

## Tips For Flying For A Person With A Disability

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Flying is a common way to see the world and get to where you need to go. Flights are fairly simple to book but it's necessary to make sure your needs are met at the airport and during the flight to make the experience more enjoyable. Often times you'll have to explain multiple times what your needs are and the purpose of any assistive devices that you use.



### Prior to flying

- Book your flight (and arrange for a place to stay!).
- Do research on what an airport can provide for you: read the airline's policy for special accommodations.
- Understand your rights before you travel. Read about the Air Carriers Access Act here: [www.disabilitytravel.com/airlines/air\\_carrier\\_act.htm](http://www.disabilitytravel.com/airlines/air_carrier_act.htm)
- If you need special seating or other assistance, call and let them know. Airlines have a computer system that will record your needs.
- If you are taking an international flight talk to the airline about the accommodations/assistance you need. Sometimes there is paperwork that needs to be completed before you travel. Be sure to write down what you and the airline staff discuss and agree on.
- Decide how you want to bring your assistive devices with you. Some large equipment, like power wheelchairs, may need to be taken apart, while a breathing device may need to be kept with you. If you need specific assistance from airport staff, write it down.
- Service animals are allowed on all planes with their owner! Let the airline know in advance if you will be bringing a service animal with you.



- You can check in online 24 hours before a flight, and print your boarding pass beforehand. If you do that in advance of arriving at the airport, it makes check-in much easier.
- Weigh your bags beforehand, to make sure they're not over 50 pounds. If they are over 50 pounds you will have to pay extra fees.
- Get to the airport early; getting through security, boarding the plane or meeting your needs

in other ways, may take longer than it does for other passengers.

#### **At the airport**

- Find the check in line for your airline and get to it!
- Get your bags checked.
- If someone is dropping you off at the airport and you are flying alone, but you'd like them to help you, you can request a gate pass for your companion which will allow them to go with you to your gate.
- Let the airline agent know what you need for assistance.
- Ask to have assistive equipment, that you don't need while flying, to be gate checked. For example, if you are using a wheelchair, after you board the plane, the wheelchair will be taken by the crew to be stored in the luggage compartment of the plane. When you arrive at your destination, the airline crew will bring your wheelchair so you can exit the plane.
- Airline staff will provide people to escort you through to your gate if needed
- When you get ready to go to the security line, you'll need to make sure people can see you, so the agents can get you through security.
- Most people have to take off their shoes and remove metal objects, but if you can't do so, let the security officers know.
- The security officers may need to pat you down. If this makes you feel uncomfortable, or you are asked to do something that you cannot do, let them know.



- It may take extra time to get through the security line, so it's a good idea to have someone get your bags for you.
- When you get through security, head to your gate, and let the gate agent know what you need. If you need your assistive devices gate checked and/or if you need any assistance on the plane let the gate agent know. You will likely be repeating your needs several times through this process.
- Stay visible, so the people at the gate can let you know when it's time to board the plane. Passengers with disabilities are usually boarded early, so be ready.
- Be sure to tell the flight staff how to help you in an emergency.
- Have fun!

