarely at the needs of photographers. A pro photographer herself, Carolyn has the credentials and the experience to protect photographers. She's represented clients in multimillion dollar litigations, but also has the desire to help new photographers just starting their careers. Carolyn graduated from Emory University School of Law with a Juris Doctor, and from Tennessee Tech Univ. with a Masters of Business Administration degree and a Bachelor of Science degree in music.

She wrote the book on photography law. "88 Secrets to the Law for Photographers," by Carolyn and well-known professional photographer, Scott Bourne, is scheduled for fall 2005 release by Olympic Mountain School Press. Carolyn also is a columnist for PhotoFocus Magazine.

Carolyn specializes in wildlife photography and her legal website is <http://www.photoattorney.com>