



Global Entry vs TSA PreCheck

What's the Difference Between Global Entry and TSA PreCheck?

Introduction

For frequent travelers, airport security and immigration lines can take valuable time away from a trip. Two popular U.S. Trusted Traveler Programs are Global Entry and TSA PreCheck. Although both are designed to make travel more convenient, they serve different purposes. TSA PreCheck focuses primarily on expedited security screening when departing from participating U.S. airports, while Global Entry focuses on expedited U.S. customs and immigration processing for eligible international travelers. Global Entry members also receive TSA PreCheck benefits when they meet the program requirements and fly on participating airlines.

What Is TSA PreCheck?

TSA PreCheck is a program operated through the Transportation Security Administration. It allows eligible, approved travelers to use dedicated security screening lanes at participating airports. In a TSA PreCheck lane, travelers may receive expedited screening benefits such as keeping shoes, light outerwear, and belts on, while laptops and compliant liquids can generally remain in carry-on bags. Travelers are still subject to security procedures and unpredictable screening measures.

The program is especially useful for people who frequently take domestic flights or travel internationally but mainly want a faster airport security experience when departing from the United States.

What is Global Entry?

Global Entry is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection program designed to provide expedited processing for pre-approved, low-risk travelers arriving in the United States from international destinations.

Instead of focusing primarily on airport security before departure, Global Entry is designed around the U.S. entry process after an international trip. Approved members can use Global Entry processing at participating locations, subject to program requirements and availability.

Global Entry is therefore particularly valuable for travelers who frequently return to the United States from international destinations.



Global Entry vs TSA PreCheck – Main Differences

The biggest difference between Global Entry and TSA PreCheck is where and when they help travelers.

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TSA PreCheck

- Focuses on airport security screening.
- Primarily helps when departing from participating U.S. airports.
- Useful for frequent domestic travelers.
- Provides access to dedicated TSA PreCheck lanes at participating locations.

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Global Entry

- Focuses on expedited U.S. customs and immigration processing.
- Helps eligible travelers returning to the United States after international travel.
- Particularly useful for frequent international travelers.
- Includes TSA PreCheck eligibility when program requirements are met.

Who Should Choose TSA PreCheck?

TSA PreCheck may be a good choice for travelers who fly frequently within the United States and want a simpler airport security experience. For example, business travelers who take several domestic trips each year may benefit from having access to participating PreCheck lanes. Families and leisure travelers who regularly fly from airports offering the program may also find it useful. If most of your travel is domestic and you rarely travel internationally, TSA PreCheck can be a more directly targeted option.



Who Should Choose Global Entry?

Global Entry may be more valuable for travelers who regularly take international trips and return to the United States.

If you frequently travel to destinations outside the United States, expedited entry processing can save time after landing. Another important advantage is that Global Entry members can receive TSA PreCheck benefits when eligible and traveling on participating airlines.

For an international traveler who wants both faster U.S. entry and expedited airport security benefits, Global Entry can therefore provide broader coverage.

Application and Approval

Both programs require travelers to complete an application and undergo a vetting process. Applicants use the appropriate government enrollment system and receive decisions through their account.

For Global Entry, applicants who receive conditional approval can schedule an interview as part of the enrollment process. CBP guidance states that applicants should complete their application through the Trusted Traveler Program system and receive conditional approval before completing enrollment.

Applicants should provide accurate information and carefully follow the instructions provided by the relevant government agency.

Cost Considerations

Cost is another factor when comparing Global Entry and TSA PreCheck. CBP's current Trusted Traveler Programs handbook lists the Global Entry application fee at \$100, and describes it as non-refundable.

TSA PreCheck pricing can depend on the enrollment provider and current fee structure. Because fees can change, applicants should verify the latest price directly through the official TSA or CBP enrollment information before applying.

Some travel credit cards and other benefits may reimburse eligible application fees, depending on their current terms.

Can You Have Both Programs?

In many cases, travelers do not need to enroll separately in both programs. Global Entry membership provides TSA PreCheck eligibility when the member meets the applicable requirements.

However, simply having Global Entry does not automatically mean TSA PreCheck will appear on every boarding pass. Travelers generally need to provide the correct Known Traveler Number when making an airline reservation, and the information on the reservation must match the traveler's enrollment details.

