

# **PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION IN TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL**

The ADA specifically includes transportation protections. Discrimination is prohibited in urban transit, Para transit (door-door), publicly funded rail systems and transit facilities.

Bus, rail, boat, ship or ferry transportation cannot discriminate against people with disabilities. Air travel is already covered by the Air Carrier Access Act and complies with ADA standards.

## **Who else is required to comply?**

Private companies whose primary business is transporting people. Any transportation provided to the general public must be available to people who are disabled.

## **YOUR RIGHTS WHEN YOU TRAVEL:**

### **Public Transportation:**

- Systems running on fixed routes must rent or buy accessible vehicles. These vehicles must be able to transport all common wheelchairs, including scooters, and electric wheelchairs.
- People with disabilities who don't use wheelchairs may use the lift or ramp.
- If accessibility features aren't in good repair, other transportation must be provided.
- Service animals are allowed provided they are in control of their handler and are not disruptive to the driver or other passengers or unhygienic.
- Specific guidelines are set up by individual companies, such as wait time, failure to cancel within a certain time limit, etc. Ask for a copy.

### **Rail travel:**

- Commuter, rapid and light-rail systems must have at least one accessible car per train
- Amtrak trains must provide one wheelchair space per passenger car, and no more than two wheelchair spots can be in any one car.

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## **Ship Cruises:**

- Since not all cruise ships are registered in the United States, each may have different services available. A U.S. registered ship must meet the ADA requirements.
- You should check with the ship's medical facilities for individual needs.
- Ask as many questions of the cruise lines information desk as you can think of. Get any special arrangements in writing.
- Reconfirm your trip before the date of your trip.

## **Car Rental:**

- All U.S. car agencies cater to physically challenged drivers.
- Some European car agencies such as Auto Europe will provide hand controls. You need to ask specific questions before traveling overseas.
- All agencies have a dedicated toll free number to arrange for wheelchair accessible vans, as well as any special needs that need to be met. This can include but is not limited to special pick-up, curbside delivery, assigned driver for visually impaired, hand controls, seat removal from vans, and many other services. Ask for the special services person when calling if you don't have the special toll free number.
- Get your confirmations in writing by Fax, e-mail or regular mail and bring with you on your trip.
- Remember to bring your Handicap Parking Placard with you when you travel as car rental agencies do not supply these.

## **Air Travel:**

- Covered by the Air Carrier Access Act which meets or exceeds the ADA standards? There are several publications available relating to air travel and can be found by going to a reputable travel agency or by searching the internet.
- Security check-in will be provided to you if you need special assistance. Just ask!
- A carrier may not refuse transportation to a passenger solely on the basis of a disability.

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- A carrier may not limit the number of individuals with disabilities on a particular flight.
- All trip and safety information that is made available to other passengers also must be made available to passengers with disabilities.
- If the plane has fewer than 30 seats, the carrier may refuse transportation if there are no lifts, boarding chairs or other means to enplane the passenger.
- Airline personnel are not required to carry a mobility-impaired person onto the aircraft by hand, place in a seat nor carry into restroom facilities. Remember, not all aircraft have accessible bathrooms. Ask if the type of aircraft you will be flying on has an accessible bathroom.
- Make your reservations early if possible opting for a direct or non-stop flight. State at the time of your reservation whether you need wheelchair assistance in the airport, getting on the plane, down the aisle, seating requirements, such as bulkhead, oxygen for the flight as you will not be able to take your own, service animal requirements (bulkhead seating), personal assistant requirements, if you will be checking your own power chair, type of batteries on the chair, and other requirements you can think of. Make a list before your call.
- If you have a service animal that needs to be relieved, ask for assistance to the relief area. This is more difficult now with the Homeland Security Act, and will require a security guard escort. Just ask for help. Also, if you are traveling outside the continental United States, your service animal may be kept in quarantine. This can be waived if the proper medical documentation is provided. You need to check with your carrier or destination to avoid this issue.
- Put labels on everything that you want not to be touched on your chair. Remove your own batteries when checking in your chair. Remove any loose parts and take with you. Make transporting your chair as easy for the baggage handlers as you can. Remember, what is easy and understandable to you may not be to someone who has no experience with your chair. Ask how your chair will be stored in the hold.
- The airlines are good at helping you travel. You need to ask early to insure your needs can be met. If problems arise, ask, don't confront and if necessary ask for the CRO listed below.
- All airlines are required to have a Complaints Resolution Official (CRO) immediately available to resolve issues that may arise between the carrier and the individual with a disability.

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## **Medical Equipment:**

- When renting medical equipment, make your reservations early for items like a hoist lift, oxygen, power chairs. Be specific. Get your confirmation in writing, call at least twice to reconfirm including the day before your trip. Not all locations have these items available. Ask if you need doctor's prescription for any of the items requested.

## **Hotels, Motels and Resorts:**

- Plan ahead and make your reservations early, then follow up at least twice before your trip, one being the day before you depart.
- When making your reservation, get a written confirmation as to your needs on your reservation. Ask specific questions, get specific answers.
- Ask also to speak directly to the Hotel or Motel you plan to stay at, speak to a manager to make sure that the room will meet your particular needs. Make sure the room is guaranteed not just requested as not all requested rooms are guaranteed to be there when you arrive. Ask them to "Block" the room.
- Again, get your communications in writing, either by fax. E-mail or regular mail and take this correspondence with you.
- Ask about fire exits if you're not on the first floor, do elevators work during a fire alarm?

## **GENERAL TIPS:**

- Plan ahead. Make reservations early, and find out about the accessibility of the places you want to go to before you depart on your trip. This will save you a huge headache when you arrive at a destination because you won't need to waste time calling places searching for information on accessibility, or worse yet show up somewhere that is not accessible. Besides, many businesses, such as medical companies and tour operators, ask for a few weeks notice so they can reserve the proper equipment for you.
- It may also be advisable to use a professional travel agency to assist you in your travel plans. Make sure that the agency has experience dealing with disability issues. Make a list of your concerns before going to make your plans. If you have a question, ASK and enjoy your trip.

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### **SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:**

- If you have specific questions not covered in the above general information, please click on the link below and I will attempt to get you an answer. It is our goal at the ADA BOARD to provide you with all the help and services you require to meet your needs.