

Aggressive Behavior Skyrocketing on Planes

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Disruptive passenger cases on the rise on airlines

Airlines are reporting a dramatic surge in disruptive passenger cases - especially among those who refuse to wear masks.

WASHINGTON - Airlines have now reported 3,000 cases of disruptive passengers to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) this year.

2,300 of them involve people refusing to wear a mask.

The FAA is investigating the highest number of potential violations of federal law in unruly passenger cases since they began keeping records in 1995. The most in the entire history of aviation. The FAA has looked into 394 incidents so far this year where passengers possibly broke the law by "interfering with the duties of a crew member."

FOX 5 spoke with a Dr. Anita Gadhia-Smith, Psychologist, to find out what is behind this disturbing uptick.

"Right now, people have a lot of stored up emotions and feelings from being in the lockdown and going through the pandemic over the last year and a half. I've actually seen a lot of mental health problems increased over this recent time. Problems with anxiety, depression, and lots of substance abuse as well," said Gadhia-Smith. "People are also very eager to get out and live life again and find some sense of normalcy, but some people have forgotten how to be around people and how to behave normally because they have been isolated."

'Get off the plane': Passengers scold woman refusing to wear mask on flight

The mask mandate in airports and on flights will stay in effect through September 13th.

"Although not everyone, many people are tired of masks and if they've been vaccinated – they feel like they shouldn't have to wear one anymore. Some people are still frightened. Not everyone is on the same page. Many people feel they should be done with these rules and regulations and requirements and they just want to be free" said Gadhia-Smith.

The FAA said they will prosecute those who misbehave to the fullest extent of the law. That means jail time or being banned for life. It is important to know – it is a federal crime to interfere with aircraft crews on a plane. Fines can reach up to \$37,000.

This shocking behavior is all happening while travel interest is rebounding. Scott Keyes, Founder of [Scott's Cheap Flights](#), believes it is inevitable to see some amount of conflict and the confrontations are becoming more common as we ease back to normal because people have forgotten or are not used to the behavioral expectations on a flight.

"I think it a lot of ways it's the growing pains of a return to normal. It's hard to turn off travel for a year, a year and a half and turn it back on again without there being a few kinks in the get up," said Keyes.

He adds we are seeing record-breaking numbers when it comes to air travel since the pandemic began. Right now, according to Keyes, it is 15% to 20% off from pre-pandemic numbers.

Keyes told FOX 5 the most sought-after travel spots include beachy and outdoorsy locations like Hawaii.