
How to Fly and Travel with Your Scuba Gear



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OK, you've booked that Scuba Trip of a lifetime to the Far East or other exotic locale – and now you need to be sure all your gear arrives there safely. Especially with some of the new TSA regulations there are a few things every diver needs to know about traveling with Scuba Gear.

Of course before packing any Scuba gear for travel it is best to have a complete gear “check-up” and make sure everything is functioning properly. Many divers will buy some spiffy new piece of equipment for a dive trip and never take it out of the box before they travel, not a good idea according to the pros – always test even brand new equipment before you travel with it.

Once you are sure that everything you want to take is working, the best way to pack gear for airplane travel is in a specific Scuba Gear Bag. There are two advantages to using a gear bag. Not only are these bags designed to keep Scuba Gear safe, some of the airlines that fly to popular scuba destinations may allow you to check an official Scuba Gear Bag, and not charge you for an additional piece of luggage. Check with your specific airline for their policy regarding a checked scuba gear bag. A scuba mask should be protected by a hard case whether it is checked or in your carry on. Fins should be placed bottom-to-bottom, and wrapped in a towel. One-gallon plastic freezer bags are great for storing your dive log and other “keep dry” items – place these bags in an easily accessible exterior pocket of your dive bag. Since you likely want to be able to take your gear bag directly from the plane and just toss it on your dive boat when you head out, the pros suggest that you pack your gear in the reverse order of suiting up – in other words pack your fins first since you put them on last, and your Wetsuit last so it is on top of your bag as you put it on first. Here is a Tip: It's a good idea to purchase TSA locks for your Scuba gear bags – these can be found online. They are TSA approved combination

pad locks that feature a Red Diamond. They can secure your gear from pilfering, but TSA agents have a special key that can open the lock if they need to inspect your bag. If they do the Red Diamond on the lock turns green so you know your bag has been inspected. It is a good idea to catalog all the gear you are traveling with by description and serial number. Pack your BC in your checked dive bag, but wrap it securely to prevent any damage or punctures.

Most divers will rent Scuba tanks when arriving at their destination; you cannot bring pressurized tanks onto an airplane. You can see the exact specifications for transporting Empty Air cylinders on the TSA's website, but the regulator and valve must be completely removed so that the inspector can see inside of the tank.

Sophisticated equipment such as dive computers and your regulator should be placed in your carry-on luggage. And remember to remove any dive knives, spear fishing equipment or your trusty "Leatherman" multi-tool from your carry-on dive bag or they will be confiscated.

Be sure to completely wash out and dry all of your gear after your trip before packing for you return flight. Use only fresh clean water. A thorough cleaning of your equipment will make sure you do not bring home any unwanted "souvenirs" like mold, and not to mention the retched stink you will raise if you allow ocean deposits to ferment in a sealed dive bag during a few hour plane ride.

Enjoy the ride and the adventure,

Scuba Diving Internationally Team