

Accessible Seating Accommodations in Air Travel



Here are some important things
to know before you go...

Know before you go



General Advice

Under the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) certain airlines are required to provide certain seating accommodations to qualified passengers with disabilities who self-identify as needing to sit in a certain seat in order to better accommodate their disability-related needs.



Most airlines provide advance seat assignments for passengers with disabilities.

Depending on the type of seating method your airline uses and your particular disability-related need, you may be required to ask for a specific type of seating accommodation more than 24 hours in advance or to check in one hour before the standard check-in time for the flight.

Know before you go



Some airlines do not provide advance seat assignments. In this situation, you (the passenger with a disability) can request to board the aircraft before other passengers if you need additional time or assistance to board, stow accessibility equipment, or select a seat that best meets your needs.

Contact the Airline In Advance

If you have a disability and would prefer or need a certain type of seating accommodation, it is recommended that you contact the airline at the time you make your reservation in order to learn more about the method that the airline uses to make arrangements for a seating accommodation.

Seat Assignment Criteria



If you are a passenger with one of the disability-related needs listed below and self-identify as such to the airline, you may qualify for one of the following types of seating accommodations:

- 1 Movable Aisle Armrest**
- 2 Bulkhead Seat or Other Seat**
- 3 Greater Leg Room**
- 4 An Adjoining Seat**

Seat Assignment Criteria



1 Movable Aisle Armrest

If you use an aisle chair to access the aircraft, and cannot transfer readily over a fixed aisle armrest



Seat Assignment Criteria



2 Bulkhead Seat or Other Seat

If you are traveling with a service animal that is best accommodated at a particular seat



Seat Assignment Criteria



3 Greater Leg Room

If you have a fused or immobilized leg and need a seat that better accommodates your disability, including an aisle seat or a bulkhead seat



Seat Assignment Criteria



4 An Adjoining Seat

If you are traveling with a person who is assisting you during the flight such as:

- + A personal care attendant who performs a function that is not required to be performed by airline personnel, for example assisting you with eating;
- + A reader if you are blind or visually impaired;
- + An interpreter if you are deaf or hard of hearing; or
- + A safety assistant, for example if you cannot assist with your own evacuation (see 14 CFR 382.29).



Seat Assignment Criteria



Note:


If the conditions above do not apply to your situation, the airline is still required to provide you with a seat assignment that best accommodates your disability, which may include one of the seating accommodations listed under “Seat Assignment Criteria.”

However, if you do not meet the airline’s seating assignment criteria (e.g. not meeting the check-in time), the airline must only provide the seating accommodation to the extent practicable.

Frequently Asked Questions




Must an airline provide me with a seat in a different class of service in order to accommodate my disability?

-  **No.** Although airlines may choose to seat you in a another class of service in order to accommodate your disability, they are not required to provide you a seat in a class of service other than the one you paid to sit in. For example, if you paid for a seat in Economy Class, the airline is not required to seat you in Business Class.

Frequently Asked Questions



Must an airline provide an extra seat free of charge for a qualified passenger with a disability who needs that space?

-  **No.** Carriers are not required to furnish more than one seat per ticket purchased.

Frequently Asked Questions



Can an airline require you to change your assigned seat or sit in a bulkhead seat because you are traveling with a service animal?

- i** **Generally No.** But it may do so in order to comply with FAA or applicable foreign government safety regulations. For example, you may be asked to change seats if you are traveling with a service animal that blocks the aisle.

Frequently Asked Questions



Can I sit in an exit row?

- i Airlines must always comply with FAA and foreign government safety rules.** For example, there are exit row seating restrictions that may, but don't always, prohibit certain passengers with disabilities from sitting in an exit row seat.



Encounter a seating accommodation-related issue?



If you encounter a seating accommodation-related issue, you can request to speak with the airline's Complaint Resolution Official (CRO) or a supervisor.

- ✔ **A CRO is the airline's expert on disability-related issues in air travel.**
Every airline must have a CRO available either by telephone or in person during operating hours.

Contact Us

DOT's Disability Hotline

1-800-778-4838

Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

Eastern Time except federal holidays

Visit Us

www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/disability



**U.S. Department
of Transportation**

14 CFR Part 382 applies to flights operating to, from, or within the United States of America.