

Flying with your Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal

All Air Carriers are legally required to allow both emotional support animals and service animals on flights without charge. However, it is always good to review the requirements for service animals for your particular airline, and whether there are any conditions that need to be met. In addition, some international destinations and Hawaii provide additional qualifications for transportation of any animal.

TSA Checkpoints

Upon arrival at the TSA checkpoint, advise the officer that your animal is a service animal. At that time, you can use the disability or family lane to expedite the screening process. If the passenger and service dog are screened by a metal detector, they can proceed one of three ways:

- (1) The passenger can walk through first with the animal following behind on its leash;
- (2) The animal can walk through first on its leash with the passenger following behind; or
- (3) The passenger and dog can walk through at the same time. If the passenger and the dog walk through at the same time and the metal detector alarms, both the passenger and dog are subject to additional screening, including a thorough pat down.



Airlines

Where does the dog go in the airplane?

When making reservations, a passenger with a disability can request either a bulkhead seat or a seat other than a bulkhead seat. A dog or other service animal may accompany a passenger with a disability to the passenger's assigned seat and remain there as long as the animal does not obstruct the aisle or other areas that must remain unobstructed for safety reasons. If a service animal cannot be accommodated at the seat of the passenger with a disability and if there



is another seat in the same class of service where the passenger and the animal can be accommodated, an airline must offer the passenger the opportunity to move to the other seat with the service animal. Switching seats in the same class of service must be explored as an alternative before requiring that the service animal travel in the cargo compartment. However, if the service animal's behavior in a public setting is inappropriate or disruptive to other passengers or carrier personnel, an airline may refuse

to permit the animal on the flight or offer the passenger alternative accommodations such as accepting the animal for carriage in the cargo hold.

Is it required to give advance notice?

It is not required under the law to provide advance notice if you are traveling with a service animal. However, in order to guarantee your seat assignment, you should be aware that,



depending on whether the carrier provides advance seat assignments and the type of seating method it uses, it may have a policy requiring passengers with a disability (i) to request a particular seat assignment 24 hours in advance of the departure of the flight or (ii) to check in at least an hour before the departure of the flight.

What proof is necessary to prove that the animal is a service or emotional support animal?

For a service animal whose use is not obvious, as with any public accommodation, the airline agent may ask (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. According to DOT regulations, an airline must accept the following as evidence that the animal is indeed a service animal: (1) the credible verbal assurances of a passenger with a disability using the animal, the presence of harnesses or markings on harnesses, tags, or identification cards or other written documentation.

For emotional support animals, the documentation required is different, and most airlines require current documentation (i.e., dated within a year of the date of travel) from a mental-health professional stating that: (1) the passenger has a mental health-related disability; the passenger needs the animal for the mental-health condition; **and** the provider of the letter is a licensed mental-health professional (or a medical doctor) and the passenger is under the individual's professional care. Most airlines have specific forms that are found on their website.

How do you get problems resolved – the Complaints Resolution Official

Each Air Carrier has designated at least one Complaint Resolution Official under the Air Carrier Access Act to handle disability-related matters at each airport that carrier serves. Each CRO must be trained and thoroughly proficient with respect to the rights of passengers with disabilities under the ACAA and accompanying regulations. Whenever there is any disability related problem involving an air carrier, the first person to request is the airline's CRO, and the CRO has the ability to resolve the complaint. If the CRO does not resolve the situation or take a complaint, the Department of Transportation has

an aviation consumer disability hotline for resolving issues related to disability accommodations. The toll-free number for the hotline is 1-800-778-4838 (voice) and 1-800-455-9880 (TTY).

References for specific Airlines

1. United Airlines: http://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/travel/specialneeds/disabilities/assistance_animals.aspx
2. American Airlines - <http://www.aa.com/i18n/travelInformation/specialAssistance/serviceAnimals.jsp>
3. US Airways - <http://www.usairways.com/en-US/traveltools/specialneeds/animals.html>
4. Delta Airlines - http://www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/traveling-with-us/special-travel-needs/disabilities/service-animals.html
5. Alaska Airlines - <http://www.alaskaair.com/content/travel-info/accessible-services/specialservices-support-animals.aspx>
6. JetBlue - <http://help.jetblue.com/SRVS/CGI-BIN/webisapi.dll?New,Kb=askBlue,case=obj%281095%29>
7. Southwest Airlines - https://www.southwest.com/html/customer-service/unique-travel-needs/customers-with-disabilities-pol.html#unique_travel_needs_allergies_disabilities_pol_tab_list_tab_10

Department of Transportation FAA regulations regarding service animals-
<http://airconsumer.dot.gov/rules/20030509.pdf>

TSA for service animals and monkey helpers - <http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/service-animals>