

# Accessibility Guidelines for Small Aircraft



Services for persons with  
disabilities on aircraft with  
29 and fewer passenger seats

Available in multiple formats



Canadian  
Transportation  
Agency

Office des  
transports du  
Canada

Canada

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For more information about these guidelines  
please call (819) 997-6828 or 1-888-222-2592

TTY (819) 953-9705 or 1-800-669-5575

**[www.cta.gc.ca](http://www.cta.gc.ca)**

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# 1. Preamble

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The Canadian Transportation Agency is a quasi-judicial tribunal of the Government of Canada. It has a responsibility for ensuring that persons with disabilities obtain access to the federal transportation network by eliminating undue obstacles. Developing and administering accessibility standards is one of the many ways in which the Agency is working toward its goal of accessible transportation in Canada.

These Guidelines, developed in cooperation with representatives of the industry, consumers and other government departments, are meant to assist carriers to better serve the needs of persons with disabilities travelling on aircraft with 29 and fewer passenger seats (small aircraft). The Guidelines let the industry and the public know what the Agency expects of operators of small aircraft when they are serving persons with disabilities.

Included in these Guidelines is information on what to discuss with persons with disabilities at the time of reservation, the carriage of various aids and service animals, what to do if a person's mobility aid is damaged or lost, and tips on how to improve communication with persons with disabilities. Also included is information on where to get training material free of charge, and a list of organizations of, and for, persons with disabilities to help implement the Guidelines.

Carriers using small aircraft will better serve persons with disabilities by providing them with, as a minimum, the services set out in these Guidelines and in the manner recommended.

Nothing in these Guidelines relieves any air carrier from complying with the provisions of any safety regulations under the *Aeronautics Act*, SOR/93-449, s. 3.

## 2. Acceptance for Carriage

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- 2.1 Make every effort to accommodate persons with disabilities – transportation cannot be refused solely on the basis of a disability.
- 2.2 In instances when refusing transportation to a person with a disability is necessary, provide a clear explanation of the reason for the refusal, including refusal at the time of reservation.

(Circumstances that may prevent a carrier from accepting a person with a disability for carriage include safety and the physical limitations of an aircraft.)

- 2.3 Offer to provide the person with a disability a written explanation for a decision to refuse carriage, referred to in 2.2, within 10 calendar days of the refusal.

(Written explanations can be useful to avoid misunderstandings with the passage of time, or to avoid arbitrary decisions – such as the refusal to carry based on a disability.)

## 3. Self-Determination

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- 3.1 Treat persons with disabilities with dignity at all times – which includes discussing relevant issues directly with them.
- 3.2 Accept the determination made by or on behalf of a person with a disability that the person is self-reliant and that the person does not require services of a personal nature during a flight.

(Services of a personal nature include assistance with eating, personal hygiene, using washroom facilities or taking medication.)

## 4. Services at Time of Reservation

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When a person self-identifies as a person with a disability at the time of reservation:

- a) describe equipment and services available to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- b) discuss both the level of accessibility and the limitations of the aircraft, the tarmac, the facilities and the availability of boarding equipment for the available services to accommodate that person's disability-related needs; and
- c) note, and offer to confirm in writing, services to be provided as soon as possible after the reservation has been made and before the flight.

## 5. Services Requested in Advance

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Provide the services set out in the carrier's tariff and, in addition, where a request for a service is made in advance of travel, make every effort to provide:

- a) any of the services described in these Guidelines; and
- b) any additional service to accommodate a person's disability-related needs.

## 6. General Services

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Services often required to be provided to a person with a disability include:

- a) assistance at check-in;
- b) assistance to reach the boarding area;
- c) assistance to board and deplane;
- d) assistance with baggage;
- e) assistance to transfer to or from a mobility aid;
- f) assistance to transfer to or from a passenger seat;
- g) inquiring, from time to time after check-in, about the needs of a person who is not independently mobile and attending to those needs when the services required are usually provided by the carrier, or where the services are set out in these Guidelines;
- h) limited assistance with beverages and snacks – such as opening packages and identifying items; and/or
- i) assistance to proceed to the general public area or to a representative of another carrier.

## 7. Assistance when Boarding and Deplaning

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7.1 Board and deplane persons with disabilities using specialized equipment whenever possible.

7.2 As a last recourse, a person with a disability may be carried by hand to enplane and deplane if the following applies:

- a) restrictions inherent to the aircraft or the tarmac prevent the use of any other boarding/deplaning method;
- b) the person with a disability agrees to be hand-carried; and
- c) this can be done safely.

(Training of carrier personnel or agents is important to the safe provision of services to persons with disabilities especially when boarding/deplaning – see 13 for additional guidance on training.)

## 8. Accessible Seating

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Provide the person with a disability with the most accessible seat on the aircraft. Have an open dialogue with the person to determine which seat is the most accessible to meet specific disability-related needs.

(Transport Canada has produced a video titled “Smart Seating” to assist people in making informed decisions for seating arrangements on aircraft. It is available free of charge, by telephone: 1-800-305-2059, TTY: 1-888-675-6863, or on-line: [www.tc.gc.ca/transact](http://www.tc.gc.ca/transact).)

## 9. Carriage of Aids

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- 9.1 Carry as priority baggage, in the cabin where possible, the following aids:
- a) a wheelchair (except when aircraft design does not permit carriage of the mobility aid);
  - b) a walker, a cane, crutches or braces;
  - c) a device to facilitate communication; and/or
  - d) any prosthesis or small medical device.
- 9.2 Where possible, allow persons with disabilities to retain any items outlined in 9.1 b), c), or d) at their seat.
- 9.3 Where the aircraft design does not permit the carriage of the aid, advise the person with a disability of alternate transportation arrangements that the person may make to transport the aid, or to travel with the aid.
- 9.4 Perform the following, provided the aircraft can carry the aid:
- a) disassemble and package, where necessary, the aid for transportation and assemble the aid upon arrival; and
  - b) return the aid promptly upon arrival.

9.5 Where facilities, the tarmac, and weather conditions permit, allow a manually-operated wheelchair to be used:

- a) to reach the boarding gate;
- b) to reach the stairs of the aircraft; or
- c) to reach the door of the aircraft (for aircraft accessible via a boarding system).

## 10. Carriage of Service Animals

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10.1 Carry a service animal under the following conditions:

- a) the animal is required for disability-related needs;
- b) the animal is certified in writing, as being trained by a professional service animal institution; and
- c) the animal is properly harnessed.

(Service animals are not pets. They are used by persons with disabilities as an aid to carry on the daily activities of life.)

10.2 Avoid separating persons with disabilities from their service animal.

10.3 Permit the service animal to accompany the person with a disability on-board and to remain on the floor at the passenger's seat or, where there is insufficient floor space at the passenger's seat, to remain on the floor in an area where the person can still exercise control over the animal.

# 11. Services related to Damaged or Lost Aids

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Where a carrier has transported a person's mobility aid, and the aid is damaged during flight or is unavailable at destination:

- a) provide the person with a suitable replacement aid;
- b) if the carrier cannot promptly provide a suitable replacement aid, assist the person in finding a suitable temporary replacement; and
- c) if a suitable replacement aid is not available in a reasonable amount of time, make every effort to find, with the person, an equitable resolution to the situation.

# 12. Communication Strategy

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12.1 Publish printed material in a format having the following characteristics:

- a) at least 14-point size;
- b) sans serif font (such as, Helvetica, Swiss, Arial, Univers); and
- c) well contrasted (such as, black on white).

(These Guidelines are printed in 14-point size, using Arial font.)

12.2 Keep a dedicated pen and paper at points of contact between staff and the public to facilitate communication with travellers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have a speech impediment.

## 13. Staff Training

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The disability-related services identified in these Guidelines are best provided by carrier personnel or agents who are properly trained to do so. Carriers are strongly encouraged to provide the following disability-related training to personnel who interact with persons with disabilities at the beginning of employment and supplement this training with periodic refresher training sessions:

- a) general sensitivity training to properly identify and respond to the needs of persons with disabilities; and
- b) training in providing physical assistance and in handling different types of mobility aids and specialized equipment.

(Transport Canada has produced a training video titled “A Way to Go.” It is available free of charge, by telephone: 1-800-665-6478, TTY: 1-800-823-3823, or by mail: Intergovernmental Affairs and Accessible Transportation, Transport Canada, 330 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5.)

# 14. Resolving Problems

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Problems can often be resolved between a person with a disability and a carrier. If a problem cannot be resolved, inform the person that:

- a) with respect to future travel, either party may contact staff of the Accessible Transportation Directorate of the Canadian Transportation Agency to address a disability-related concern prior to travel (By telephone: 1-888-222-2592, TTY: 1-800-669- 5575, or by email: [info@otc-cta.gc.ca](mailto:info@otc-cta.gc.ca));
- b) either party may request the Canadian Transportation Agency to help settle the problem by mediation; or
- c) he or she may file a complaint with the Canadian Transportation Agency ([www.cta.gc.ca](http://www.cta.gc.ca)).

# 15. Contacts

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Contact local, provincial or national organizations of and for persons with disabilities to identify resources available which may facilitate the implementation of these Guidelines, including those respecting training.

The following organizations may be able to provide you with the name of a local organization representing the interests of persons with disabilities in your area:

## At the national level

Canadian Association for Community Living  
Toronto, Ontario                      Tel.: (416) 661-9611  
Web Site: [www.cacl.ca](http://www.cacl.ca)                      TTY: (416) 661-2023

Canadian Association of the Deaf  
Ottawa, Ontario                      Tel.: (613) 565-2882  
Web Site: [www.cad.ca](http://www.cad.ca)                      TTY: (613) 565-8882

Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres  
Ottawa, Ontario                      Tel.: (613) 563-2581  
Web Site: [www.cailc.ca](http://www.cailc.ca)                      TTY: (613) 563-4215

Canadian Council of the Blind  
Ottawa, Ontario                      Tel.: (613) 567-0311  
Web Site: [www.ccbnational.net](http://www.ccbnational.net)

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association  
Ottawa, Ontario                      Tel.: (613) 526-1584  
Web Site: [www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca)                      TTY: (613) 526-2692

Canadian Hearing Society  
Toronto, Ontario Tel.: (416) 928-2500  
Web Site: [www.chs.ca](http://www.chs.ca) TTY: 1-877-347-3429

Canadian National Institute for the Blind  
Toronto, Ontario Tel.: (416) 486-2500  
Web Site: [www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)

Canadian National Society of the Deaf/Blind  
[cnsdb@canada.com](mailto:cnsdb@canada.com)  
North York, Ontario  
Web Site: [www.cnsdb.ca](http://www.cnsdb.ca)

Canadian Paraplegic Association  
Ottawa, Ontario Tel.: (613) 723-1033  
Web Site: [www.canparaplegic.org](http://www.canparaplegic.org)

Council of Canadians with Disabilities  
Winnipeg, Manitoba Tel./TTY: (204) 947-0303  
Web Site: [www.ccdonline.ca](http://www.ccdonline.ca)

Guide Dog Users of Canada  
[guidedogs@gduc.ca](mailto:guidedogs@gduc.ca)  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Web Site: [www.gduc.ca](http://www.gduc.ca)

National Federation of the Blind:  
Advocates for Equality  
Kelowna, British Columbia Tel.: 1-800-561-4774  
Web Site: [www.blindcanadians.ca](http://www.blindcanadians.ca)

## At the provincial level

British Columbia Coalition of People with Disabilities

Vancouver, British Columbia

Tel.: (604) 875-0188

Web Site: [www.bccpd.bc.ca](http://www.bccpd.bc.ca)

TTY: (604) 875-8835

Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities

Edmonton, Alberta

Tel.: (780) 488-9088

Web site: [www.accd.net](http://www.accd.net)

TTY: (780) 488-9090

Toll Free: 1-800-387-2514

Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities

Regina, Saskatchewan

Tel.: (306) 569-3111

Web site: [www.saskvoice.com](http://www.saskvoice.com)

Manitoba League of People with Disabilities

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Tel.: (204) 943-6099

Web Site: [www.mlpd.mb.ca](http://www.mlpd.mb.ca)

Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee

Toronto, Ontario

Tel.: (416) 480-7686

Web Site: [www.odacommittee.net](http://www.odacommittee.net)

TTY: (416) 964-0023, ext. 343

Confédération des organismes provinciaux des personnes handicapées du Québec (COPHAN)

Montreal, Quebec

Tel.: (514) 284-0155

Web Site: [www.cophan.org](http://www.cophan.org) (French only)

Kéroul

Montreal, Quebec

Tel.: (514) 525-3104

Web Site: [www.keroul.qc.ca](http://www.keroul.qc.ca)

New Brunswick Premier's Council on  
the Status of Disabled Persons

Fredericton, New Brunswick

Tel.: (506) 444-3000

Web Site: [www.gnb.ca/0048](http://www.gnb.ca/0048)

Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Tel./TTY: (902) 455-6942

Web Site: [www.novascotialeo.org](http://www.novascotialeo.org) Toll Free: 1-866-696-7536

Prince Edward Island Council of the Disabled

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island Tel.: (902) 892-9149

Web Site: [www.peicod.pe.ca](http://www.peicod.pe.ca)

Coalition of Persons with Disabilities –  
Newfoundland and Labrador

St John's, Newfoundland

Tel.: (709) 722-7011

Web site: [www.codnl.ca](http://www.codnl.ca)