



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20591

August 3, 2021

Dear Airport Leaders:

During the last year, the aviation system has faced many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to see new challenges that require the entire industry to work together as the burgeoning recovery takes off.

As the number of passengers traveling has increased, so has the number of unruly and unsafe behavior incidents on planes and in airports. The FAA adopted a Zero-Tolerance policy toward this behavior on airplanes earlier this year, and we are taking the strongest possible action within our legal authority. But we need your help.

While FAA has levied civil fines against unruly passengers, it has no authority to prosecute criminal cases. Every week, we see situations in which law enforcement was asked to meet an aircraft at the gate following an unruly passenger incident. In some cases, flight attendants have reported being physically assaulted. Nevertheless, many of these passengers were interviewed by local police and released without criminal charges of any kind. When this occurs, we miss a key opportunity to hold unruly passengers accountable for their unacceptable and dangerous behavior.

Our investigations show that alcohol often contributes to this unsafe behavior. The FAA requests that airports work with their concessionaires to help avoid this. Even though FAA regulations specifically prohibit the consumption of alcohol aboard an aircraft that is not served by the airline, we have received reports that some airport concessionaires have offered alcohol “to go,” and passengers believe they can carry that alcohol onto their flights or they become inebriated during the boarding process. Airports can help bring awareness to this prohibition on passengers carrying open alcohol onboard their flights in 14 CFR 121.575 through signage, public service announcements, and concessionaire education.

Many of you are already showing our Zero Tolerance video in your passenger lounges and other common areas. You might be aware that our robust public education campaign included a short “Kids Talk” PSA, where children talk about the importance of behaving properly on a flight. We ask that you also show this PSA in any location in your airport where it might catch passengers’ attention, particularly in boarding areas.

We have the safest aviation system in the world, and you are a key partner in that success. I know that we can keep it that way with your continued help and these additional actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Dickson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "S" and "D".

Steve Dickson  
Administrator