

Hand luggage liquid and laptop restrictions on planes could be scrapped

Security restrictions on liquids and laptops in airport hand luggage could be removed in the UK, due to the rollout of new high-tech 3D scanners.

For 16 years, air passengers have had to take all hand luggage liquids, in containers of no more than 100ml, and electrical devices out of their bags and transfer them into a separate tray or a small plastic bag in order for staff security to inspect.

Now the government is considering rolling out more advanced scanners, similar to CT scanners used in hospitals, in order to cut down airport security queues.

The Times newspaper reported that ministers have been reviewing a 2017 trial at [Heathrow Airport](#), where 3D scanners already in use in the US allowed staff to zoom in on a bag's contents and rotate the images for inspection.

A spokesperson for the Department for Transport said: "We are currently considering the position on the future screening of liquids and electronics being carried through UK airport security checkpoints by passengers.

"This includes whether liquids and electronics may be left in cabin bags when being screened. A number of UK airports are currently trialling new technology which has the potential to allow this."

Current regulations, put in place in 2006, ended stricter restrictions on liquids in the cabin. They were first imposed in the wake of British police foiling an Islamist

transatlantic terror plot, which officers said aimed to blow up as many as 10 planes departing from London Heathrow, using explosives hidden in drinks bottles.

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Heathrow's chief executive, John Holland-Kaye, told The Times: "We are slowly rolling them out.

"We have just started the expansion of the security area in Terminal 3 which will have more CT scanners and have a deadline of mid-2024 from the [Department for Transport]. By then the normal passenger experience will be that liquids stay in bags."

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Image:

The rollout of new high-tech equipment aims to cut airport security queues down. Pic: AP

Sky News understands that the Department for Transport is yet to confirm a date when the use of the 3D scanners will begin and new rules could come into force.

Back in 2019, former prime minister Boris Johnson announced plans for all major UK airports to introduce new 3D baggage screening equipment to improve security.

At the time, government officials said that once in place, the 100ml liquid limit may no longer apply. The original deadline of December 2022 was affected by the COVID pandemic, with

passenger numbers reduced due to travel restrictions.

The Department for Transport added: "Passengers at UK airports must not carry liquid containers larger than 100ml through security, and both liquids and electronics should be taken out of cabin bags at airport security checkpoints."