

(IN)ACCESSIBLE WORLD OF TRAVEL



The world is becoming friendlier to disabled people in recent years. Accessibility is an important issue for growing number of hotels and other facilities world wide. There are, sad to say, still some unresolved issues. For example air travel may be a very unpleasant experience for a disabled person. Some airlines even make steps that may be considered discriminatory by these people.

For example the Australia based airline Rex wants to get exemption from anti-discrimination laws so that they may require disabled people to travel only with a carer. A disabled person who is not able to get to the toilet or to put on a life vest would need to pay an extra airplane ticket for their personal carer. This measure will also apply to intellectually disabled passengers who can not demonstrate an ability to understand safety procedures.

The airline claims that it has only one fly attendant on board of every of their 33 aircraft and that the person is unable to cater to the needs of the disabled people. They also argue that lifting of passengers has caused injuries to their crew members in the past.

Another airline - Virgin Blue wanted to make similar measures in 2006 but it did not succeed and it has partially backed down. Tiger Airways, a Singapore based carrier, now faces a law suit by group of its customers with hearing difficulties who were demanded to travel with a carer because of their disability.

There are, nevertheless, airlines that care about their disabled customers quite considerably. For example AirAsia has bought ambulifts which will move passengers directly from the aircraft to the ground and vice versa. The airline's planes lavatories have built-in handles for disabled guests. There are of course limits. The airline can cater to only four disabled passengers during the flight and only two seats are for quadriplegic customers.

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