

**ECAC POLICY STATEMENT
IN THE FIELD OF
CIVIL AVIATION FACILITATION**

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Annex E

**GUIDANCE LEAFLET FOR PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY WHO
MAY BE INFREQUENT, OR FIRST TIME, FLYERS**

GUIDANCE LEAFLET FOR PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY WHO MAY BE INFREQUENT, OR FIRST TIME, FLYERS

As a Person with Reduced Mobility (PRM) you should be able to enjoy opportunities to travel by air. Most services you will need will be provided free of charge, e.g. assistance with boarding the aircraft. But it is worth making sure, when booking, that there will be no charges made.

To ensure all goes smoothly and your journey is as stress free and comfortable as possible there are some simple "points to follow":

- make sure you have all the information you need before finalising your travel plans
- be realistic about your own needs, particularly if you cannot walk long distances without help. The distances between the check in desks and the departure gates can be very long.
- identify the airline or tour company best able to meet those needs.
- contact them to make sure they know, understand and can meet your particular needs.
- don't assume that help will be available "on demand". Pre-booking assistance is the best approach.
- don't assume that staff know the best way to lift or transfer you - if they don't ask, tell them!

The airline also has responsibilities to you as a passenger. You must both play your part if the journey is to be as comfortable and stress free as possible.

Under international agreements compensation for lost or damaged personal baggage (which includes mobility equipment) will be calculated on the basis of the weight of the item(s), not their value. Before you travel you should make sure your travel insurance provides cover for your mobility equipment. You may need to take out an additional cover.

Getting the information you need

Assistance

There may be specialist organisations in your country who can advise you on the services offered by various airports and airlines. They will generally be well experienced in dealing with PRMs and can offer informed advice on the services available. Some may also be able to make your travel arrangements direct.

Alternatively, you may want to use a particular travel agency or booking agent. It is vital when you make your booking that you tell the agent about your particular travel needs so that they can be recorded as part of your booking. And you will need to check that they have recorded all the information accurately.

Your needs

Airlines use an internationally recognised coding system to identify the level of assistance they will need to provide to particular PRMs. A copy of that list is attached.

The questions the agent (or through them, the airline) asks may seem intrusive, but they are necessary to ensure that you receive the type of service you need. The following are some examples of the questions you might be asked:

1. What type of disability do you have?
2. Are you able to walk through the airport terminal to the aircraft, or will you require a wheelchair/buggy?
3. If you require a wheelchair will you be using your own chair?
4. Is the chair:
 - collapsible?
 - power operated?¹
- 4 Do you need the airline to provide someone to push you in your wheelchair?
- 5 Are you able to walk up and down aircraft steps, or will you require assistance boarding and disembarking?
- 6 Can you transfer from a wheelchair unaided?
- 7 Are you able to walk about inside the aircraft, or will you need to use an on board wheelchair?
- 8 Do you need to know if the airline can provide a toilet that is accessible to the onboard wheelchair?
- 9 What assistance will you need, if any, during the flight. If so please specify? The airline cannot assist with feeding, lifting, communicating, medicating and toileting. If you need help with those you will need to be accompanied.
- 10 What type of seat suits you best?
- 11 Are you taking any medical equipment?
- 12 Are you asthmatic or do you have other breathing difficulties?
- 13 If you also have a serious medical condition, you must contact the airline and it may be necessary to provide a « Fitness to fly » certificate. You may be asked at the airport to confirm your fitness to fly.

Booking

You will be able to have access to all types of ticket, e.g. economy, business, apex, etc..., but not all of those types of ticket may be able to offer the level of service you require. For example, if you need extra legroom an economy class seat may be unsuitable. You are strongly advised to make your reservation in advance where possible 7 days in advance, but at least 48 hours before you intend to travel. This should ensure that the assistance you need is made available. It may also save disappointment. Aviation requirements limit the number of PRMs who can travel on any flight; it is related to the size of the aircraft and the level of service required by the passenger. By booking early you can make sure that you are not the one left behind. Of course, if you need to cancel a reservation you should let the airline know as soon as practicable so that your seat is available for other PRMs.

It is also worth confirming the arrangements in advance, to check that all the assistance you need, and any other special requirements, are recorded on your booking.

¹ If the airline doesn't ask for this information, you should tell them anyway. They will need to know what type of battery is fitted to the wheelchair if they are to provide safe carriage. You should also be advised to remove the "control box" from the wheelchair and carry it in your hand luggage to avoid any risk of it being lost or damaged.

Boarding and disembarking

If your pre-planning has worked then all your needs should be met in accordance to your booking.

If you use a wheelchair, you need to be aware of what will happen to it during the flight.

It may be possible to store a manual, folding wheelchair in the passenger compartment if suitable accommodation is available.

It is more likely, however, that your wheelchair will be stowed in the luggage hold; this would certainly be the case for all powered wheelchairs.

In either case, airports and airlines should allow you to remain in your own wheelchair to the door of the aircraft. They should also deliver your wheelchair to the same place upon arrival at your destination. In the case of powered wheelchairs this may not be possible. If, for safety reasons, the wheelchair needs to be stowed in a particular way in the aircraft hold, or at airports where wheelchairs have to be lifted up and down stairs at the gate and staff would be at risk, the airline may not be able to allow you to remain in your own wheelchair.

On board

Make sure you have any necessary medication in your hand baggage and check that you have packed enough to cover any delays to your flight.

If you require the use of an onboard wheelchair then this should have been recorded when you made your booking.

If you have a sensory impairment, the airline staff should make themselves known to you and should offer the appropriate level of assistance during the flight. For example, they should explain the emergency procedures and they can assist with food packaging.

If you have breathing difficulties and require supplementary oxygen for the duration of the flight, the airline will provide on board oxygen. Some airlines will make a charge for this service. But you cannot take your own oxygen. If you need oxygen only in an emergency there will be no need to order an oxygen cylinder. The standard, emergency oxygen which is provided by all airlines will be available.

At the end of your journey

If the airline meets all your needs - in accordance with your booking - then your journey should be as comfortable as anyone else's. But if things do go wrong, it is worth notifying the problems promptly to the relevant bodies.

In the first instance complaints should be addressed to the Head of Passenger Services of the airline, and/or to the Airport Manager. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive then you may want to consider taking it up with the aviation authority or the ministry of transport in your country.

AIRLINE CODES

WCHR Passenger who can walk up and down stairs and move about in an aircraft cabin, but who requires a wheelchair or other means for movements between the aircraft and the terminal, in the terminal and between arrival and departure points on the city side of the terminal.

WCHS Passenger who cannot walk up or down stairs, but who can move about in an aircraft cabin and requires a wheelchair to move between the aircraft and the terminal, in the terminal and between arrival and departure points on the city side of the terminal.

WCHC Passenger who is completely immobile, who can move about only with the help of a wheelchair or any other means and who requires assistance at all times from arrival at the airport to seating in the aircraft or, if necessary, in a special seat fitted to his/her specific needs, the process being inverted at arrival.

DEAF Passenger who is deaf or a passenger who is deaf without speech.

BLIND Blind.

DEAF/BLIND

Blind and deaf passenger, who can move about only with the help of an accompanying person.

STCR Passenger who can only be transported on a stretcher.

MAAS (Meet and assist)

All other passengers in need of special help.

Doc 30 contains another category, which is not yet internationally recognised:

WCHP Passenger with a disability of the lower limbs who has sufficient personal autonomy to take care of him/herself, but who requires assistance to embark or disembark and who can move about in an aircraft cabin only with the help of an on-board wheelchair.
