

Airport Gate Passes for Military Passenger Family Members

In January 2004, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) issued a security directive pertaining to military passengers that allows the airlines to issue a special access pass that allows family members to accompany the service member through airport security check points or to meet them at the arrival gates.

According to TSA Security Directive 1544-01-10w (Access to Sterile Concourse for Non-traveling Individuals), Military Passenger Family Members may be given a pass to escort the military passenger to the gate or to meet a military passenger's inbound arrival at the gate.

According to a TSA spokesperson, family members who want to escort the service member to the departure gate need to process through the ticket line when the service member checks in. The airline will issue the special access passes and the group will need to proceed through the security station at the same time.

Family members who want to meet their service member at the arrival gate should first check to see if the airport has a USO Office. The USO is working with TSA and the airlines to secure the special access passes. If the airport does not have a USO Office, family members should go to the ticket counter of the airline that the military member is flying on and request the passes. Family members will need to present the pass and photo ID to get through the security checkpoint.

The TSA spokesperson said that not all airports and airlines are able to issue the special access passes to meet returning service members at the gate due to local security situations. She added, one way to make this process easier, is for the traveling service member to inform the ticket agent at check in, that family members will be contacting the ticket office at the arrival destination to request the special passes.