

In the Bag

This past October, I was one of thousands of giddy ticketholders for The Who's concert at Golden 1 Center. While I stood in line to enter the venue, however, my excitement turned into mild panic when I spotted this sign: "Bags larger than 8" x 6" x 1" are not allowed."

Oh, dear. Would my cute DKNY purse make the cut? (It did, but barely.)

Enter the new world of increased security measures. Though requirements vary, bag policies are becoming increasingly common—not just at sports stadiums and arenas, but at smaller performing arts facilities, festivals and fairs. Searches are nothing new (and still can happen, along with X-ray screening), but it's now more than that: A clear bag, or at least a smaller one, is becoming de rigueur.

"It's the new reality," says Doug Elmets, spokesperson for Thunder Valley Casino Resort in Lincoln. While bag requirements do not apply to the casino itself, patrons attending shows at The Venue, the resort's new 4,500-seat performing arts center, are expected to comply with policies outlined on the website, thundervalleyresort.com. Clear bags of all types are acceptable, as are solid-colored bags and purses 8 inches by 8 inches (or smaller). Those out of compliance may stash their satchel on-site (or return it to their car) or purchase a \$10 clear backpack, conveniently available at The Venue, according to Elmets.

The reason for such policies, says Elmets, is self-explanatory, and for the greater good. It's about safety, pure and simple. "It provides an extra level of protection for all of our guests, our team members and the artists themselves," he says. Such measures are becoming the norm, notes Elmets. "It's not like we're breaking new ground here."

A quick survey of Sacramento-area sites revealed that while some, like The Sofia, merely encourage patrons to limit bags to a certain size, others are implementing policies that may prompt you to break out the measuring tape. (Yes, there's an app for that.) In addition to Thunder Valley and Golden 1 Center (whose guidelines were driven by the NBA), others following suit include Hard Rock Live, SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center, Ace of Spades and Punch Line Sacramento.

You'll also encounter bag restrictions at festivals and fairs, including the California State Fair & Food Festival, in full swing July 14–30.

Summer offers a ton of fun in the Sacramento region. But before you bolt out that door, check the appropriate website to find out whether you should ditch your duffel at home.

I wish I had!—CATHY CASSINOS-CARR

