

HIGH IMPORTANCE - HELPFUL PREPARING FOR TRAVEL INFORMATION

GradWeek is a Tour Operator that coordinates complete group travel packages for graduating high school seniors using major airlines, bus companies, and hotels. We would like to remind our parents and travelers that **GradWeek trips do not have “chaperones,”** but we do provide 24-hour onsite adult destination staff at each destination who are available to help travelers during their stay.

Each traveler who books a package with GradWeek is considered to be an adult and will be navigating the airport (or bus) check-in process and travel experience, on their own, even if they are 17 years of age when they travel. Please talk to your traveler *prior* to taking this trip to discuss the ins and outs of travel. A prepared traveler is a confident traveler!

GradWeek does not provide staff on the flights to or from these destinations, nor do we have staff at any of the departure airports in the U.S. For this reason, GradWeek highly recommends that parents/guardians discuss the travel process with their travelers prior to their departure. For Panama City Beach travelers, there will be staff member(s) on the buses for most departure cities.

Due to increased summer travel demand, along with ongoing concerns surrounding federal government shutdowns (which impact TSA operations), travelers may experience longer-than-usual wait times at airport security checkpoints. TSA will continue normal operations, though higher passenger volume can place added strain on security staffing. This can result in longer security lines during peak travel times. To help provide a smoother airport experience during this period of high travel demand, the Department of Homeland Security **recommends arriving at the airport up to 3–4 hours prior** to departure instead of the typical 2-3 hours. Planning ahead and allowing extra time can help you move through security smoothly and reduce the chances of travel disruptions. Allowing extra time can also help reduce the risk of missing a flight and avoiding potential complications such as rebooking, crowded gates, or delays affecting connecting flights.

Helpful Tip: TSA has introduced tools to help travelers better plan ahead. The [MyTSA](#) app allows you to check real-time security wait times at your departure airport, helping you to better estimate when to arrive.

As your summer Grad Trip approaches, it is important to be prepared for the unexpected. **As with all travel, unfortunate Flight Delays or Flight Cancellations can occur.** While these situations are rare, they do happen, and travelers are often notified by the airline before GradWeek receives updates. If a traveler ends up experiencing a significant Flight Delay or Flight Cancellation, we ask that travelers direct all communication to the airlines/airport personnel. In addition, parents/guardians should also communicate directly with their students for flight updates, as **they will be receiving first-hand information from the airline at the airport.**

While GradWeek is the issuing agent on the flight tickets, **once your group is within 24-hours of departure, the airline/airport takes complete control of any changes due to missed flights, flight delays or cancellations.** **Unfortunately, GradWeek cannot intercede and make any demands of the airline.** Airline personnel at the airport are specifically trained to handle these situations, as they handle these daily and are the only individuals authorized to make changes to flight reservations.

Once flight changes have been made by the airlines or airline agents, GradWeek will be notified, and we will then send out either a Text-Blast or Email-Blast to everyone in that group regarding their flight changes. GradWeek will also contact our on-site team at your destination regarding transfer and hotel so they can prepare for your new arrival time. We understand and realize that Flight Delays or Flight Cancellations can be extremely frustrating for everyone involved! However, it is important that we direct you to the proper individuals that can determine the best options for the group, which is the airline.

If a Flight Delay or Flight Cancellation creates out-of-pocket expenses travelers should keep all receipts. In the event of an extensive delay or cancellation, those receipts may be eligible for reimbursement through Travel Protection Insurance (included in your trip package). Please read through the online insurance information sheet to see what is covered, to know your rights, and to have it handy should you need to file a claim with the insurance company.

If you have any issues with your flight, we advise that you contact the airline directly to seek compensation. Travelers are required to fill out and submit their own paperwork to request compensation directly with the airline they were confirmed and ticketed on. **If a traveler encounters baggage loss or delay, they must file a baggage claim form at the airport before they leave.** If travelers need any basic information or help understanding their paperwork, our office team is more than happy to assist during business hours.

Once travelers arrive at their destination airport (Hawaii, Bahamas, Cabo, or Puerto Rico), GradWeek Staff members will be visible, wearing GradWeek staff shirts and ID badges outside of the customs area or baggage claim area to direct them to the designated buses for their hotel. **GradWeek Staff members are not permitted to go to the departure or arrival gates,** so passengers must ensure they have all their personal belongings before they exit the plane/bus and the terminal and follow the posted signs for directions. Travelers with flights will have on-site bus transportation (provided round trip) from the airport and their hotel. When they arrive at their hotel, they will have a Welcome Orientation with GradWeek Staff members to go over the week's schedule, Action Pac, and all the important details to ensure they have a well-supported and fun experience.

On the return portion of the trip, GradWeek Staff will be in the lobby of the hotel to assist with check out and getting your traveler on the designated bus back to the airport. As a reminder, staff are not permitted at airport gates, **so travelers must be prepared to navigate the airport and flight check-in process independently.** Once travelers are dropped off at the airport, **they will need to check-in at the airline counter for their flight,** pay for luggage, obtain a boarding pass, go through security or customs (if traveling internationally), and get to the gates in a timely manner *without GradWeek Staff.*

All suppliers involved in these travel packages have partnered with GradWeek for over 40 years. While we work with trusted partners, there may still be situations beyond our control. Travelers should be prepared for unexpected circumstances and understand that travel can sometimes require flexibility. Please know that GradWeek is committed to supporting travelers and will do everything possible to help ensure a positive grad trip experience.

We wish all travelers a safe, smooth, and memorable graduation trip—and hope it is truly the best week of their lives.

Happy Travels!