

June 2009 Departure - BAGGAGE GUIDELINES FOR AFS PARTICIPANTS

**Please remember that you are responsible for ALL extra charges for overweight and oversized luggage!
Call your domestic and international airlines NOW to find out the restrictions!**

Domestic Flights within the United States:

Luggage restrictions have become very strict on all airlines. Too much luggage can be a problem for you and for others. AFS will not take responsibility for your overweight or oversized luggage. Many of you will have domestic flights from your orientation site to your gateway city. Most airlines now charge **\$15.00** for the first piece of luggage and **\$25.00** for the second plus any additional fees for overweight or oversized luggage – meaning **you will need to pay at least \$40.00 to the airline at check-in**. Overweight and oversized luggage can be charged anywhere from \$100.00 to \$175.00 per piece.

Weight and size limits for international flights:

Please be aware that most international and domestic airlines have reduced their weight limit to **50 pounds** per bag. Generally, **two** pieces of checked luggage are allowed on international flights. The **size limit** for each checked piece of luggage is **62 inches** (about 152.4 centimeters – add the length + depth + width of your luggage to figure out the size). Your carry-on bag must be less than 45 linear inches.

Be aware that if either of your bags is larger or heavier than these figures, you may be charged an “excess baggage” fee, which can be anywhere from \$25.00 to \$300.00 (to be paid by cash or credit card). **AFS will not pay these charges for you!** The airline may also not allow you to check these bags in at all. You will have to leave behind anything that is overweight. Please make sure you have a credit card you can use in case of excess charges.

Carry-on luggage needs to be able to fit under the airline seat or in an overhead compartment. Items such as golf clubs, bicycles, skis, and snowboards are generally considered “over-sized” baggage and you will have to pay additional charges. If you have an oversize suitcase you will usually have to pay a charge (\$80.00 - \$110.00), depending on the item’s size and weight, even if such an item is your second “checked” piece of luggage. It is a good idea to call the airline before-hand to check on any oversized baggage. These regulations are also posted on the websites for each airline.

Musical instruments, such as guitars, are considered part of your 2-piece allotment on flights. If you plan to return with a musical instrument you will only be allowed one other piece of checked luggage.

Finally, remember that items on airlines get banged around. Be sure to pack your musical instrument or electronic equipment in hard cases to protect them as best as possible. Such items will likely need to be checked as a third piece of luggage, and you will need to pay additional baggage fees as required by the airline.

Security:

Airlines are now searching all bags when a passenger checks in for their flight. Please take this into consideration when packing. Someone may go into your bag after you have closed and locked it and may not help you re-close your bag! In addition, locks on luggage can pose a problem at security checkpoints in airports. Please make sure to unlock your luggage while it is going through security, and or keep your luggage key available while checking in.

Due to recent security measures that all airlines have taken, the luggage limit is tighter than ever. For some airlines, it is **NOT** possible to pay overweight charges. The airline will make you leave anything over the weight restrictions behind. Also, airlines have instituted **very strict** rules about carry-on luggage. Most airlines are allowing only **one piece** of carry-on luggage plus a purse or small backpack.

Please check the website or your international and domestic airline for restrictions on bringing liquids in either your carry-on or checked luggage.

Baggage Tags:

All of your luggage must be clearly labeled! Be sure to put your **natural family address** on the baggage tags.