

MEDIA RELEASE

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DON'T FORGET TO PACK THE INSURANCE POLICY – LOST LUGGAGE IS ON THE RISE

More than 29 million items of luggage were delayed, damaged or lost at the world's airports last year.

A Flight Centre analysis of the 2011 Air Transport Industry (ATI) Baggage Report found that an average of 80,657 luggage items was mishandled globally every day during 2010 – an 18 per cent increase on the 2009 total.

On average, 1.2 items were mishandled for every 100 passengers, a 6% increase on 2009.

According to the report, more than half the luggage items (51%) went missing between transfers and more than half was returned to its owner within 42 hours.

In total, misplaced baggage cost the aviation industry an estimated \$US2.94billion during 2010.

Flight Centre New Zealand executive general manager, Mike Friend, said while the statistics showed that most misplaced luggage was located within two days, even relatively short delays could create headaches for travellers.

“The statistics show that most people will find their luggage at the carousel, but it is important to take precautions for those rare instances when something goes wrong,” Mr Friend said.

“If you are without your luggage for any length of time, chances are you will incur extra costs during your holiday, your work trip or even returning home.

“Replacing basic items like clothes and toiletries takes time and can place added strain on a budget.

“In these situations, travel insurance can prove a valuable investment.

“When buying insurance, read the policy carefully and make sure adequate provisions are made for lost or misplaced luggage.

“The financial support that may be available under your policy can be crucial even if your luggage is lost for a relatively short period of time.”

Lost luggage fact file

- 29.44million bags were mishandled globally during 2010 – an average of more than 80,000 items were day, according to the Air Transport Industry Baggage Report
- 1.2 bags were mishandled for every 100 travellers
- Bags were most likely to be mishandled at European airports, a factor partially attributed to the disruption and flight cancellations caused by the Iceland volcano
- 51% of the mishandled luggage was linked to transfers
- 14% failed to load
- The number of bags that were never recovered increased slightly during 2010
- While most luggage is reunited with its rightful owner, unclaimed luggage is sometimes auctioned or sold
- In the US, Alabama’s Unclaimed Baggage Centre specialises in selling unclaimed luggage and is now considered one of the state’s largest tourist attractions
- According to the Unclaimed Baggage Centre, unusual items recovered by its staff include a live rattlesnake, a full set of armour, Egyptian artifacts dating to 1500 BC and a camera designed for the Space Shuttle

ENDS

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