

Doc 9984



# Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities

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Approved by the Secretary General  
and published under his authority

First Edition — 2013

International Civil Aviation Organization



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## FOREWORD

Persons with disabilities make up a significant and growing percentage of the world's population and constitute the world's largest minority. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that this number is increasing through population growth, medical advances and the ageing process.

Aviation, like all other transport modes, needs to recognise and accommodate this growing passenger segment. Persons with disabilities have the same international rights as other citizens, such as accessibility, and full and effective participation and inclusion in society, including freedom of movement and freedom of choice (United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, articles 3.c and 3.f). Persons with disabilities should have equivalent access to air travel.

These international rights apply to air travel as to all areas of life. There have been many changes in the provision of accessible facilities and services to persons with disabilities in air transportation worldwide, and this trend requires renewed attention at an international level.

In keeping with the general obligations of States under the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, to promote universal design, to provide accessible information, and to promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities (article 4, paragraph 1, f, h, and i), this manual provides general guidance on services and features needed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities in air transportation. The guidance material in this manual was created by the Facilitation Panel's Working Group on Persons with Disabilities for the purpose of elaborating on the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices in Annex 9 — *Facilitation* and assisting the civil aviation community in their implementation.

This manual should be read in conjunction with other key documents in this field, which provide more detailed guidance, and the legal frameworks which apply to various jurisdictions.



## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACI	Airports Council International
IATA	International Air Transport Association
TTY	Telephone typewriter device
WHO	World Health Organization

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## DEFINITIONS

**Person with disabilities.** Any person whose mobility is reduced due to a physical incapacity (sensory or locomotor), an intellectual deficiency, age, illness or any other cause of disability when using transport and whose situation needs special attention and the adaptation to the person's needs of the services made available to all passengers.

**Aircraft operator.** A person, organization or enterprise engaged in or offering to engage in an aircraft operation. For the purposes of this manual, the term also includes operators operating under code sharing and wet-leasing arrangements.

**Service animals.** Animals, normally being dogs or other animals, specified in national regulations, for the purpose of accompanying persons with disabilities with the objective of providing them with physical or/and emotional support, being under the control of the person with disabilities and provided that their presence on board an aircraft:

- a) does not endanger the safety of flight operations;
- b) is not reasonably considered as a threat to other passengers; and
- c) does not cause health concerns related to hygiene.

Member States should encourage aircraft and airport operators and travel agents to use common definitions for different categories of persons with disabilities. Such entities should follow the standard system of classification and codification developed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) for this purpose, as amended from time to time.





# **Chapter 1**

## **GENERAL ISSUES**

### **ACCESSIBLE AIR TRAVEL**

1.1 All procedures forming part of an air travel journey, including reservations, check-in, immigration and customs, security clearances, transfers within airports, embarkation and disembarkation, departure, carriage and arrival should be adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities in order to facilitate the clearance and air transportation of such persons in a dignified manner.

1.2 In some instances, the aircraft operator with whom the passenger enters into a contract of carriage may be a separate entity from the actual aircraft operator. Aircraft operators should ensure, as far as possible, that the services that they provide to persons with disabilities are also provided by the operator that operates their flights.

### **CONSULTATIONS WITH ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

1.3 Airport and aircraft operators should consult with organizations that represent persons with disabilities when developing services and training programmes and when designing facilities and equipment to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to air transportation. Airport and aircraft operators should consider involving organizations that represent persons with disabilities in evaluating services, training programmes, facilities and equipment.

### **SEAMLESS SERVICE**

1.4 The service provided at the request of persons with disabilities should be professional and “seamless”, that is, with no points at which such persons may be left stranded or without assistance.

1.5 Seamless is a concept that includes a comfortable, safe and uninterrupted journey, with the provision of assistance that is adapted to the needs of each individual person with disabilities.

### **NO REFUSAL OF CARRIAGE EXCEPT FOR SAFETY REASONS**

1.6 Aircraft operators should not refuse to transport persons with disabilities on the basis of their disabilities except for safety requirements.

### **NO CHARGE FOR ASSISTANCE**

- 1.7 Assistance to meet disability-related needs should be provided without charge to persons with disabilities.

### **SERVICE LEVEL TARGETS**

- 1.8 This manual presents the minimum recommended service level targets that Member States should meet, and urges them to exceed these service level targets wherever possible.

- 1.8.1 Recommended service level targets should be set for each request for assistance. These should be mutually agreed on by airport and aircraft operators, as well as by all other stakeholders. Organizations representing persons with disabilities should be consulted in the development of these service level targets which should be included in contractual arrangements.

### **ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1.9 Some States' legislation and regulations assign responsibilities for providing accessible services at airports to airport operators, while others assign them to aircraft operators. Further references in the manual to airport and aircraft operators should be read in that context.
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## **Chapter 2**

# **TRAINING**

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

2.1 Training for all staff in the chain of the air travel service delivery is vital for providing quality service to persons with disabilities in a consistent and respectful manner. It is essential that staff know their responsibilities and are able to perform them. Training should address the attitudinal, environmental/physical and organizational barriers that affect persons with disabilities in air transportation. Training should prepare staff to provide assistance to persons with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity, and as a professional service to which the person is entitled, rather than as a favour or compassionate gesture.

### **WHO SHOULD BE TRAINED?**

2.2 Training should be provided to airport and aircraft operator personnel, including contracted personnel, who provide assistance to the travelling public, including persons with disabilities.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

2.3 Organizations that represent persons with disabilities should be consulted regarding the content of training programmes. Airport and aircraft operators should consider involving those organizations in evaluating the content of their training programmes and, where possible, in the training itself.

2.4 Training should include an understanding of disabilities and their diversity, and help staff develop an awareness of and appropriate responses to persons with disabilities.

2.5 Training should cover:

- a) physical, sensory, hidden and learning disabilities;
- b) mental health problems;
- c) cognitive impairments;
- d) persons who use mobility aids;
- e) persons with walking difficulties or limitations in balance, agility or coordination that affect their mobility;
- f) persons who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- g) persons who are blind or partially sighted;

- h) persons who are deafblind;
  - i) persons with impaired speech;
  - j) persons who require assistants and the roles of assistants; and
  - k) persons travelling with a service animal, and the role and needs of that animal.
- 2.6 Employees and contractors should be trained in the policies and procedures of the airport or aircraft operator concerning persons with disabilities, and the legal obligations that exist in national and international legislation and regulations.
- 2.7 The content of the training should be appropriate to the duties of the person being trained.
- 2.8 Training on how to seek and record accommodation needs and information from persons with disabilities should be provided to booking agents.
- 2.9 Training should be provided on communication, including on how to ask what assistance persons with disabilities need, and how best to provide it, for example, how to guide and orient a person who is blind.
- 2.10 Employees and contractors should be trained how to recognize requests for communication accommodation from persons with hearing and/or visual impairments and how to respond, such as providing information in an appropriate format, as well as receiving information from persons with disabilities transmitted via their communication aids or devices.
- 2.11 Employees and contractors should be trained how to communicate directly with persons with disabilities, who are in the best position to explain their needs, rather than with a companion, assistant or interpreter.
- 2.12 Employees and contractors who provide physical assistance should be trained to always ask persons with disabilities what kind of assistance they need, and seek feedback to ensure they are providing appropriate assistance.
- 2.13 In addition to general training, aircraft and airport operators should ensure that they train their employees and contractors who are required to handle different types of mobility aids. They should be required to be familiar with procedures for securing, carrying and stowing mobility aids, including methods of dismantling, packing, unpacking and assembling these aids, if deemed necessary, under safety, security, or hazardous material requirements.
- 2.14 Employees and contractors who provide physical assistance should be trained in assisting persons with mobility aids through doors and on irregular and multi-level surfaces, steps, curbs and elevators.
- 2.15 Training should be provided on transferring persons with disabilities from their own mobility aids to mobility aids provided by the aircraft or airport operator, and from such mobility aids to passenger seats. Training should include instructions on lift techniques, asking persons with disabilities about their preferred method of transfer, and performing the lifting with maximum consideration for the dignity, safety and comfort of the persons with disabilities and avoiding injury to employees.
- 2.16 Training should be provided on the proper and safe operation of equipment used to accommodate persons with disabilities, including boarding and disembarking assistance equipment and how to ensure the safety and dignity of passengers.
- 2.17 Cabin crew training should be geared towards familiarizing persons with disabilities with their immediate environment and possible hazards within the cabin, and assisting them in the competent use of the facilities that are provided.

2.18 Training programmes and emergency procedures should include special provisions related to the evacuation of persons with disabilities.

#### **INITIAL TRAINING**

2.19 Aircraft and airport operators should ensure that employees and contractors complete initial training before commencing their duties.

2.20 Staff should be trained to an advanced skill level that allows them to accomplish their duties, and adeptly, respectfully and effectively provide the necessary services the first time.

#### **REFRESHER TRAINING**

2.21 Aircraft and airport operators should provide refresher training periodically and/or when appropriate, for example, annually or every two years. Any feedback from passengers that signals necessary improvements should be incorporated into training programmes.

2.22 Routine ongoing training should be provided by way of information on new equipment, policies and procedures, and the related implications on the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, as these are introduced or implemented.

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## Chapter 3

### PRE-JOURNEY

#### COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION ON SERVICES AND FACILITIES

3.1 Member States should publish, or encourage aircraft and airport operators or interested organizations to publish, general information or guidance material relating to air travel by persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities, such as electronic, web-based, large-print and audio, in a timely manner and without additional cost.

3.1.1 Web-based material and internet bookings should be accessible to persons with disabilities in accordance with international web accessibility standards found at [www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility](http://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility).

3.2 Aircraft and airport operators, ground handling operators, and travel agents should take necessary measures to inform those persons with disabilities planning to travel or in the course of travel of the availability of accessible services and of how to access them, whether or not the information is specifically requested.

3.3 Information about the following should be made available to the public by airport and aircraft operators as applicable:

- a) hours of operation;
- b) location of designated parking areas;
- c) location of drop-off and pick-up areas;
- d) telephone numbers for accessibility information;
- e) wheelchair or electric cart services;
- f) location of relieving areas for service animals;
- g) accessible inter-terminal transportation;
- h) accessible ground transportation;
- i) passes for non-travelling companions;
- j) complaint resolution services;
- k) advance notice requirements;
- l) check-in and flight departure times;
- m) requirements for the carriage of mobility aids, e.g. size; and

n) types of services available at the airport and in flight, including available boarding equipment.

3.4 Aircraft and airport operators should ensure that they have the means to facilitate communication with travellers who have cognitive or sensory disabilities (e.g. deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or with low vision) and they should describe such means in the public information referred to in 3.1 to 3.3, in accessible formats.

3.5 Aircraft and airport operators and travel agents should integrate information for persons with disabilities into their general product literature and information available online or in advertising.

## RESERVATION ASSISTANCE

3.6 Travel agents, tour operators and aircraft operator employees or contractors should actively enquire during booking transactions whether there will be anyone in the party who may require assistance at the airport and/or in flight. For bookings made online, there should be a place where the required assistance can be noted. If this is not possible and can only be done by telephone, a toll-free telephone number should be provided.

3.7 When a reservation for a person with disabilities is being made, and such disability and the assistance required is made known to the aircraft operator, the latter should provide information to the person with disabilities on the assistance that it is required to provide, and the accessibility features of the aircraft or service limitations, whether or not such information is specifically requested.

3.8 Aircraft operators should request the dimensions of any mobility aids at the time of booking to ensure that they cannot carry a mobility aid, or if a mobility equipment requires special handling (e.g. a powered wheelchair that requires the battery to be isolated), such information is communicated as soon as possible to passengers, in order for them to make alternative arrangements, if needed.

3.9 If a change in aircraft before a flight's departure results in the aircraft operator not being able to accommodate a passenger's wheelchair in the cargo hold, the aircraft operator should offer the passenger alternative transportation at a different time or refund the fare where there is no alternative.

3.10 Agents should advise passengers on the limits of an aircraft operator's liability regarding the carriage of mobility aids, so that persons with disabilities can consider taking out their own insurance. Agents should also advise passengers of the current status of safety, security, and hazardous material restrictions, as these could impact on the carriage of medical devices or mobility aids.

## ADVANCE NOTICE

3.11 Persons with disabilities requesting special assistance should be encouraged to inform the aircraft operator or travel agent of their needs at the time of booking of a flight or as early as possible in advance of the flight.

3.11.1 Aircraft operators and travel agents should ensure that the information they receive from travellers with disabilities regarding their disability-related needs is communicated to the departments, teams and organizations that will deliver the relevant assistance, such as airport operators and ground handling companies.

3.12 Aircraft and airport operators should ensure that services are provided to persons with disabilities as long as a request is made at least 48 hours prior to departure.



3.13 Persons with disabilities who wish to travel on short notice should not be prevented from travelling if they are unable to provide advance notice. Aircraft and airport operators should make all reasonable efforts to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities who do not provide advance notice of 48 hours.

### **SELF-IDENTIFICATION**

3.14 Persons with disabilities should not be required to identify themselves when they do not require disability-related services. However, when persons with disabilities do require such services, or when required for safety purposes, it is important that they identify their needs to the aircraft or airport operator.

3.15 Aircraft and airport operators should promote the services available to persons with disabilities and the advantages of persons identifying their needs in advance of travel.

### **TRAVELLING WITH AN ASSISTANT**

3.16 Aircraft operators should accept the self-assessment persons with disabilities as to whether they are able to travel independently and attend to their own needs on board an aircraft. However, in some circumstances, for reasons of safety, an aircraft operator may determine that it is necessary for a person with disabilities to travel with an assistant (e.g. to understand and respond to safety briefings when no alternate forms of communication can accomplish this, or to assist in an emergency evacuation).

3.17 As aircraft operators do not provide personal care (e.g. assistance in the washroom or with eating), some persons with disabilities who require such care will need to travel with an assistant who can provide personal care during the flight. However, an aircraft operator's concern that a person with disabilities may need personal care should not be reason enough for it to impose a requirement to travel with an assistant; rather, a person's self-assessment of his or her personal care needs should be accepted.

3.18 Consideration should be given to offering discounted rates or a free seat to assistants.

3.19 An assistant travelling with a person with disabilities should be seated with that person.

### **SEAT RESERVATIONS — GENERAL**

3.20 Aircraft operators should have seats that are designated as accessible for persons with disabilities. Aircraft operators may choose to block these seats until close to the time of departure and should ensure that they are the last seats assigned to other passengers. Seats should be reassigned, if necessary, to ensure that persons with disabilities have appropriate seating. Aircraft operators that charge for advanced seat selection should waive the charge for a persons with disabilities in order that the latter may select the seat that best meets his or her needs.

3.20.1 Aircraft operators are encouraged to provide persons with disabilities alternative seating, if available, where this can better meet their needs.

3.21 When a person identifies the nature of his or her disability, the aircraft operator should, before assigning that passenger a seat, inform the passenger of those available seats that are most accessible and then establish with that passenger an appropriate seat assignment (e.g. movable armrests, additional legroom, near washroom, adjacent seating for the person with disabilities and the assistant), subject to safety regulations. Where seats are not allocated in advance, the person should be able to pre-board and choose the seat which best meets his or her needs, if available, subject to safety regulations.

### **SEAT RESERVATIONS FOR PERSONS TRAVELLING WITH SERVICE ANIMALS**

3.22 Where the use of a service animal is required by a person with disabilities, aircraft operators should provide seating with sufficient space so that the animal can remain on the floor at the passenger's seat in accordance with applicable safety regulations.

3.23 Aircraft operators should not impose charges for transporting service animals.

3.24 Aircraft operators should have a dialogue with a person with disabilities in advance of a flight to help determine the amount of space required to ensure that the person in question and his or her service animal can travel safely and without discomfort.

3.24.1 For more information on the carriage of service animals please refer to section 8.10.

### **TRANSMISSION OF RESERVATION CONFIRMATION**

3.25 Whenever possible, aircraft operators should indicate in the record of a person's reservation, the disability-related services that they will provide to that person, and provide a written confirmation of such services.

3.26 Aircraft operators should ensure that instructions relating to special assistance requests by persons with disabilities, such as those regarding mobility aids, are passed on to the cabin crew, gate agents, ground personnel and others, as appropriate, with any other special instructions. They should also transmit, to the appropriate personnel assisting the person requiring the services mentioned above, a list of the services that they have undertaken to provide to that person at the time of reservation. When medical information is provided to the aircraft operator, the passenger should be advised that this data will be transmitted to personnel who need this information in order to provide the relevant services.

3.27 When an aircraft operator, its agent(s) or tour operator(s) receive a notification of a need for assistance, they should transmit the information as soon as possible to the departments, teams and organizations that will deliver the assistance (e.g. aircraft and airport operators and ground handling companies). The information should be transmitted as soon as practicable if the identity of the aircraft operator is not known at the time of notification.

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## **Chapter 4**

### **ARRIVAL AND MOVING THROUGH AN AIRPORT**

#### **TIMELY SERVICE**

4.1 Aircraft and airport operators should ensure that assistance to persons with disabilities is provided in a timely manner such that they are able to take the flights for which they have reservations.

#### **USE OF FACILITIES**

4.2 Aircraft and airport operators should provide assistance to persons with disabilities in the use of airport facilities, such as assistance in getting to and from washrooms and using automated kiosks, subject to sufficient time being available.

#### **INFORMATION DESKS**

4.3 Information desks should be accessible to all persons with disabilities, for example, those who use a mobility aid such as a wheelchair, or who have a visual, auditory, dexterity, or speech impairment. Information desk staff should be provided with the training required for handling requests for information from persons with disabilities with efficiency and sensitivity.

#### **CHECK-IN SERVICES**

4.4 Airport and aircraft operators should ensure that automated check-in machines or kiosks under their control are accessible and identified with the universal symbol of accessibility. If the machines and kiosks cannot be made accessible, then an equivalent level of service should be provided to those persons who are unable to use them independently.

4.5 Airport and aircraft operators should provide assistance to persons with disabilities at check-in counters. Check-in staff should be given appropriate training to handle requests from, and respond to the needs of, persons with disabilities, such as by assigning appropriate seating.

#### **AVAILABILITY OF WHEELCHAIRS**

4.6 Airport and aircraft operators should provide wheelchairs, upon request, at airports to persons with disabilities to ensure seamless transportation from their arrival at an airport to the time of boarding an aircraft, and from the point of disembarkation to their exit from an airport. Adequate information should be available to passengers about the availability of wheelchairs, and whether the airport or aircraft operator needs advance notification to provide

wheelchair service. Passengers should be able to remain in their personal wheelchair up to the departure gate and receive it upon disembarking wherever this is possible.

### **BAGGAGE ASSISTANCE**

4.7 Airport and aircraft operators should provide assistance with baggage to persons with disabilities when requested during check-in, security, customs, immigration and boarding.

### **SEATING**

4.8 Airport or aircraft operators should provide persons with disabilities with seating in passenger service areas under their control where there may be long waiting lines or times, including at ticket sales counters, check-in counters, security screening points, customs areas, and baggage retrieval areas. Seating should not be placed where it blocks evacuation routes.

### **LEAVING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES UNATTENDED**

4.9 When a person using a wheelchair who is not independently mobile must await assistance with boarding or disembarking, the airport or aircraft operator staff, as appropriate, should be in frequent (e.g. every 30 minutes) contact with the person to advise them of the status of the request for assistance and to enquire about the person's needs.

### **REVIEW OF PROCESSES**

4.10 Airport and aircraft operators should ensure that they continually review their processes related to the provision of services to persons with disabilities so that services are consistently improved and take account of new practices and technologies. Feedback from persons with disabilities should be sought to help inform this review.

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## Chapter 5

### AIRPORT FACILITIES

#### CONSULTATIONS IN PLANNING STAGES

5.1 Airport operators should ensure that, from the first phase of planning, any plans for new construction and renovation of airport facilities open to the public meet accessibility standards for persons with disabilities. Airport operators should seek the advice of experts on accessible and universal building design. In general, airport operators should refer to the relevant manuals of ICAO (e.g. *Airport Planning Manual (Doc 9184), Part 1, Master Planning*) and Airports Council International (ACI) for guidance on the building and planning requirements which will help to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

#### ACCESSIBLE ROUTES AND PASSAGEWAYS

5.2 Passenger walkways, including crossings to terminal buildings, should be accessible to persons with disabilities.

5.3 Routes of travel for boarding and disembarking aircraft should be accessible to persons with disabilities.

5.4 All areas in terminal buildings that are open to the travelling public should include facilities designed in such a way that persons with disabilities can reach and use them without difficulty, in particular:

- a) washrooms;
- b) restaurants;
- c) shops;
- d) business lounges;
- e) communication equipment;
- f) information and check-in counters;
- g) drop-off and pick-up areas; and
- h) exterior paths of travel, such as in parking areas.

5.5 Airport operators should ensure that new barriers are not created along accessible routes. Accessible paths of travel should be checked on a regular basis and any obstructions should be removed.

5.6 Systems of intra- and inter-terminal transportation (e.g. moving walkways) should comply with national legislation on accessibility standards.

## WAYFINDING

5.7 Airport operators should incorporate wayfinding methods that are appropriate for persons with disabilities.

5.7.1 Examples of wayfinding methods include visual contrast, detectable (e.g. tactile) patterns on floors and walls to indicate direction, arrangement of architectural features such as walls and columns, etc.

## SIGNAGE

5.8 Facilities which are reserved or designed for persons with disabilities should have appropriate signage in accordance with internationally-agreed standards. All other signs should take account of the needs of persons with disabilities.

5.9 Airport operators should ensure that when persons with disabilities arrive at an airport, signage is clear and enables them to find their way easily within the airport.

5.10 Airport operators should ensure that tactile symbols are included in signs used for: washrooms, emergency exits, elevators, stairwells, doors or passageways off main corridors, designated seating areas, service animal relief areas, and gate and departure area numbers. Signs should have letters, symbols or pictograms that are glare-free, in high contrasting colours and of a universal font and size. Letters should be sans serif and numbers should be Arabic. Signs should be supplemented by Braille where possible. Illuminated signs should not use red text on a dark background. Signs should be placed so that they can easily be seen by persons with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs.

## AUTOMATED KIOSKS

5.11 Airport and aircraft operators should ensure that automated kiosks are accessible and identified with the universal symbol of accessibility. Automated kiosks include those that provide travel-related services such as confirming check-in, verifying photograph identification, allowing seat selection, and dispensing boarding passes, baggage tags, and parking passes. If kiosks cannot be made accessible, then an equivalent level of service should be provided to those persons who are unable to use them independently.

## ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

5.12 Some or all flight information systems should be installed at eye level.

5.13 Airport operators should ensure that communications systems for use by the general public (such as telephones, internet terminals, and mobile device recharging stations) are also accessible to persons with disabilities.

5.14 Airport operators should ensure that both landside and airside public telephones (e.g. in arrival and departure areas, at boarding gates and in baggage claim areas) are accessible to persons with disabilities and such persons can use the machines independently. For example, people who are Deaf or hearing-impaired use telephone typewriter devices (TTYs) or require communication equipment to be compatible with hearing aids and, for those who do not have hearing aids, volume controls and some kind of visual indication that their requests for assistance have been received should be in place.

5.15 Accessible telecommunications systems should be clearly identified using the universal symbol of accessibility or the identification sign for TTYs.

### **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

5.16 Airport and aircraft operators should ensure that public announcements concerning delays, schedule changes, gate changes, connections and baggage claims are made both verbally and visually.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE MONITORS**

5.17 Airport operators should install some monitors at eye level (1.5 m above the floor +/- 25 mm) in each area where monitors are used. Monitors installed above eye level should be placed so that they can be easily seen by persons with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs. Information screens should be visible from seating areas which are designated for persons with disabilities. Monitors should be positioned to avoid glare.

5.18 Information displayed on monitors should be in plain language that is easy to read and should avoid the use of acronyms.

5.19 If monitors or other electronic signs are used, good colour contrast should be provided, such as a light colour on a dark background, which is preferable. Red lettering on a black background should not be used. Scrolling, flashing or dot matrix texts also create accessibility barriers for some users and should be avoided where possible.

### **SEATING AREAS**

5.20 Airport operators should provide specially designated seating along circulation paths at regular intervals, for example, in long corridors or passages to boarding areas where possible. Seating should not be placed where it blocks evacuation routes.

5.21 Airport operators should provide persons with disabilities with seating in passenger service areas where there may be long waiting lines or times, including at ticket sales counters, check-in counters, security screening points, customs areas, and baggage retrieval areas.

5.22 Designated seating should be available for persons with disabilities at boarding gates and departure areas within viewing distance of communication boards and within hearing range of audio announcements. Such seating areas should be identified by the universal symbol of accessibility, and shelter should be provided if this seating is outdoors. However, airport and aircraft operators should not require persons with disabilities to remain in designated seating areas in order to receive accommodations or to have access to information that is provided to other passengers.

5.23 Aircraft and airport operator staff should provide regular updates to persons with disabilities who self-identify on the status of their flights and enquire about their needs. This is particularly important for visually impaired passengers who cannot read customer information screens.

### RELIEVING AREAS FOR SERVICE ANIMALS

5.24 Airport operators should ensure that there is an area available for service animals to relieve themselves, whether designated or not. Airport and aircraft operators, as applicable, should ensure that staff and volunteers are made aware of the relieving areas so that they know how to facilitate access for travellers to the relieving area and on to their connecting flights. There should be accessible paths of travel between terminals and suitable relieving areas.

5.25 Where possible, persons travelling with service animals should have access to a relieving area within secured areas for use between connections. If this is not possible, a relieving area that can be easily accessed from secured areas should be provided to minimize the time required to relieve a service animal.

*Note.— Service animals may have different preferences for surfaces for relieving themselves. Generally, gravel or grass works well in a relieving area, as not all animals will relieve themselves on hard surfaces such as concrete. Ideally, relieving areas should provide more than one surface.*

5.26 Other considerations for relieving areas include the provision of the following: a fenced-in area located away from high traffic areas; plastic bags for clean-up and a garbage can or other container for the hygienic disposal of waste; and a water source to facilitate the cleaning of the area by staff. Signage should be provided that reminds users to clean up after their animals.

### MAINTENANCE OF ACCESSIBLE FEATURES AND EQUIPMENT

5.27 Airport and aircraft operators, if they own, lease or operate the airport facility, should ensure that accessibility features are maintained in proper working order. If airport operators own and operate boarding devices or equipment, they should be properly maintained.

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## Chapter 6

# SECURITY SCREENING AND BORDER CHECKS

### MAINTAINING DIGNITY

6.1 Immigration, customs and security operational procedures should be adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities in order to facilitate their clearance in a dignified manner.

6.2 Security procedures should be communicated both verbally and visually, as needed, to advise passengers of the following:

- a) when to proceed into a security screening area;
- b) directions for placing cabin baggage and other materials on an X-ray machine conveyor belt;
- c) when to proceed through a security screening device; and
- d) when a security inspection is complete and to continue to the next step.

### SECURITY SCREENING OPTIONS

6.3 Security personnel should offer a physical search in the place of screening using metal detectors, with the option of the search being performed in an area that is not open to public viewing.

### PASSES FOR NON-TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

6.4 If government security regulations allow, airport operators should have a process in place to provide temporary passes to non-travelling companions, so that persons with disabilities can be escorted by a person of their choice, in addition to aircraft operator or terminal staff, through secured areas to boarding gates.



## Chapter 7

# BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING AN AIRCRAFT

### ASSISTANCE WITH BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING

7.1 Assistance for persons with disabilities should be provided by airport and aircraft operator staff trained and qualified to meet their needs, from arrival at an airport terminal until they are seated on board an aircraft, and vice versa, and with the appropriate equipment to assist them.

7.2 Services should include:

- a) assistance with boarding and disembarking an aircraft;
- b) transferring a person with disabilities from the person's own mobility aid to a wheelchair, boarding chair or other mobility aid provided by the airport or aircraft operator;
- c) transferring a person with disabilities from a wheelchair or mobility aid to his or her seat and vice versa;
- d) assistance with stowing and retrieving cabin baggage, including mobility aids and other assistive devices;
- e) assistance with proceeding to baggage retrieval areas, including the completion of immigration and customs procedures;
- f) assistance with retrieving hold baggage if the person with disabilities has difficulty doing so; and
- g) assistance with proceeding to general public areas and, if requested, to the first point of onward connection or to reach a connecting flight.

7.3 Persons with disabilities who self-identify as needing assistance or additional time should be offered the opportunity to separately pre-board (i.e. prior to all other passengers) and disembark (i.e. before or after all other passengers), as this is generally more dignified and less stressful for the person and more efficient for the aircraft operator. Assistance in getting on and off aircraft should be provided promptly to persons with disabilities.

7.4 Aircraft, airport and ground handling operators should cooperate to ensure, where practicable, that persons who use wheelchairs may use their own wheelchairs to move to and from an aircraft door. However, this may not be possible with some powered wheelchairs. For example, it may not be practical to allow an individual to remain in his or her own wheelchair at an airport where wheelchairs have to be carried up and down stairs at a gate, which could potentially place staff at risk of injury.

7.5 Aircraft and airport operators should provide for the timely return of wheelchairs and other mobility aids, as close as possible to the door of an aircraft so that persons with disabilities may use their own equipment to the greatest extent possible, except if there are national security or hazardous material rules to the contrary, or if the person requests otherwise.

7.6 Aircraft and airport operators should ensure that they inquire periodically about the needs of persons who are not independently mobile.

### **LIFTS AND RAMPS**

7.7 Airport and aircraft operators, including airport ground handlers and aircraft operators that self-handle, should ensure that boarding equipment that provides for the safe and dignified boarding and disembarking of persons with disabilities is available for use at their terminals. Airport and aircraft operators should ensure that boarding equipment is properly maintained.

7.8 Aircraft operators should be encouraged to use hand-carrying as a method of boarding and disembarking assistance for persons with disabilities only if all other options have been exhausted, and only if the person with disabilities agrees and the transfer can be done safely.

### **TRANSFER OF MOBILITY AIDS**

7.9 Airport and aircraft operators should ensure that means to securely transfer mobility aids to or from boarding levels in preparation for carriage are available, avoiding, as far as practicable, the hand-carrying of power wheelchairs and other large mobility aids, to minimize the risk of damage to mobility aids and the risk of injury to staff handling such aids.

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## **Chapter 8**

### **AIRCRAFT OPERATORS' SERVICES ON BOARD**

#### **CARRIAGE OF MOBILITY AIDS AND ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

8.1 Mobility aids and assistive devices should be accepted in addition to an aircraft operator's standard baggage allowance for both cabin and hold baggage. Mobility aids and assistive devices should be accepted free of charge.

8.2 Aircraft operators should permit the carriage, where stowage space permits, of manually operated folding wheelchairs and small disability aids in a passenger cabin. Mobility aids should take priority in the cabin over other passengers' cabin baggage.

8.3 If wheelchairs cannot be carried in a passenger cabin, aircraft operators should accept them for carriage in the cargo hold and promptly return them at the passenger's destination.

8.4 Wheelchairs and mobility aids should be the last items to be stowed in an aircraft cargo hold and the first items to be removed.

8.5 Batteries may need to be removed from battery-operated wheelchairs or mobility aids and packaged in accordance with national regulations.

8.6 If it is necessary to disassemble and package a mobility aid, aircraft operators should then unpackage and reassemble the aid and return it as quickly as possible to the person with disabilities. Mobility aids should be returned to passengers in the same condition in which they were received. Aircraft operators should encourage passengers to provide instructions regarding the disassembly and assembly of their mobility aids.

#### **SIGNAGE ON BOARD**

8.7 Signage should be positioned so as to avoid shadows and glare. Characters and symbols presented in contrasting colours (light on dark or dark on light). Letters should be sans serif. Many States have their own standards regarding the height at which signs should be placed and the sizes of characters, symbols and pictographs. If symbols and pictograms are supplemented with Braille, the code should be located under the symbols or pictograms.

#### **SEAT ALLOCATION**

8.8 Persons with disabilities should be assigned seats that meet their needs, subject to safety requirements, for instance a seat with a movable armrest for a passenger who cannot easily transfer over a fixed aisle armrest; a seat that provides additional leg room for a passenger who cannot bend his or her leg; or a seat close to a washroom or exit for a passenger with a mobility impairment. Once seats have been assigned, persons with disabilities should not be moved from the seats that are most appropriate for them, other than for safety reasons. In the event of an equipment change, persons with disabilities should be reassigned to an appropriate seat.

8.9 Aircraft operators should have seats that are designated as accessible for persons with disabilities. Seats should be reassigned, if necessary, to ensure that persons with disabilities have appropriate seating. Aircraft operators may wish to block accessible seats in order to ensure that they are available for persons with disabilities. If a person with disabilities requests a seat with less than 24 hours' notice in advance of the flight, aircraft operators should make a reasonable effort to provide appropriate seating.

### SERVICE ANIMALS

8.10 Guidelines regarding service animals on board include the following:

- a) aircraft operators should not impose charges for transporting service animals;
- b) persons with disabilities and aircraft operators should take the steps necessary to comply with animal health regulations, if any, of the State of arrival, to permit the legal transportation of a service animal to the destination airport. States are encouraged to minimize such restrictions whenever possible to facilitate travel by persons requiring service animals;
- c) if the use of a service animal is required by a person with disabilities, aircraft operators should provide seating with sufficient space so that the animal can remain on the floor at the passenger's seat, in accordance with applicable safety regulations. This may require an extra seat to be provided by the aircraft operator or purchased by the passenger in order for there to be enough floor space for the animal to lie down, without extreme discomfort to the animal or the person with disabilities. The accommodation should ensure that the animal is able to carry out its duties without contravening safety regulations;
- d) in advance of a flight, aircraft operators should determine with persons with disabilities the amount of space required to ensure that they and their service animals can travel safely and without discomfort. The following should be considered when determining the required amount of floor space:
  - 1) a service animal should not have to remain in a "tight curl" for any significant period of time. The space should allow the animal to assume other positions besides curling up, especially on long flights;
  - 2) entry paths of seat rows affect the space available for a service animal to lie down. An entry path for this purpose is measured from the front of the seat cushion to the back of the seat in front, and should be wide enough for the animal to get in and out of the row without having to be squeezed through the space;
  - 3) no part of a service animal should have to extend into an aisle in the way of carts or people walking;
  - 4) sufficient space is required to allow a person with disabilities to sit with his or her legs and feet in a position which will not result in the service animal lying on the person's feet or legs;
  - 5) the person with disabilities should be able to avoid having to place his or her legs over the service animal in a confined space, which may result in injury to the person if the animal is startled or gets up quickly for any reason; and

- 6) an assigned seat for a person with disabilities and a service animal should have the fewest impediments possible under the seat (e.g. electrical boxes, entertainment and safety equipment, footrests, and seat fasteners) to reduce the chance that the animal will become injured or accidentally damage equipment;
- e) if an aircraft is changed at the last minute or if a person with disabilities fails to check in on time, resulting in a change to the pre-assigned seat (which was determined to have enough space for the person and a service animal), aircraft operators should discuss the situation with the person. The person should be offered an opportunity to move with the animal to another seat if the new seat assignment does not provide enough space for the person, their service animal and other passengers to travel safely and without injury or extreme discomfort; and
- f) only if no other alternative for appropriate seating is available on the flight should the aircraft operator discuss other alternatives with the person with disabilities, such as travelling on a later flight with more room.

### **COMMUNICATION OF SAFETY BRIEFINGS AND INFORMATION ON EQUIPMENT FEATURES**

8.11 Aircraft operators should provide individual safety briefings to persons with disabilities, where requested or required, in a manner that meets the passenger's needs. If individual safety briefings are provided, they should be done as discreetly as possible.

8.12 Aircraft operators should ensure that verbal descriptions are provided for information that is presented in a visual format and that verbal information is likewise also presented in a visual format. This will ensure that persons with sensory impairments have equal access to the same information provided to all other passengers. The use of pictures generally meets the needs of persons with learning disabilities.

8.13 Upon request, aircraft operators should provide verbal, written or visual information about the equipment features of an aircraft, such as the location of call buttons and washroom features.

### **ON-BOARD WHEELCHAIRS**

8.14 An aircraft with accessible washroom facilities should be equipped with an on-board wheelchair. An aircraft that is not equipped with accessible washrooms should carry an on-board wheelchair when a person with disabilities requests one, subject to the aircraft having the capacity to stow and restrain such equipment.

8.15 On-board wheelchairs should be designed to permit the easy transfer of an occupant and easy manoeuvring of the wheelchair. On-board wheelchairs should include footrests and armrests that are moveable or removable, an occupant restraint device, and wheel locks or other adequate means to prevent the chair from moving during transfer or turbulence.

### **PERIODIC ENQUIRIES**

8.16 During a flight, aircraft operators should make periodic enquiries concerning the needs of a person with disabilities.

**MOVING THROUGH THE CABIN**

8.17 Aircraft operators should provide assistance to persons with disabilities in moving to and from an aircraft washroom. Such assistance should not include hand-carrying the person.

**SERVICES NOT REQUIRED OF OPERATORS**

8.18 Aircraft operators are not required to provide personal care assistance to persons with disabilities. Examples of personal care assistance include the following:

- a) assistance with eating;
  - b) assistance in a washroom or with elimination functions; and
  - c) provision of medical services, including administration of medication.
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## Chapter 9

### AIRCRAFT

#### ACCESSIBLE AIRCRAFT FEATURES

9.1 Aircraft operators should optimize the level of accessibility of new aircraft and those undergoing refurbishment by choosing design options and features that meet the needs of persons with disabilities, insofar as aircraft type, size and configuration permit, for example:

- a) aircraft should be equipped with an accessible washroom;
- b) signage should be positioned to avoid shadows and glare. Aircraft should have tactile directional signage to assist the movement of vision-impaired passengers around the cabin;
- c) lighting on aircraft, except reading and other lighting under the control of a passenger, should be directed and controlled so as not to create shadows or glare. Lighting should not result in any sharp contrasts in intensity in the cabin;
- d) integrated boarding stairs on an aircraft should have:
  - uniform riser heights and uniform tread depths, and a first step on and a last step off at a height that does not exceed the uniform riser height;
  - tread surfaces that are firm and non-slippery and do not create glare;
  - a contrasting colour strip marking the top outer edge of each step; and handrails on both sides;
- e) handrails should:
  - be sturdy, rounded, smooth and slip-resistant;
  - colour contrasted from their surrounding area;
  - have an exterior diameter that permits easy grasping and not have any obstructions that could break a handhold; and
  - return to the wall or the head and foot of the stairs in a smooth curve;
- f) floor surfaces on an aircraft should be glare-free and slip-resistant;
- g) movable aisle armrests should be installed on at least 50 per cent of the seat rows and should be distributed throughout all classes of service;
- h) aircraft with more than one aisle should have at least one on-board wheelchair that can be moved around the cabin;

- i) an on-board wheelchair should have a design that permits the easy transfer of an occupant and easy manoeuvring of the chair with assistance in the aircraft. It should have footrests, armrests that are movable or removable, a restraint device and wheel locks; and
- j) tactile markers should be installed to indicate rows.

## ACCESSIBLE WASHROOMS

9.2 Where aircraft type, size and configuration permit, at least one washroom should be accessible to persons with disabilities, including tactile signage, colour contrasting and ease of use of handles, faucets and other controls, as set out below.

9.2.1 The following additional features apply to aircraft whose size permits an on-board wheelchair:

- a) *identification*: persons with disabilities should be able to identify the accessible washroom by the universal symbol of accessibility in pictograph and tactile form by or on the door;
- b) *privacy*: persons with disabilities using an on-board wheelchair should be able to use the accessible washroom with privacy;
- c) *doors*: doorways should be wide enough to accommodate a person with disabilities using an on-board wheelchair and there should be enough space outside the door to manoeuvre that wheelchair. Doors should open outwards or sliding doors should be used. Door handles, pulls, latches, locks and other operational devices should be mounted at a height that a person in an on-board wheelchair can easily reach. These devices should be operable with one hand using minimal force and should not require fine finger control, tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist. They should also be colour-contrasted from their surrounding areas;
- d) *toilets*: toilets should be at a height and location that allows a person with disabilities using an on-board wheelchair to make an easy transfer. Toilets should have a flush control that is colour-contrasted from its surrounding area. A person with disabilities should be able to operate the flush control with a closed fist using minimal force, or the flush control should be automatically controlled. Toilets should have a back support if there is no seat lid, and a toilet paper dispenser within reaching distance that does not interfere with the grab bars;
- e) *grab bars*: the accessible washroom should have grab bars that are sturdy and located on the wall behind the toilet, if possible, and on one of the walls beside the toilet. They should be at a height and length such that a person in an on-board wheelchair can easily reach them. Grab bars should be rounded, free of any sharp or abrasive element and slip-resistant. They should as well be colour-contrasted from their surrounding areas or marked with a contrasting colour strip that runs the full length of each bar;
- f) *sinks, faucets and other controls*: the sink should be positioned such that a person using an on-board wheelchair can use it easily. Faucets and other controls should be colour-contrasted from their surrounding area. A person with disabilities should be able to use the faucet with a closed fist using minimal force or the faucet should be automatically controlled;
- g) *accessories*: accessories, such as soap dispensers, towel dispensers and waste receptacles, should be easily useable by a person using an on-board wheelchair. Such accessories should be a different colour than their surrounding areas and identified by tactile signs;

- h) *mirrors*: each mirror should be mounted so that a person using an on-board wheelchair can access it easily; and
- i) *call buttons*: washrooms should have call buttons that are a different colour than their surrounding areas and identified by tactile signs. A call button should be positioned so that a person using an on-board wheelchair can easily access it and operate it with one hand using minimal force, and should not require fine finger control, tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist.

### **STOWAGE SPACE FOR MOBILITY AIDS**

9.3 Guidelines on stowage space for mobility aids include the following:

- a) where there is sufficient space, aircraft operators should carry a passenger-owned, manually-operated folding wheelchair in addition to small aids in the passenger cabin, consistent with safety and security requirements;
  - b) stowage of a passenger's manually-operated wheelchair in the cabin should have priority and should take place when the person using the wheelchair pre-boards; and
  - c) aircraft operators should give priority in the stowage of wheelchairs and other mobility aids in the hold over other baggage and cargo.
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## Chapter 10

### CONNECTIONS AND LEAVING AN AIRPORT

#### LOSS OR DELAY OF OR DAMAGE TO MOBILITY AIDS

10.1 In the case of a lost, damaged, unduly delayed or destroyed mobility aid resulting in the mobility aid not being available to a person with disabilities upon the person's arrival at their destination, airport and aircraft operators should provide a temporary replacement.

10.2 This replacement should be as similar as possible to the person's mobility aid and satisfactory to the person with disabilities, and provided at no extra charge.

10.3 Airport and aircraft operators should have information about local mobility aid providers readily available so that they can make arrangements in the event of loss, damage or undue delay of mobility aids, and to ensure that persons with disabilities can make onward travel arrangements.

10.4 If a mobility aid is damaged during carriage and can be repaired quickly and adequately, aircraft operators should arrange for its repair at no expense to the person with disabilities and return it to the person as soon as possible.

10.5 If a mobility aid is damaged during carriage and cannot be repaired adequately or if a mobility aid is lost and cannot be located, aircraft operators should reimburse the person with disabilities according to applicable conventions. Aircraft operators are encouraged to reimburse the person for the full replacement cost of the aid.

#### BAGGAGE RETRIEVAL

10.6 Airport and aircraft operators should assist persons with disabilities with baggage retrieval if requested to do so.



## **Chapter 11**

### **GROUND TRANSPORTATION**

#### **AVAILABILITY OF ACCESSIBLE GROUND TRANSPORTATION**

11.1 Airport and aircraft operators should ensure that accessible ground handling services are available in landside, terminal and airside areas during operational hours, and also during extended hours when necessitated by irregular operations. Where it is not possible to provide accessible ground transportation, airport and aircraft operators should advise of alternative services available in the community and advise the public how to access these other services. Where there is no ground transportation available, the public should be informed of this fact.

#### **INFORMATION ON AND RESERVATIONS FOR ACCESSIBLE GROUND TRANSPORTATION**

11.2 Airport and aircraft operators, or ground handling operators, as appropriate, should assist passengers in finding a booking service that allows persons with disabilities to specify their needs for ground-handling assistance in advance of travel. This information should be accessible, for instance, published in large print or Braille or available in audio or on an accessible website.

#### **GROUND TRANSPORTATION WITHIN AN AIRPORT**

11.3 Airport, aircraft or ground handling operators should provide vehicles or equipment for the transport of persons with disabilities within an airport.

#### **NO EXTRA CHARGES**

11.4 Persons with disabilities should not incur extra charges for accessible ground transportation for transporting service animals, wheelchairs, or other mobility aids.

#### **ACCESSIBLE GROUND TRANSPORTATION TO REMOTE AIRCRAFT STANDS**

11.5 Airport, aircraft or ground handling operators under contract should make available accessible vehicles to transport persons with disabilities between terminals and between a terminal building and a remote aircraft stand when other persons are transported by bus. Such vehicles should be designed and equipped to ensure the safe and dignified transport of persons with disabilities. Personnel operating such vehicles should be trained in the correct and safe procedures for boarding and disembarking. Service animals should be permitted to accompany persons with disabilities in the passenger compartment of a vehicle.

### **ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN AIRPORTS**

11.6 Airport or aircraft operators, as appropriate, should be encouraged to organize means of transport between airports so as to enable persons with disabilities to be transported at the same cost and in the same conditions of comfort and safety as those available to other passengers. Service animals should be permitted to accompany persons with disabilities in the passenger compartment of a vehicle. Ground transportation vehicles should be able to accommodate the sizes of mobility aids commonly used in their State.

### **SIGNAGE**

11.7 Airports operators should provide signage in accordance with internationally-agreed standards, indicating the availability of accessible ground transportation services.

### **ADAPTED RENTAL VEHICLES OR EQUIVALENT SERVICE**

11.8 Airport operators should encourage rental vehicle companies on their premises to make available vehicle rentals with hand controls for persons with disabilities at no additional cost beyond the standard vehicle rental rates.

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## Chapter 12

### COMPLAINTS

12.1 Airport and aircraft operators should:

- a) have processes available for persons with disabilities to make complaints about the level or quality of service;
- b) have specially trained human resources available, whether in person or by telephone, to persons with disabilities to resolve problems in a timely manner at no cost to the passenger;
- c) ensure that the complaints process is accessible to persons with disabilities, who may need assistive technology such as TTYs or similarly effective technologies, and accessible websites;
- d) provide reasonable means for persons with disabilities to file a complaint. Aircraft and airport operators should accept both verbal and written complaints;
- e) inform the public about their complaints procedures in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities; and
- f) promptly inform persons with disabilities that they may file a complaint with the State body that handles such complaints if they are unable to resolve the complaint or become aware that the person is not satisfied with the solution provided.

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## Chapter 13

### MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

13.1 States are encouraged to set up a body or agency responsible for the enforcement of compliance with accessible air transportation standards and guidelines of that State.

13.2 The general responsibility of the enforcement body should be to conduct regular monitoring of service providers to ensure that standards are upheld and improved as needed, and to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are respected.

13.3 States should encourage service providers to establish their own internal performance monitoring systems.

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