

June 2008 Departures
BAGGAGE GUIDELINES FOR AFS END-OF-STAY PARTICIPANTS

End of Stay:

Space on the buses you will be riding en route to Departure Day and to your international flight is extremely limited. We recommend that you take only that which is essential, and send the remainder of your belongings home.

You may not exceed the limit of two suitcases and one carry-on. Less is better!

If you arrive at your End-of-Stay with additional baggage the items will not be permitted on the bus.

Flights within the United States:

Be advised that **you** are responsible for any and all excess baggage fees charged by airlines, both international and domestic flights. **AFS is not responsible for any of these costs.** If you have a question on whether you will be traveling by bus or plane to the EOS or your international carrier, please contact your Regional Travel and Logistics Coordinator. You will return to your home country on the same airline that you traveled with when arriving to the United States.

YES and CB students will have a separate domestic flight to Washington, DC. By D-day, we expect that all airlines will charge to check a 2nd suitcase so these students should plan accordingly.

Flights within your home country:

Some of you will have to make domestic connections once you arrive into your home country. The weight limits on these flights will allow less than the international flight. In some cases, your domestic ticket is part of your international ticket so that your luggage will be "checked through" to your home city. However, we cannot guarantee that the airline in the US will do this in all cases. You are responsible for any additional costs should you have overweight or oversized luggage. If you are unsure of your domestic connection in your home country, then you will need to contact your natural family and ask them to check on the weight limits.

Weight and size limits:

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 is allowed. 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-\$300 (to be paid by cash or by 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 snow-boards are generally considered "over-sized" baggage, and will not be permitted on the bus. You will need to ship these items home prior to your End-of-Stay. If you have an oversize suitcase you will usually have to pay a charge (\$80-\$110), 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.



You are responsible for calling both your domestic and international airlines to ask about the exact weight and size limitations for your trip home!!!

(OVER)

Students from Central America: be aware that airlines have an embargo on additional baggage during the summer months. You will NOT be allowed to travel with additional baggage, whether or not you are willing and able to pay for it. Federal Regulations prevent the airline from allowing any weight over 70 pounds per bag, with a maximum of 2 bags. They will also not allow you to travel with boxes or odd shaped bags.

Security:

Airlines are now screening 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 restrictions are tighter than ever –both with the items in your carry-on bag as well as your checked bag. Airlines are allowing only **one piece** of carry-on luggage plus a purse or small backpack. Again, please check directly with your airline for the most up-to-date policy.

Packing Suggestions:

We strongly recommend that you begin sorting through your belongings to see if you can mail anything home.

- As soon as the weather allows, you should send your winter clothes or shoes home.
- If you have collected papers and printed matter (school newspapers, playbills from concerts or shows, books, photo albums, etc.), consider sending these home, too. Paper becomes very heavy when you try to pack a big stack of it, and there is a special “printed matter” rate that is available through the United States Postal Service – check your local post office for information about packaging and rates.
- Remember, you will be responsible for carrying **all** of your own luggage while traveling. **PACK ACCORDINGLY!** When in doubt, pack your things and try to walk up and down your block a few times. That should give you an idea of whether or not you will be able to handle your bags during the bus trip and the final trip to the airport from the Departure Day site.
- If your parents are coming to visit, they should bring an extra, empty suitcase so they can bring some of your belongings home.

Baggage Tags:

All of your luggage must be clearly labeled! You will be given some baggage tags at your Pre-Return Orientation or End-of-Stay Activity with the specific instructions about your return home in a couple of months. Be sure to put your **natural family address** on the baggage tags. Additional tags will be available at Departure Day.

See you at Departure Day!

