

Business Travelers Choose Driving over Flying



More and more travelers in the USA prefer driving their car over traveling by plane. It is because of the security restrictions at airports. The passengers have to get to airports hours before departure time and are restricted to carry various items.

Some passengers prefer charter flights. Some prefer cars since it is faster and more reliable. This concerns short distances, of course. A traveler said that a trip from Raleigh to Charleston took her about four hours and cost \$65 in gas. Counting early arrival, flight time and renting a car, flying would have taken four or five hours. A walkup ticket on US Airways cost \$1,350.

After the terrorist attacks in 2001 many people have stopped traveling by planes and started using their cars more often. According to Helene Becker, analysts for The Benchmark Company in New York, there are 15 percent fewer departures now than in 2001.

On the other hand, Dave Jackson, a spokesman for American Airlines and American Eagle, says that they haven't seen many people booking away across the system. American Airlines and American Eagle, are the busiest carriers at Raleigh-Durham International Airport.

The alternative to commercial flights is charter flights, though this option is not a cheap one. Liz Daniel, charter manager at Landmark Aviation in Raleigh-Durham International Airport said it costs \$1,500 to \$2,000 an hour to rent a twin-engine King Air turboprop plane, while a private G4 jet runs \$4,000 an hour. According to Liz Daniel, there is 30 to 40 percent higher demand for the charter flights. It is because of the unsuccessful terrorist attacks in Britain.

If the tough security measures continue, it could result in airlines canceling some short-haul flights and also some business flights. But Caleb Tiller, spokesman for the National Business Travel Association, an Alexandria, Va. group representing business travelers, thinks that the security measures are just temporary.

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