



Canadian  
Transportation  
Agency

Office  
des transports  
du Canada

# Alternative Communications Systems Compliance Report



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The Canadian Transportation Agency is responsible for ensuring that undue obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities are removed from federally regulated transportation services and facilities, which include air, rail, and extra-provincial ferry and bus transportation. It seeks to remove such obstacles by:

- developing regulations, codes of practice and standards;
- communicating with the transportation industry and the community of persons with disabilities;
- resolving individual accessibility-related disputes; and by ordering corrective measures as required.

The Agency follows the Federal Government's policy of setting standards using alternatives to regulations and therefore develops voluntary codes of practice and other standards. In 2004, the Agency released its ***Code of Practice: Removing Communication Barriers for Travellers with Disabilities*** (Code), which aims to improve the communication of transportation-related information for persons with disabilities. This Code was developed through consultation with industry and groups representing persons with disabilities. All terminal operators within the federal transportation system, such as airports, passenger rail stations and ferry terminals were to be compliant by June 2007.

Section 1.4 of the Code states that ground transportation service providers at airports are to provide alternative communication systems to ensure equal access to reservation and information lines. It is the responsibility of the terminal operator (***airport***) to ensure that ground transportation service providers provide these facilities by specifying them in the terms of their contracts or by other means. Alternative communication systems are systems which facilitate communication, other than telephones (1-800 #s). For example, a teletypewriter (TTY) line allow persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and persons who have a speech impairment to transmit written text via a telephone line.

Ground transportation service providers include taxis, limousine, motor coaches, shuttle buses, and car rental companies that operate from a terminal under contract or permit with the terminal operator.

This report is on compliance by airports with the requirement that car rental companies provide alternative communication systems for reservations and information to persons with disabilities.

## **Process of the Agency's Review**

In June 2008, Agency staff researched the extent to which car rental companies at airports within the National Airports System (NAS) provided alternative communication systems. The NAS is comprised of 26 national airports linking Canada from coast to coast. The NAS handles 94% of air travellers in Canada and includes airports serving the national, provincial and territorial capitals as well as airports with annual traffic of 200,000 passengers or more.

The Agency examined airport Web sites of all NAS airports to determine which car rental companies were operating from each airport. The Agency focussed on nine principal car rental companies.

- If a car rental company was operating at an airport, it was assumed that the car rental company is under contract with the airport.
- If the airport did not have a Web site or if the Web site did not make reference to car rental companies, phone calls were made directly to the airport to determine whether car rental services were offered.
- If car rental services were not offered on site at the airport, the airport was excluded from the monitoring exercise.

Two airports were outside the scope of the review. As there were no car rental services offered on site at Iqaluit Airport, this airport was not included in the monitoring exercise. The Agency was informed that passengers requiring car rental services could call from the airport to a service located in town. Montreal-Mirabel International Airport was also not included in the monitoring exercise as its operations are limited to cargo services.

Therefore, the following 24 out of the 26 NAS airports were subject to Agency monitoring to determine if their on-site car rental services were in compliance with section 1.4 of the Code:

1. Calgary International Airport (Alberta)
2. Charlottetown Airport (Prince Edward Island)
3. Edmonton International Airport (Alberta)
4. Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport (Yukon)
5. Fredericton Airport (New Brunswick)
6. Gander International Airport (Newfoundland)
7. Greater Moncton International Airport (New Brunswick)
8. Halifax International Airport (Nova Scotia)
9. Jean Lesage (Québec) International Airport (Québec)
10. Kelowna Airport (British Columbia)
11. Lester B. Pearson (Toronto) International Airport (Ontario)
12. London International Airport (Ontario)
13. Macdonald-Cartier (Ottawa) International Airport (Ontario)
14. Pierre E. Trudeau (Montreal) International Airport (Québec)
15. Prince George International Airport (British Columbia)
16. Regina International Airport (Saskatchewan)
17. Saint John Airport (New Brunswick)
18. Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport  
(Saskatchewan)
19. St. John's International Airport (Newfoundland)
20. Thunder Bay Airport (Ontario)
21. Vancouver International Airport (British Columbia)
22. Victoria International Airport (British Columbia)
23. Winnipeg International Airport (Manitoba)
24. Yellowknife Airport (Northwest Territories)

The Agency reviewed the airports' Web sites and called their telephone lines to determine whether the nine principal car rental firms made the following alternative communications systems available for the purpose of making reservations or obtaining information:

- Web sites
- e-mail addresses
- TTY telephone numbers
- fax numbers.

### **Major Finding**

1. All 24 airports with car rental companies (100% or 24/24 airports) were found to be compliant with section 1.4 of the Code as all nine principal car rental companies operating from the terminals offered alternative communication systems such as Web sites and/or e-mail addresses to access information and make reservations.

### **Additional Findings**

2. All of the 24 airports had a Web site to communicate transportation-related information.
3. 23 airports had Web sites that provided information about the airport's car rental companies. Although no information on the Whitehorse International Airport Web site referred to car rental services, the public can access this information by calling the airport.
4. Of the 23 airports with Web sites containing information about car rental companies, all but one provided a hyperlink to its car rental companies. Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport listed a telephone number for the car rental companies.
5. All of the 24 airports had at least two car rental companies operating at their terminal that offered alternative communications systems where reservations could be made.

6. A car rental company with outlets at Calgary, Kelowna, Vancouver, and Victoria did not have a dedicated TTY line but instead reported using telephone relay services when necessary. A telephone relay service allows real-time conversation by providing a third party who acts as a bridge between telephone users who communicate by voice and those who communicate by TTY.
7. Only one rental car company had a fax number posted on their Web site to make reservations. This company had outlets at Calgary, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg airports.
8. Only one car rental company provided live text messaging from the company's Web site to obtain information and make reservations. This company had outlets at twelve of the 24 NAS airports.
9. All of the 24 NAS airports had at least one car rental company outlet that offered information on its Web site about accessibility services such as hand controls. The provision of hand controls also makes the 24 NAS airports compliant with the Agency's Code of Practice: Passenger Terminal Accessibility, section 2.7.1 on Ground Transportation. The Terminal Code stipulates that terminal operators are to include in contracts with car rental companies provisions for hand control systems for vehicles.
10. Hand controls in rental cars were reported to be made available by eight companies, with outlets at all the 24 airports. Two of those eight companies had hand controls available dependant on the location.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the Agency's review, there is 100% compliance by the 24 airports to ensure that on-site car rental companies have alternative communications systems for reservations and information.

Data obtained from this research is available upon request.

***For further information:***

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