

Access to Air Travel



The Consumer Council

Easy read version for passengers with a learning disability



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Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure the information provided in this guide is accurate and correct at the time of going to print but no legal responsibility is accepted for any errors, omissions or misleading statements.

Please note the information in this guide could be subject to change. You will be able to download an updated version from the Consumer Council's website www.consumerCouncil.org.uk

Introduction

This guide is to help you when taking a trip by plane. It explains the type of help available to you to make your trip problem free.

If you have a learning disability the airport and airline will help you if you ask. Airport and airline staff are trained to help you. There is no charge for their help.

Staff can:

- Help carry and check in your bags.
- Help guide you through the airport.
- Provide a wheelchair if you cannot walk long distances.
- Help you get on and off the plane if you find climbing stairs difficult.

1 Asking for help



If you need help to travel by plane, tell the airline when you book your flight. If you book with a travel agent, tell the travel agent.

You can ask for help on the airline website.



If you prefer, you can ask the airline for help by telephone or you can send the airline an email.

If you need help, tell the airline at least 2 days before your flight leaves. It is best to tell the airline when you book your ticket.



If you forget to ask for help before you travel, don't worry. You can ask for help at the airport assistance desk when you arrive at the airport.

2 Mobility equipment



If you are a wheelchair user, tell the airline at least 2 days before you travel.

You can bring your wheelchair with you. There is no charge for this.

If your mobility equipment is very heavy, airline staff might have to take it apart to load it onto the plane. If this happens, staff will put the equipment back together when the plane lands.

Your wheelchair will not be allowed in the passenger cabin of the plane.

If you need a wheelchair to get to the toilet when you are on the plane, ask if the airline will provide one.



3 What to do before you fly



Make sure you have your passport and ticket ready.



The airline may allow you to use a different form of identification instead of your passport. Ask the airline if you have any questions about the type of identification you are allowed to use.



If you cannot fasten and unfasten your seatbelt by yourself, the airline might ask you to travel with a friend or carer who can help you during the flight.



If you need a particular type of seat on the plane because of your disability, tell the airline. For example, you may need a seat with extra legroom.

4 Getting your luggage ready

There are 2 types of luggage, hand luggage and check in luggage.



Hand luggage. This is the bag you are allowed to carry on to the plane. In your hand luggage you should keep your passport, your ticket and any medication you need while you are on the plane.



Measure your bags to make sure they are not too big. You can use a tape measure to do this.



Check in luggage. These are the bags staff put on the plane away from where you sit. They are usually bigger bags that hold things like clothes and shoes.

- Ask the airline how many hand luggage bags and how many check in luggage bags you are allowed to bring.
- Ask how big and how heavy your hand luggage and check in luggage is allowed to be.



Weigh your bags to make sure they are not too heavy. You can use bathroom scales to do this.



What to pack in your hand luggage



You can carry makeup, toiletries or sun cream in your hand luggage but each item must be in a container no bigger than 100ml. All the items must fit into one small, clear bag.



If you have medication in your hand luggage, bring a letter from your doctor saying that you need it.

You should also tell the airline and airport that you will be bringing medication in your hand luggage.



Do not pack any sharp items in your hand luggage.



What to pack in your check in luggage



You can put any amount of liquids into your check in luggage.



If you need to carry sharp items, these can go in your check in luggage.

5 Arriving at the Airport



You should arrive at least 2 hours before the plane takes off.



Go to the help point to tell the airport staff you have arrived



Staff will meet you and help you move to the check in desk.

Staff will carry your bags if they are too heavy for you.

6 Check in



Check in is where people working for the airline check your passport and ticket.

The check in staff will take your check in luggage so it can be put on the plane.



Give your passport and ticket to the check in staff. The staff will check them and will give them back to you.

The check in staff will ask you to answer some security questions.



Your check in luggage will be put on a conveyor belt next to the check in desk. The luggage will be weighed and sent to the plane.

Airport staff can help lift your check in luggage onto the conveyer belt.



If you are a wheelchair user you might be allowed to stay with your wheelchair until you get on the plane.

However, your wheelchair may need to be taken by staff at check in. If this happens, you will be given an airport wheelchair to use until you get on the plane.

7 Security



Staff will help you get to the security area.



- You will be asked to put your hand luggage through the security scanner. This will not take long and you will be able to see your luggage come out the other side.



- If you have liquids in your hand luggage take out the clear bag holding the liquids. Place the clear bag onto one of the plastic trays which will be available and put it through the scanner on its own.



- Take any electrical items such as your mobile phone or laptop out of your hand luggage. Put these through the scanner.



- Be prepared to take off your coat, shoes and belt. You may be asked by staff to put these through the scanner too.



- Be prepared for your hand luggage to be searched by security staff.



- You will be asked to walk through the metal detector archway.
- You may need to have a pat down search from security staff.

If you prefer, you can ask for your security search to be carried out in a private room.

8 Departure Lounge



While you wait to get on the plane you can go to the shops, a café or a restaurant.

You can ask for a staff member to come back and meet you when it is time to get on the plane.



Assistance staff will help you get to the toilet.

However, if you need help to use the toilet, a friend or carer will need to travel with you.



Listen carefully to all announcements by staff and check the information screens.



The information screens will tell you which departure gate to go to when it is time to get on your plane.



If you cannot read the information screens or cannot hear announcements ask a staff member to tell you when it is time to get on the plane.

The staff member can also let you know if the flight is delayed or cancelled.

9 Getting on the Plane



If you have a learning disability you may be asked to get on the plane first.



If you are a wheelchair user or if you have trouble climbing stairs, a special lift will be used to help you get on the plane.



If you cannot walk to your seat, assistance staff will have a special wheelchair which can be used on the plane.

The airline staff will help you put your hand luggage in the overhead locker.

10 On the Plane



If you need help to get to the toilet, the airline staff will help you. However, if you need help to use the toilet, a friend or carer will need to travel with you.

If you need a wheelchair when you are on the plane to get to the toilet, tell the airline before you book your ticket.



The airline staff will tell you what to do in case there is an emergency.



If you need help to eat or take medicine when you are on the plane, a friend or carer will need to travel with you.

11 Getting Off the Plane



When the plane lands, staff will help you get off the plane.

If you are a wheelchair user, your own wheelchair should be available when you leave the plane.



If you are getting onto another flight at the airport, the staff will take you to the next plane.

12 Leaving the Airport



The staff at the airport will:

- Help you move through passport control.



- Help you move through customs.



- Help you collect your luggage.



- Help you get to the toilet.



If you need to get a bus or train, the staff will take you to the airport bus stop or train station.



If you need to get to the car park, the staff will help you get to the car park.



Remember, if you are unsure about anything, ask a member of staff for help.

13 Assistance Dogs



If you have an assistance dog, make sure you have the correct identification documents for it.

There is no charge for your assistance dog.

If you have any questions ask the airline.

14 Complaints

If you are not happy with the help you are given, contact the Consumer Council. We can speak to the airline or airport to sort the problem out.

Our telephone number is 0800 121 6022 and it's free to call.

You can also contact us by email. Our email address is: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk



The Consumer Council

Notes

Notes



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