Edinburgh security rules create painful delays

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Key Points

- **EGPH/Edinburgh airport has a rule that means all aircraft have to go through outbound security screening, regardless of weight or type of flight.**
- **Airport Spy reports suggest this can easily take an extra hour to complete, so plan for departure delays.**
- **If planning a trip to the region, consider EGPF/Glasgow instead!**

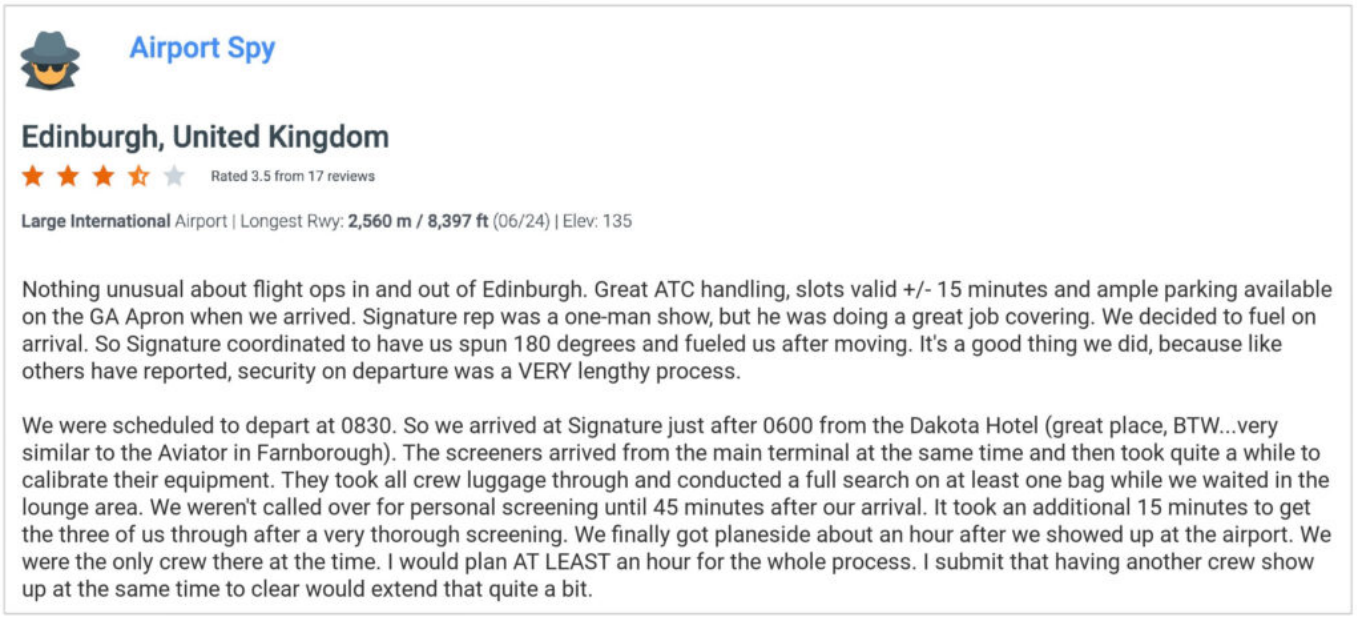
There's a rule in the UK that means outbound security screening is required for commercial flights over 10 tonnes MTOW, and all flights over 45.5 tonnes whether commercial or private.

But at **EGPH/Edinburgh**, outbound screening is required for all flights, regardless of weight or type of flight.

This means all crew and pax must pass through security, and abide by the 100ml liquid rule for carry-on luggage.

A recent Airport Spy report says that this **whole process took around an hour**, and they were the only crew there at the time!

Another Airport Spy report says to consider using **EGPF/Glasgow** instead, where they just have the standard UK rules for screening, and also don't have arrival or departure slots.



Airport Spy

Edinburgh, United Kingdom

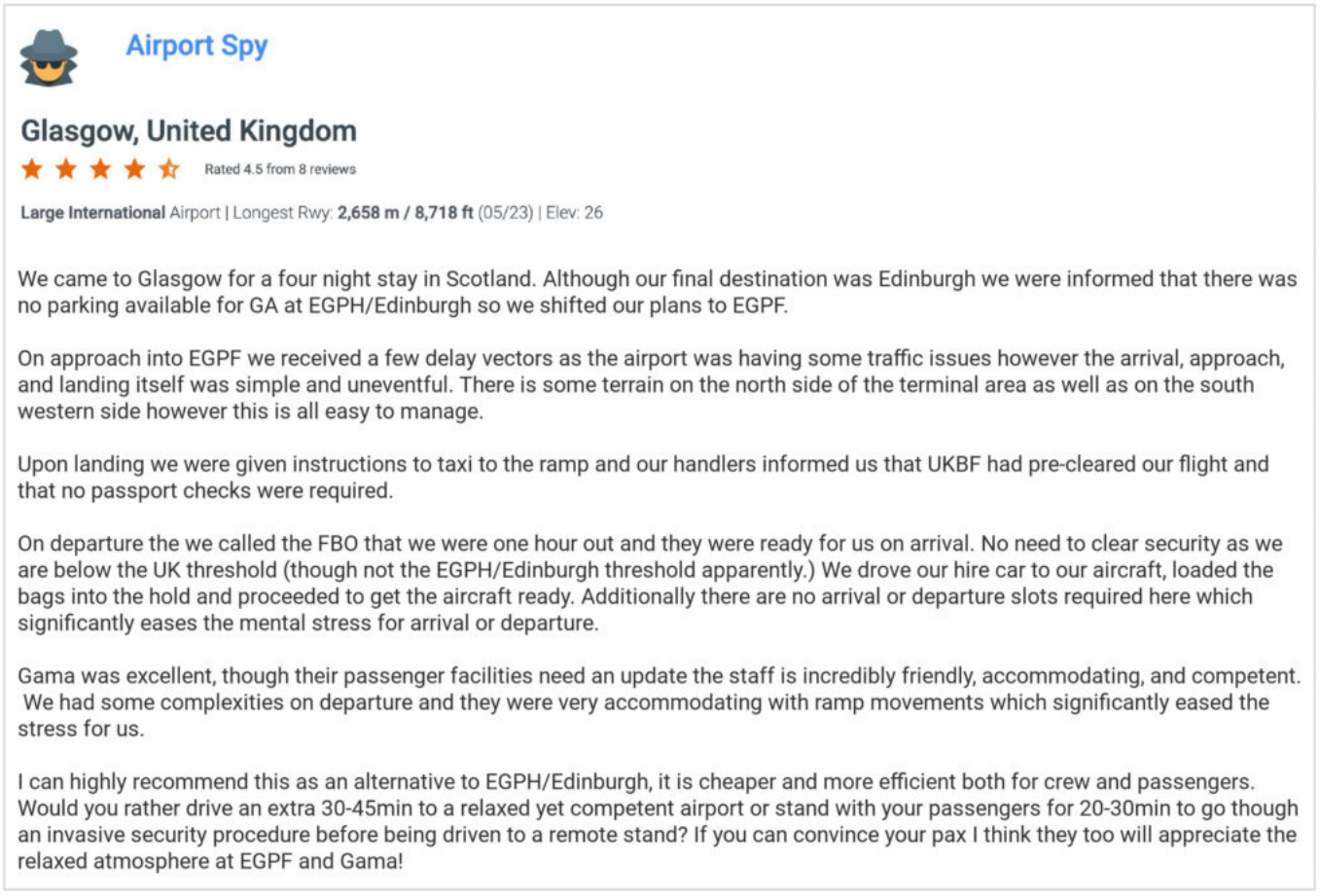
Rated 3.5 from 17 reviews

Large International Airport | Longest Rwy: **2,560 m / 8,397 ft** (06/24) | Elev: 135

Nothing unusual about flight ops in and out of Edinburgh. Great ATC handling, slots valid +/- 15 minutes and ample parking available on the GA Apron when we arrived. Signature rep was a one-man show, but he was doing a great job covering. We decided to fuel on arrival. So Signature coordinated to have us spun 180 degrees and fueled us after moving. It's a good thing we did, because like others have reported, security on departure was a VERY lengthy process.

We were scheduled to depart at 0830. So we arrived at Signature just after 0600 from the Dakota Hotel (great place, BTW...very similar to the Aviator in Farnborough). The screeners arrived from the main terminal at the same time and then took quite a while to calibrate their equipment. They took all crew luggage through and conducted a full search on at least one bag while we waited in the lounge area. We weren't called over for personal screening until 45 minutes after our arrival. It took an additional 15 minutes to get the three of us through after a very thorough screening. We finally got planeside about an hour after we showed up at the airport. We were the only crew there at the time. I would plan AT LEAST an hour for the whole process. I submit that having another crew show up at the same time to clear would extend that quite a bit.

Painful.



Airport Spy

Glasgow, United Kingdom

Rated 4.5 from 8 reviews

Large International Airport | Longest Rwy: **2,658 m / 8,718 ft** (05/23) | Elev: 26

We came to Glasgow for a four night stay in Scotland. Although our final destination was Edinburgh we were informed that there was no parking available for GA at EGPH/Edinburgh so we shifted our plans to EGPF.

On approach into EGPF we received a few delay vectors as the airport was having some traffic issues however the arrival, approach, and landing itself was simple and uneventful. There is some terrain on the north side of the terminal area as well as on the south western side however this is all easy to manage.

Upon landing we were given instructions to taxi to the ramp and our handlers informed us that UKBF had pre-cleared our flight and that no passport checks were required.

On departure the we called the FBO that we were one hour out and they were ready for us on arrival. No need to clear security as we are below the UK threshold (though not the EGPH/Edinburgh threshold apparently.) We drove our hire car to our aircraft, loaded the bags into the hold and proceeded to get the aircraft ready. Additionally there are no arrival or departure slots required here which significantly eases the mental stress for arrival or departure.

Gama was excellent, though their passenger facilities need an update the staff is incredibly friendly, accommodating, and competent. We had some complexities on departure and they were very accommodating with ramp movements which significantly eased the stress for us.

I can highly recommend this as an alternative to EGPH/Edinburgh, it is cheaper and more efficient both for crew and passengers. Would you rather drive an extra 30-45min to a relaxed yet competent airport or stand with your passengers for 20-30min to go though an invasive security procedure before being driven to a remote stand? If you can convince your pax I think they too will appreciate the relaxed atmosphere at EGPF and Gama!

Less painful.

The reason that EGPH/Edinburgh has this strange rule is something to do with it being a **“Critical Part” airport.**

What is a “Critical Part” airport?

Some folks we spoke to called this term *“Critical Park”*, others *“Critical Path”,* but we think it’s *“Critical Part”*.

Either way, there’s nothing about it in the UK AIP or seemingly anywhere else online.

It’s apparently something to do with how the *specific layout of the airport affects zoning for security purposes*.

And that’s all we know.

Are there any other UK airports that do this?

Yes. **EGLL/Heathrow** and **EGKK/Gatwick** both have the same rule: all outbound flights must have security screening here.

We contacted a whole bunch of other airports (EGSS/Stansted, EGGW/Luton, EGMC/Southend, EGLC/London City, EGTK/Oxford, EGLF/Farnborough, EGKB/Biggin Hill), and they all said the same thing: no weird stuff here – the normal UK rules apply.

So tell me the rules again?

EGPH/EGLL/EGKK: Outbound screening is required for all flights, regardless of weight or type of flight.

All other UK airports: Outbound screening only required for commercial flights over 10 tonnes MTOW, and all flights over 45.5 tonnes whether commercial or private. *(May 2026 edit: Some airports may accept a waiver/declaration process for private aircraft operating under an approved reduced-MTOW configuration below 45.5T.)*