



## Disabled persons

### Services offered by airlines to passengers requiring assistance.

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#### Special needs passengers: Person with reduced mobility

Persons with reduced mobility (PRM) can enjoy the advantages of air travel. Most of the services that they require, i.e. help in boarding, are offered at no additional cost. However, when booking the flight, it is always a good idea to make sure that no extra services will be charged.

It is the responsibility of the carriers, the airports and the service agents of both to tend to the needs of PRMs. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the PRMs to specify their travel needs when making the reservation and to confirm that all the necessary information has been included.

Aviation regulations, for reasons of safety in the event of evacuation or emergencies, limit the number of PRM travelling on one aircraft or require, in certain circumstances, that they be accompanied. By making your reservation in advance and giving all relevant information to the airline, you can make sure you will not be one of the passengers left on the ground.

#### Assistance codes

Airlines use internationally recognised codes to identify the level of assistance required by each individual PRM. The codes are as follows:

- WCHR: passengers that need help moving from the aircraft to the terminal, self-sufficient to board and move about the aircraft.
- WCHS: passengers that need help between the aircraft and the terminal and for boarding, self-sufficient inside the aircraft.
- WCHC: passengers lacking all mobility and not self-sufficient. Must be accompanied to their seat and need total personal attention. An accompanying person is required for trips longer than three hours.
- DEAF: deaf passengers.
- BLND: visually impaired passengers.
- DEAF/BLND: deaf or visually impaired passengers that require an accompanying person
- STCR: passenger on a stretcher.
- MAAS: passenger who requires assistance.
- WCHP: passengers that need help to get to their seat and can move about the aircraft with the help of an on-board wheelchair, self-sufficient in their personal care.

#### Reservation

Aviation regulations, for reasons of safety in the event of evacuation or emergencies, limit the number of PRM travelling on one aircraft or require, in certain circumstances, that they be accompanied. This limitation depends on the size of the aircraft and the level of service requested by the passenger. By making your reservation in advance and giving all relevant information to the airline, you can make sure you will not be one of the passengers left on the ground.

It is recommended that you book your flight, whenever possible, seven days in advance and a minimum of 48 hours before undertaking the trip. This way you can be sure that the assistance you require will be available.

Your flight can be booked at a travel agency or at one of the airline's sales points. You can book any kind of ticket, for example tourist or business class, etc., but please remember that not all types of tickets provide the same level of service. A tourist class ticket will not be possible if you require, for example, more space between seats.

Upon booking a flight, a person with reduced mobility should:

- communicate their travel needs.
- check that all the information has been included.
- make sure that the requested assistance has been noted in their reservation.
- notify the cancellation of their reservation as soon as possible so that another PRM may take their place.

### **Boarding / disembarkation**

If you use a folding wheelchair, it may be stored in the passenger cabin if space permits. If the chair is battery powered, it must be transported in the aircraft's hold.

Airlines at the airport permit PRMs to stay in their own wheelchairs up to the door of the aircraft as long as the chair is manual and it is not necessary to go up or down stairs as this would present a risk for the personnel. Otherwise, the airline will provide a chair for transport and return your wheelchair upon arriving at the destination.

### **Board denial, cancellation or long delay**

According to the European Parliament and Council's Regulation 261/2004, 11 February 2004, which establishes common rules for compensation of boarding denial and cancellations or long delays, the responsible airline will give priority to disabled persons or persons with reduced mobility and their companions or guide dogs considered as such under the prevailing legislation, as well as accompanied minors.

In case of boarding denial, cancellation or delays of any length, persons with disability and/or reduced mobility and their companions, as well as unaccompanied minors, will have the right to the corresponding assistance as soon as possible.

Blind or visually impaired persons must be informed of their rights using the appropriate alternative means.

### **Security**

According to current civil aviation regulations, persons with disability and/or reduced mobility must pass the same security controls as the other passengers, searches being carried out insofar as their condition allows.

### **Onboard**

Once on board, you should make sure you have all necessary medication in your hand luggage and check that it would be enough in the case of delay.

If you need a wheelchair on board the aircraft, you must request it upon booking the flight.

If you have a sensory disability, airline should offer you an appropriate level of assistance during the flight. They should, for example, explain emergency procedures to you and help you with the packaging of the meals.

The crew may take your crutches or walking cane prior to takeoff in order to store them in an appropriate place. If you have a respiratory insufficiency and need supplementary oxygen during the flight, the airline will provide you with oxygen on board. Some companies charge for this service, but you are not allowed to carry your own oxygen. If you are travelling with your guide dog, it may board with you at no additional cost.

### **At the end of the trip**

If the conditions of your transport contract were not met or were deficient, you may file a letter of complaint with the company or use the complaint forms that these companies can provide you with. The complaint must be levied at the organisers and companies when the flight in question forms part of the contract of a combined trip.

Complaint forms, which can be obtained at airport information stands, you can file any type of complaint regarding airport services or air transport and the companies or official and commercial organisations that operate in them.