

MINNPOST

You should file a claim for that damaged luggage. Just saying.

By Jeff Severns Guntzel | 01/20/11



REUTERS/Juan Medina

Fewer than one in every 100,000 passengers files a claim for property damaged, lost or stolen at an airport or on an airplane.

Last week an airline lost my suitcase. When it finally arrived at my home in Minneapolis the handle was busted. I couldn't help but wonder, should I file a claim? Could it possibly be worth the effort?

The Transportation Security Administration logged just over 167,000 claims for damaged or lost property, personal injury, and other such incidents at the nation's airports between January 2002 and May 2010, according to agency data.

All told, \$6.5 million was paid out for passenger property lost during that period, while close to \$5 million was paid out for property damaged and \$600 thousand for injuries.

I know, I know, number crunching like this is the kind of fluff you find in the USA Today you grabbed from the hotel lobby. Maybe so, but for me this is personal.

It turns out that fewer than **one in every 100,000 passengers** files a claim for property damaged, lost, or stolen at an airport or on an airplane. That's certainly not representative of the actual



property lost, damaged or stolen. Just as with crime stats, you've got to factor in the people who don't bother reporting anything at all. And just as with crime stats, there must be lots of those people.

So what about those who do file? According to the TSA data (covering roughly eight-and-a-half years), just over \$215,000 was paid out in response to complaints where a Minnesota airport was listed as the "claim site." That's 1.5 percent of the \$13.6 million nationwide total.

Of the 2,700 claims involving Minnesota airports filed between January 2002 and May 2010, 45 percent were denied straightaway. Claims for broken luggage (the thing that got me digging through this data in the first place) did about as well. But these odds aren't bad.

Claim forms can be found [on the TSA website](#). Now if you'll excuse me...

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SUBMITTED BY [RYAN COLEMAN](#) ON JANUARY 20, 2011 - 5:37PM.

I've never had anything stolen from my luggage - I'm lucky, too, as I regularly pack extra camera gear in my suitcase because I can't fit it in my shoulder bag or camera bag to go on the plane. Included in that are tripods, monopods (could be considered weapons on the plane so they *never* come into the cabin), flashes, a spare body or two. Sometimes hard drives for storing photos.

But I've never had anything stolen. And the damage done to my luggage in the past ten years is not worth the claim. So I wonder of those 99,999 of 100,000 people that don't file claims are in my boat: The damage is too petty to waste their time. I've never had, either, big holes in my bags just the plastic form corners break constantly. The luggage is still quite functional.

Oh and those monopods and tripods I travel with? Always get me a hand check from TSA. At least they see that they are pipe-like and looking into it.

SUBMITTED BY [PAUL UDSTRAND](#) ON JANUARY 25, 2011 - 2:01PM.

My wife's luggage was damaged recently, although there was a glitch with the service, and they fixed it wrong the first time, it did get done surprisingly quickly. I didn't even know they'd fix it.

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