

Air Travel for Handicapped Travelers

There are thousands of individuals that travel by air every year. Some individuals are able-bodied and others are handicapped. Handicapped or disabled travelers face a number of issues while traveling that other more able-bodied passengers do not face. Some of the problems that are faced by handicapped travelers in taking a trip by plane are difficulties in check in. Check-in can be especially difficult for those that are disabled due to the security requirements and long lines at security checkpoints.



It is true that airports have made major strides in recent years by providing grab bars and wider width bathroom doors for passengers, but there are still problems that exist. Most of the airplane restrooms are not equipped in the least to handle the needs of wheelchair bound passengers. The plane aisles are not often wide enough for wheelchairs as well. Disabled airline passengers also provide information that airports and airlines are not all alike when it comes to providing for the needs of handicapped passengers.

Many disabled travelers point to the lack of accessibility of wheelchairs. Sometimes they have to wait a long period of time for a promised wheelchair to be available. Sometimes passengers that are disabled still have to walk to their ticket counter, baggage carousel or other area. They may be unable to do it, or do it so slowly they miss their connecting flights. Until fairly recently, some airline carriers charged individual passengers to take their wheelchair from the secure check-in area to the plane itself.

@VIDEO@

Other airlines would put a cap on the number of disabled passengers that were allowed to fly at one time. Blind passengers faced discrimination as well by airlines refusing to allow guide dogs on board. They also were denied additional assistance once they had gotten to their destination. Fortunately, airlines have changed their procedures to be more inclusive to those suffering from handicaps or disabilities. It is certainly going to be a necessity with an aging population.



It is probably the best idea for handicapped travelers to call the airlines they plan to use and ask for specifics on their accommodations, since services vary from airline to airline, and airport to airport. Airline travel for disabled passengers should be standard across all transporters and airports, but in the real world things rarely work the way they are supposed to all the time. Certainly this is true in the way personal property is handled. Since

Other common complaints from handicapped passengers is the damage to personal property such as walkers, and wheelchairs, frequently mis- handled by baggage personnel.

Perhaps the most troubling issue that can be faced by disabled passengers is discrimination from airline personnel. Degrading treatment has frequently been a complaint by passengers not only for airline accomodation issues, but also some disabled passengers have been denied boarding priviliges and assistance. They have also been subjected to treatment that would be considered degrading. These are just some of the issues that handicapped passengers face.

Services that should be essential for disabled passengers include the easy access to wheelchairs, proper treatment from all airline personnel, airport and airplane bathrooms that are large enough to accomodate wheelchairs. The use of Braille in airports and on planes for those who may have visual problems should be essential. Large print and simple instructions for those who may have intellectual disabilities should also exist. Air Travel should be relatively easy for all.

Fortunately, European nations and some Asian nations are working together to make some of these options a reality for disabled individuals. There are some countries that are completely accessible for handicapped citizens and they will keep working until this is standard for all airline passengers. Accessible air travel should be a goal.

Airlines and Airports all over the world are aware they need to "step it up" to accommodate passengers with disabilities. Plans are underway to make disabled passengers more comfortable in both airports and on airplanes. New airline bathrooms are currently being designed that can accommodate wheelchairs. Airlines and airports have made significant improvements over the years. However, clearly more needs to be done before handicapped passengers have the accessibility, and the ease of access to airline transportation that the non disabled do. It should be the goal of every airline, airport and nation to make air travel safe, friendly and accessible for all.

Date: 2012-05-01

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-air-travel-for-handicapped-travelers-article18>