

Airline Travel

Eighteen months of preparation and your Philmont adventure is now almost here. But first you need to get to Colorado, which means dealing with the airlines as well as navigating through Newark Liberty Airport and its security measures! Over the years, the Watchu Team has learned that the following will ease your way through that process.

- **The day before your flight, check online with your airline for final flight status and gate assignment. *HOWEVER, DO NOT CHECK-IN ONLINE!*** Check-in must be done at the airport - your boarding passes will be printed and waiting for you at the airport. All airline details will be listed in the **Travel and Tour Information** handout to be distributed at the June Crew Chief/Advisor Briefing. Have it with you. For any questions or emergencies in the days before your crew departs, please call the Patriots' Path Council office at 973-765-9322 and ask for Andrew Joiner at x252.

- **Address your luggage tags and several index cards** with the following information:

YOUR NAME

COMPLETE EXPEDITION (*crew*) NUMBER (*for example, 706D4*)

PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH

47 CABALLO ROAD

CIMARRON, NEW MEXICO 87714

PHONE: 575-376-2281

Note that using the Philmont address on the trailbound flight means that should the backpack become lost enroute, the airline will deliver it to Philmont - exactly what you want! On the homebound flight, use your home address and phone number on your identification tags. The index cards should be placed inside your bags. **Tip:** bring labels with your home address for the homebound flight to place over the address you used on the trailbound flight.

- **Pack your Watchu Expedition Day Pack and Tour (Carry-on) Bag** with the items listed on the [checklist](#), paying special attention to the TSA security rules, which are constantly changing - check for the latest at the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\) Web site](#). Recently, for carry-ons the rules have included no sharp objects, that liquids, gels and aerosols be in 3 ounce or smaller containers and all in one quart-size zip lock bag, and small amounts of matches, lighters, or other flammables may be on your person, though not carrying any is recommended. Check out the [Day Pack](#) and [Tour Bags](#) videos on the [Watchu Experience Web site](#) for tips on how to pack your tour bag. Put one Blue Sky tag on the bag and another identification card inside. **Tip:** remember that there will be 47 otherwise identical tour bags on the bus - it is a good idea to identify your bag with color ribbon or tape.
- **Prepare your backpack for shipping in the nylon backpack bag.** You can turn this "packing exercise" into a crew event with the nylon shipping bags and identification tags. A good time to do this is during your final crew overnight, i.e. your last night before departure, right after your last gear shakedown to make sure that each crew member has everything on the personal gear checklist, and the crew has all crew equipment it needs.

It can be a fun time for all. The entire process is demonstrated in the [Backpack Shipping Bags](#) video on the [Watchu Experience Web site](#). Or check a [photo](#) of just the drawstring "goose neck" closing the bag. Attach the second Blue Sky luggage tag to the draw string of the nylon bag. Attach an identification card to the frame of your backpack, and one or more readily accessible inside the pack. Be mindful of the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) rules for checked baggage, including no flammables of any kind. Unlike carry-on bags, toiletries larger than 3 ounces and sharp objects are allowed in checked bags.

- **Be certain your luggage meets the airline regulations.** Checked baggage must be less than 50 pounds and 62 linear inches (length plus width plus height) to avoid overweight or oversized fees. Making an error here could be very expensive - every bag will be weighed at check-in, and possibly measured if it appears to exceed the size limit. At the airport each Lead Advisor should check in first. Fees for a second bag, or an overweight or oversized one, will need to be handled directly with the affected crew member.
- **All crew members will travel in an [Official BSA Uniform](#), unofficially called "Class A."** That applies to both the homebound trip as well as the trailbound one. You may wear BSA Scout long or short pants. We encourage, but don't require, all crews to wear the same type of crew hat. Absolutely NO look alike, non-BSA uniforms. Remember you will need a hat and jacket for the tour of Colorado as well as the trail at Philmont. Any piece of crew or personal gear can be replaced at Philmont's Tooth of Time Traders except well-broken-in boots - wear (do not pack) your hiking boots with official BSA Scout socks on the flight to Denver to make sure yours are not left at home or become lost baggage.
- **All crews must report directly to the airport terminal for the assigned airline at least two hours before flight time.** Patriots' Path Council will NOT provide transportation to or supervision in the airport. Upon arrival at the airport stack your packs in a line, Philmont style. Ask an agent for location of the group check-in counter and follow their instructions when your entire crew is present. Do not wait for other crews to arrive and realize there may be other Scout groups in the airport; warn your crew members not to just blindly follow people in BSA uniforms. Each member of your crew is ticketed with an E-Ticket. It will be necessary to show your ID at check-in. Each crew member's family should know the travel schedule, including Philmont expedition number, airline, flight schedules, and terminal - give them a copy of the **Travel and Tour Information** distributed at the June Crew Chief/Advisor Briefing.
- **Each crew member should have a suitable photo ID**, and the name on the ID must match that on the ticket (which has been taken from your Watchu Crew Roster.) All adults (18 years of age and older) **MUST** carry identification with a photo issued by a government agency, such as a state driver's license or a United States passport. Youth (17 years and under) **SHOULD** have some form of photo identification. However, in a pinch, Scouts could have at least two forms of official identification without photos. Your ID must be shown both at the airline check-in counter and at the TSA security checkpoint.

- **The entire crew should move out to pass through the TSA security checkpoint immediately after completing the airline check-in process.** Do not wait for the other crews while they check-in. Avoid any security breaches. Be silent and extra polite at the screening. Advise all crew members that there will be no smart talk or reference to issues which might cause the airline officials to be concerned. "Yes sir" and "No ma'am" is all you need. After clearing the security check, you can fill your water bottle and carry it onto the plane.
- **Don't count on the airlines to satisfy a hungry crew!** With the early start to get to the airport, there is little time for a hearty breakfast. The airline will at most serve a snack, and depending on the carrier there may be a fee. You may have time to grab a bite at the gate, but a better idea is to bring a big bag meal/snack along for the plane. Crews will eat lunch shortly after leaving the airport in Colorado.
- **Upon arrival in Denver follow the signs to "Baggage".** All crews will be met by a Blue Sky Adventures representative at the top of the escalators in the main lobby or at your baggage carousel. Gather your backpacks, form a pack line, and wait for instructions. Don't wander off - keep your crew together. Rest rooms are available near the baggage carrousel. You will move out of the airport as soon as possible and be on your way with the Colorado Tour and to Magic Mountains of Philmont!
- **Homebound after your trek, when the bus arrives at the airport in Denver all crews should immediately report to group check-in** and ask an airline representative for help with group check-in. Check-in will be at the airport (not online) by crew. Immediately following check-in the crew should head for the security checkpoint - the process in Denver can be slow and time-consuming; do not linger in the main terminal for a snack or any other reason. The gate areas all have food and other amenities. All must take their shoes or boots off at security. Escalators present a serious potential safety hazard for those with untied laces - instruct all to retie their laces immediately after the security check and before getting on escalator down to train (if necessary - be alert that some gates can be reached without using the train.)

Advisor Question: Can frequent flyer miles be earned for the flights to and from Colorado?

Answer: Yes, your flights are eligible for frequent flyer miles credit if you are a member of a program that recognizes the particular air carrier you are flying. Simply give your account number to the ticket agent when you check in.

Tip: The *Guidebook to Adventure* IS your guidebook to adventure. Bring it with you and re-read it on the plane or bus. And the crew should have a copy on the trail.

Bonus Tips:

- Put brand-new, fresh batteries in your camera and flashlight.
- Just before your day of departure, get a short haircut to make it easier to take care of your hair while on trail.
- Trim your toenails short, rounding the corners.

Reminder to Advisors: Philmont is a youth-led experience. Let the Scouts lead. You have all you can do keeping an eye out for health and safety issues. At the airport is a good time for the youth Crew Chief to take charge of the crew.

Feedback from past Advisors and a reminder to all: Recall the Watchu Gram "[It's Not Just a Hike](#)" - take time to smell the roses and enjoy your adventure as you step back in time to the Old West. Unfortunately, it will be over far too soon...

Phil Fact: Waite Phillips' older brothers, Frank and Lee Eldas (L.E.), founded the Phillips Petroleum Company. When a car testing their gasoline on Highway 66 in Oklahoma happened to hit a peak speed of 66 miles per hour, they decided to name the fuel and their stations Phillips 66. During your tour of the Villa Philmonte you will see where they carved their initials in a tabletop during Waite and Genevieve's weeklong housewarming party in July, 1927. Philmont has plans to construct a replica Phillips 66 gas station at Rayado in the coming years.

Selling "the gasoline that won the West!"

Frank and L.E. Phillips

Bartlesville, Oklahoma