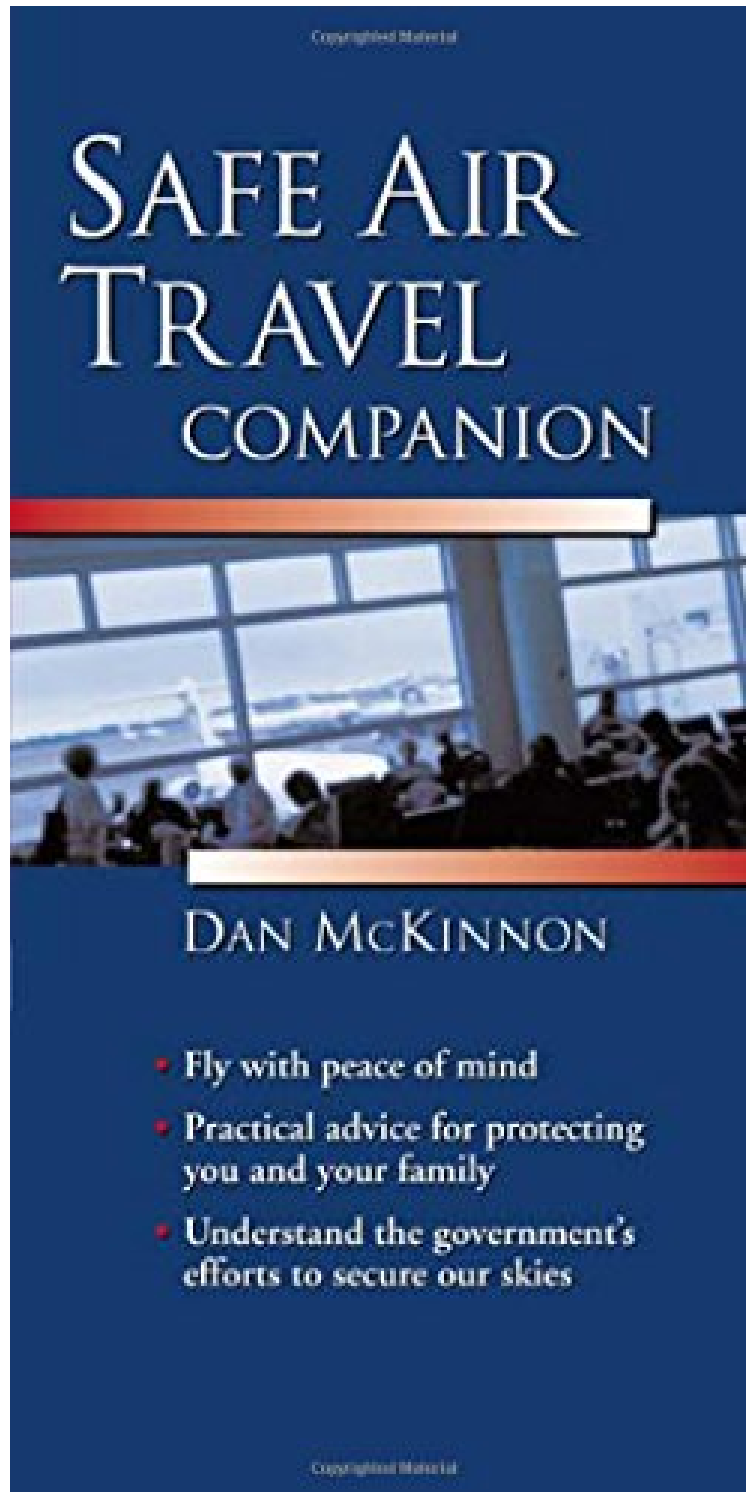



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## **Safe Air Travel Companion**

Dan McKinnon

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**Dan McKinnon : Safe Air Travel Companion** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Safe Air Travel Companion:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Self-help for the concerned air travelerBy JDiverDan McKinnon is a

former Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board and Navy rescue pilot, current CEO of one of our smaller airlines (North American Airlines), so he has some credibility on this topic. He is trying to keep the advice concise, yet deal with a field that is full of myths and misconceptions- and is subject to continual change, not to mention design by political expedience. But if people are concerned and not flying, or fearful and feeling in the dark, this book can help them understand what is being done about travel safety, and what each of us can do to increase self-protection while traveling. Areas covered include what is being done by government, airport authorities and airlines to increase security; what individual travelers can do to reduce exposure and manage risk while traveling (or while visiting or living in a foreign location); what to do if the unthinkable happens and you are present during a hijack attempt, or taken hostage. He also attempts to address some of the current hot topics in security planning, such as whether pilots should be authorized to carry firearms. Frequent travelers, those who are concerned about international travel and those who will travel to areas that carry heightened exposure to terrorism may find this book useful- but some of the tips also apply to reducing one's profile to thieves and scam artists as well, though that purpose is not overtly the topic of the book. Some caveats: this book opts for succinctness, rather than lengthy explanations and references, and it deals with current air travel security practice- which could change in some of its aspects at any time. It also occasionally doles out what could be termed brutal honesty- not everyone's cup of tea, even if the probabilities are low that one will be subject to a hijack or hostage-taking situation. But as one who flies over 75,000 miles domestically and overseas every year- and who hasn't even slowed down since 9-11- I think this is a good book for those who are concerned about post-September 11 air travel, as well as those travelers who are not experienced and want to know how they can manage some of their potential risk.

Recent events have forced everyone to be more aware of safety during airline flights. But being aware isn't enough . . . there are dozens of easy-to-follow practical actions you as a passenger should follow in order to minimize your risk -- and perhaps save your life -- in the event of a hijacking or other terrorist activity. In *Safe Air Travel Companion*, Dan McKinnon, an expert in commercial travel and survival, calmly, clearly, and rationally spells them out. In this one-of-a-kind resource, learn smart travel strategies for business and personal travel for yourself as well as your family.

Here's what to do if you're hijacked -- and what to do even before you board. The federal government recently took over security at airports, promising to make the system safer. But Dan McKinnon, the 68-year-old president of charter service North American Airlines and former chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board, says that's no reason for Americans to let down their guard. While security at airports has improved significantly in recent months, terrorism in the skies is still a possibility and everybody who flies should be prepared to respond to an attack. McKinnon, who has written a pocket-sized guide to staying safe when flying, the *Safe Air Travel Companion* (McGraw-Hill, \$12.95), tells USA TODAY'S Gene Sloan how fliers can avoid becoming a hijacking victim. Q: What's the smartest thing to do if you're on a plane that gets hijacked? A: Take action immediately. Do not let things settle down so the hijackers have time to get control. You want to wait a moment to make sure there is not an air marshal on the aircraft, but a very short time -- tenths of seconds. Then you want to pop up, and hopefully everybody pops up. You want to subdue the hijackers immediately, and you do that through physical force. If the hijacker is a legitimate threat, I don't think passengers should have any reservations about hurting him. It's like the Wild West -- you're deputized to defend yourself and others. Q: What's the best plan? A: Remember that the chances are there'll be more than one or two hijackers, so (first) yell for help. You can use shoes, full sodas or beer cans, pillows and blankets to attack the hijackers. Smother the person with as many body objects as possible. Put blankets over his head so he can't see. Belts and shoelaces make good handcuffs. Make sure the flight attendants keep the cockpit aware of what is going on. Q: What about trying to sweet-talk the captors into surrendering? A: It doesn't work. These guys have a mission. The hijacking may be the biggest thing in your life, but it's also the biggest thing in their life. These people are willing to give their lives for their cause. You're not going to make friends with them. Your best chance is to subdue them quickly. Take the case of the shoe bomber. The passengers were right on top of him and it saved the day. Q: In the book, you talk about things to do for safety before one even steps on the plane. What's the most important? A: You want to take a good look at who's getting on board. Do your own screening and profiling. Q: And you're looking for? A: These guys are smart; they're not necessarily going to be with whiskers all over their face and a bandanna on their head. They may be dressed to blend in. You want to look into their eyes. You can tell a lot about people by looking into their eyes. Are they shifty? Are they nervous? It's a subjective judgment, really. Q: OK, so what do you do if someone does look shifty? A: If you have a real suspicion, you should notify a flight attendant or gate agent. If they remain on the aircraft, and you still feel uncomfortable, don't be afraid to ask the airline to reschedule you on another flight. Q: What else can fliers do to avoid becoming a victim? A: Sit near the front of the plane. You control the airplane by controlling the cockpit. Men should sit on the aisles. Women and children should sit in center and window seats. Men generally have more strength than females, so you want men to be able to get to the action fast. Q: In your book, you talk about the difference between a "suicide" hijacking, a la Sept. 11, and a "traditional" hijacking. How does one know the difference? A: At first, it's hard to tell. But if they bring the plane back down to the ground, to an airport, then it's

probably a traditional hijacking. Traditional hijackings generally are done for money or to make a political statement or to cross a border, but (the hijackers) don't necessarily intend to kill everyone (on board). If you can survive the first 15 minutes, you'll probably survive the entire ordeal. Q: In a case like this, what's the safest way to act? A: The trick is to not call attention to yourself. They may kill a few passengers, but their purpose is not to kill the whole planeload. Passengers are more valuable to them alive than dead. Don't try to be a hero. Don't confront, antagonize, or argue with your captors. Avoid eye contact. Don't ask for special permission or favors, such as being able to smoke, to change seats, or to have something to eat. Q: What if I need to go to the bathroom? A: After a long time, it's going to be a necessity. But only go when you are in extreme duress -- not just uncomfortable but downright miserable. Q: What's the smartest thing to do if there's a rescue attempt? A: Do not get involved. The people who are making the rescue attempt do not know who are the good guys and who are the bad guys. If you stand up and start motioning to the bad guys they may think you are a bad guy and you could get (unintentionally) hurt. Q: Put this all in perspective. How much should we really worry about a hijacking? A: Your chances of getting hijacked are one in 11 million; at least that's what it was before Sept. 11. Statistically it's insignificant. You've got to remember that 40,000 people were killed in automobile accidents last year. About 3,000 people were killed in the terrorist attacks. Terrorism and hijacking are forms of warfare, but we can't allow them to paralyze our lives. The book is offered as a guide to prepare us as best we can and (then) get on with our lives. (USA Today 2002-03-29)

**FLY WITH CONFIDENCE**

**Safe Air Travel**, an expert in commercial aviation travel and survival calmly and clearly details dozens of practical actions you can take to minimize the risks and manage the realities of aerial hijacking and terrorism. Dan McKinnon, former Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board, a Naval rescue pilot, and current President of North American Airlines:

- \* Recommends smart travel strategies for business and personal travel
- \* Offers life-saving behaviors to adopt in a crisis situation
- \* Describes current antiterrorism programs
- \* Identifies high-risk global locales and gives a rundown of cultural dos and don'ts
- \* Details airport security measures and compliance

Empowering anyone who flies, **Safe Air Travel** contains the information you need to offset fears and reach your destination safely.

**About the Author** DAN McKINNON is an expert in commercial aviation travel whose background includes special projects for the CIA and extensive military and civilian study in survival, captive, and POW situations. A former Navy pilot, Mr. McKinnon specialized in rescue efforts and techniques and holds the Navy peacetime helicopter rescue record in air-sea saves. From 1981 to 1984 he served as Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), overseeing the implementation of airline deregulation and the shutdown of the CAB. Mr. McKinnon is President of North American Airlines.