

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Transportation Security Administration
Office of the Administrator
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4220

March 2, 2004

The Honorable John Ensign
United States Senator
333 Las Vegas Boulevard, South
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Dear Senator Ensign:

Thank you for your letter of January 21, 2004, on behalf of your constituent, Dr. F. Fuller Royal, concerning the transport of homeopathic medicines on commercial flights. Specifically, Dr. Royal voices concerns expressed by fellow members of the State of Nevada, Board of Homeopathic Medical Examiners in the proper handling of homeopathic medicines during the security screening process.

One of the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) primary goals is to provide the highest customer service to all who pass through our security checkpoints. Our current policies and procedures focus on ensuring that all passengers, regardless of their personal situations and needs, are treated equally and with the dignity, respect, and courtesy they deserve. This, of course, includes individuals traveling with homeopathic medicines.

Although the homeopathic community states that homeopathic medicines may be adversely affected by x-ray screening, there appears to be no scientific evidence to support or confirm this notion. However, TSA acknowledges that passengers traveling with various types and forms of medications have expressed concern about their medication being x-rayed. Therefore, as a customer service initiative, we have adjusted our screening procedures for all medications, including homeopathic medicines, effective February 17, 2004. Passengers who want the alternate screening procedure in lieu of the usual x-ray screening will need to request it.

TSA recommends that the passenger make the alternate inspection process as smooth as possible by consolidating her/his medication(s) in a separate pouch that can easily be handled by the screener. Below are the steps of the alternate inspection:

1. The passenger will give her/his bag of medication(s) and supplies to the screener who will maintain the items until the person goes through the walk-through metal detector (WTMD).
2. Once the passenger clears the WTMD, she/he will be escorted to a table where the medication(s)/supplies will undergo a visual inspection.

3. To prevent contamination or damage to fragile medications and supplies, only the passenger will display and handle the medication(s) and associated supplies during the visual inspection. This inspection may include the screener asking the passenger to open containers/supplies as needed to ascertain the contents.
4. Once the medication(s)/supplies have satisfactorily cleared, the passenger will repack the item(s) and proceed to the sterile area.
5. Only if the medications and supplies do not clear the visual screening process will x-ray screening be necessary. If the individual refuses x-ray screening of the item(s), the item(s) will not be permitted beyond the security checkpoint.
6. TSA recommends that passengers refrain from carrying large volumes of medicines (particularly homeopathic). Passengers should carry enough medication to meet their immediate needs, and any backup supplies should they experience delays, etc. To prevent more intense x-ray and tomography screening exposure, we also recommend that large volumes of medicines not be in checked baggage, but be sent by mail or any other alternative way preferred by the passenger.

I recommend that your constituent, Dr. Royal, visit our website “Tips for Persons with Disabilities/Medical Conditions” at www.TSATravelTips.us for information on the screening process and how to prepare for trips. The tips are updated periodically, and are available in alternative formats.

We appreciate you bringing Dr. Royal’s concerns to our attention. Feedback from Dr. Royal and other passengers has helped us understand and facilitate this important change to our screening process. Their input is essential for continually improving our screening program, and achieving our goal of world-class customer service.

I hope this information is helpful. If your staff needs further information or assistance, they are requested to call Ms. Leslie Adlam, Acting Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, at (571) 227-2717.

Sincerely yours,

David M. Stone
Acting Administrator