

The Virgin Islands Consortium

TSA Raising Aviation Security Baseline With Stronger Focus On Electronic Threats

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The Transportation Security Administration (T.S.A.) said on Thursday that it has begun implementing new, stronger screening procedures for carry-on items at airports across the United States and its territories, in an effort to ensure the security of airline passengers and the nation's airports.

According to T.S.A., the new procedures, beginning later this month at both the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport in St. Croix and at the Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, require travelers to place all electronics larger than a cell phone in bins for X-ray screening in standard checkpoint lanes.

“T.S.A. is not just what you see at the checkpoint. We are a counterintelligence agency committed to aviation security,” said T.S.A. spokesperson Sari Koshetz. “We appreciate our partnership with the Virgin Islands Port Authority as we work together to stay ahead of any evolving threats.”

T.S.A. officers will be asking travelers to remove electronics larger than a cell phone from their carry-on bags and place them in a bin with nothing on top or below, similarly to how laptops have been screened for years, according to the release. T.S.A. said this step helps its officers to obtain a clearer X-ray image. Passengers will experience a bag check if they fail to follow this procedure, which will slow screening for them and everyone else on line, according to the T.S.A. Passengers in the T.S.A. Precheck program generally will be exempt from this procedure during hours when the program is running. But any passenger’s electronics or other belongings may be subject to additional screening at any time, the release said.

T.S.A. officers will guide passengers through the screening process and recommend how best to arrange their carry-on items for X-ray screening. Travelers are encouraged to organize their bags to ease the screening process and keep the lines moving. There are no changes to what travelers can bring through the checkpoint; food and liquid items that comply with the 3-1-1 liquids rule, electronics, and books continue to be allowed in carry-on bags.

T.S.A. also suggested that passengers adhere to the airline’s recommended arrival time. Arriving as suggested will allow adequate time to navigate the ticketing, baggage and security screening processes.