



FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

SEVENTH MEETING

Montréal, 22 to 26 October 2012

Agenda Item 3: Report of the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Working Group

REPORT OF THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP (PWD WG)

(Presented by the Rapporteur of the PWD WG)

SUMMARY

The Persons with Disabilities Working Group (PWD WG) was established following the fifth meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/5, 2008) following a recommendation of the Panel that ICAO Circular 274, *Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*, be updated. The sixth Panel meeting (FALP/6, 2010) considered a revised 2nd draft revision of the guidelines. It decided that the PWD WG would continue its work on revising the guidelines, under the direction of its Rapporteur. In the inter-session, the 3rd and 4th draft revisions of a new ICAO Manual on the matter were circulated among the participants on the WG for comments. These comments have led to the 5th draft of the guidelines that is being presented, in the Appendix, to FALP/7 for consideration.

Action by the FAL Panel:

The FAL Panel is invited to:

- a) consider the Fifth Draft Revision of the guidelines on *Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*, attached to this paper, and provide comments, if any; and
- b) adopt the final version as the 1st Edition of the *Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following the fifth meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/5, 2008), the Persons with Disabilities Working Group (PWD WG) was set up to revise the existing guidelines for persons with disabilities found in Circular 274, *Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities* (1999).

1.2 A revised 2nd draft version of the guidelines was considered by the Panel at its sixth meeting, in 2010 (FALP/6-WP/6). *Inter alia*, the Panel decided to expand the Terms of Reference of the PWD WG. As a result, the WG was requested to:

- a) examine existing ICAO guidelines relating to persons with disabilities, found in ICAO Circular 274;
- b) consolidate and harmonize these guidelines, as appropriate, with any guidance material on the subject developed by ACI and ECAC and any appropriate national legislation, multilateral instruments or other pertinent material that may be made available for consideration by the group; and
- c) in accomplishing the tasks set out in paragraphs (a) and (b), take into consideration the proposals and comments presented during FALP/5 (i.e. the relevant FALP/5 working papers).

1.3 The Panel agreed that the PWD WG would continue its work on revising the guidelines, under the direction of its Rapporteur, who would present a report at the present (seventh) meeting.

1.4 Consequently, the 3rd and 4th draft revisions of the guidelines (now as draft texts of a new ICAO Manual) were considered by the PWD WG.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The PWD WG has agreed that the 5th Draft should be placed before the FALP/7 meeting for consideration and comments, if any. This 5th Draft is found in the Appendix.

2.2 The PWD WG recommends that the final version of the document be adopted by the Panel as the 1st edition of the *Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*.

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FOREWORD

- i) Persons with disabilities form a large and growing proportion of our populations. 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.
- ii) 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 the full and effective participation and inclusion in society, including freedom of movement and freedom of choice (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the "Convention", articles 3c and 3f.). Persons with disabilities should have equivalent access to air travel.
- iii) 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 on an international level.
- iv) In keeping with the general obligations of States under the UN Convention, to promote universal design, to provide accessible information, and to promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities (articles 4f, 4h and 4i), 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 FALP Working Group on Persons with Disabilities, with the advice and assistance of the ICAO Secretariat under the direction of the Facilitation Panel and the Assembly, for the purpose of elaborating on the Annex 9 SARPS and assisting the civil aviation community in their implementation.
- v) 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.

Section 1- GENERAL ISSUES

Definitions

1.1 *Person with disabilities:* Persons 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.

1.2 *Air carrier:* The term air carrier also includes carriers operating under code sharing and wet-leasing arrangements.

1.3 Contracting States should encourage air carriers and airport operators, and travel agents to use common definitions of 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.

Accessible air travel

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

1.5 In some instances, the air carrier with whom the passenger may contract is a separate entity from the actual aircraft operator. Air carriers should ensure, as far as possible, that the services that they provide to persons with disabilities are also provided by the carrier that operates their flights.

Consultations with organizations representing persons with disabilities

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

Seamless service

1.7 The service provided at the request of passengers with disabilities should be professional and “seamless,” (i.e. there are no points at which such a passenger is left stranded or without assistance).

1.8 “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 a disability.

No refusal of carriage except for safety reasons

1.9 Air carriers should not refuse to transport persons with disabilities on the basis of their disability except for safety requirements.

No charge for assistance

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

Service level targets

1.11 This Manual presents minimum recommended service level targets that Contracting States should meet and urges them to exceed these service level targets wherever possible.

1.11.1 Recommended service level targets should be set for the requested assistance. These should be mutually agreed on by air carriers and airport operators as well as all other stakeholders. Organizations representing person with disabilities should be consulted in the development of these service level targets. Service level targets should be included in contractual arrangements.

Section 2 – TRAINING

General principles

2.1 Training of staff is vital for providing quality service in a consistent, respectful manner to persons with disabilities. It is essential for staff to know their responsibilities and be able to perform them. Training for all staff in the chain of air travel/service delivery is needed to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are appropriately met. Training should address the attitudinal, environmental/physical and organisational 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 a favour or compassionate gesture.

Who should be trained?

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

Scope and content of training programs

2.3 Organizations that represent persons with disabilities should be consulted in the content of training programmes. Air carriers and airport operators should consider involving organizations representing persons with disabilities in evaluating the content of their training programmes and, where possible, in the training itself.

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

2.5 Training should cover:

- a) physical, sensory, hidden or 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 role of the assistant; and
- k) persons travelling with a service animal including the role and needs of that animal.

2.6 Employees and contractors should be trained about the policies and procedures of the air carrier or airport operator concerning persons with disabilities, and what legal obligations exist in national and international legislation and regulations.

2.7 The content of the training should be appropriate to the duties of the person's job who is being trained.

2.8 Training about how to seek and record the accommodation needs and information from persons with disabilities should be provided to booking agents.

2.9 Training should be provided about communication: 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 a companion, assistant or interpreter.

2.12 Employees and contractors who provide physical assistance should be trained to always ask the person what kind of assistance they need, and seek feedback to ensure they are providing appropriate assistance.

2.13 In addition to general training, air carriers and airport operators should ensure that they properly train their employees and contractors who are required to handle different types of mobility aids. They should be required to be familiar with the procedures for securing, carrying and stowing mobility aids, including methods of dismantling, packaging, unpackaging and assembling these aids, if deemed necessary by safety, security, or hazardous material requirements.

2.14 Employees and contractors who provide physical assistance should be trained how to assist with 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 a person between their own mobility aid and a mobility aid provided by the air carrier or airport operator, and between that mobility aid and the passenger seat. Training should include instructions on lift techniques, asking the person with a disability about their preferred method of transfer, and performing the lifting with maximum consideration for the dignity, safety and comfort of the person with a disability and to avoid injury to the employee.

2.16 Training should be provided on the proper and safe operation of equipment used to accommodate persons with disabilities, including enplaning and disembarkation assistance equipment and how to ensure the safety and dignity of passengers.

2.17 Cabin crew training should be geared to 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 Air carriers and airport operators should ensure employees and contractors—complete initial training before their entry upon duty.

2.20 Initial training should train personnel to an advanced, skilled and adept level that allows personnel to be able to accomplish their duties and provide the necessary services effectively and respectfully the first time.

Refresher training

2.21 Air carriers and airport operators should provide refresher training periodically/when appropriate (annually or every 2 years, for example). 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 providing accommodation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, as these are introduced or implemented.

Section 3 – PRE-JOURNEY

Communication of information on services and facilities

3.1 Contracting States should publish, or encourage air carriers and airport operators or interested organisations 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 (e.g. electronic formats, such as on a website; large print; audio formats) in a timely manner and without additional cost.

3.1.1 In order that this may be possible, Web material and internet bookings need to be accessible to persons with disabilities, in accordance with international Web accessibility standards (<http://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility>).

3.2 Air carriers 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 airports and air carriers 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 service;
- f) location of relieving areas for service animals;
- g) accessible inter-terminal transportation;
- h) accessible ground transportation;
- i) escort passes;
- 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 service available at the airport and in-flight, including available boarding equipment.

3.4 Air carriers and airport operators should ensure they have the means to facilitate communication with travellers who have sensory (deaf or hard of hearing, blind or low vision) or cognitive disabilities and they should describe such facilities in the public information referred to above in accessible formats.

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

Reservation assistance

3.6 Travel agents, tour operators and air carrier 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 on-line, there should be a place where the required assistance can be noted. If this is not possible and can only be done by phone, a toll-free phone number should be provided.

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

3.8 Air carriers should request the dimensions of the mobility aid at the time of booking to ensure that if they cannot carry the mobility aid, that information is communicated as soon as possible to the passenger so that they will be able to make alternative arrangements if needed, and if the mobility equipment requires special handling, e.g. if it requires the battery to be isolated for a powered wheelchair.

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

3.10 Agents should advise on the limits of an air carrier's liability regarding the carriage of mobility aids, so that travellers with disabilities can consider taking out their own insurance. Agents should also advise customers 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 air carrier operator or travel agent of their needs at the time of booking of the flight or as early as possible in advance of the flight.

3.11.1 Air carriers 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 assistance (i.e. airport operators and ground handling companies).

3.12 Air carriers and airport operators should ensure that services are provided to persons with disabilities when 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 a certain amount of advance notice. Air carriers 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 Passengers with disabilities should not be required to identify themselves when they do not require disability-related services. However, when passengers with disabilities do require such services, it is important that they identify their needs to the air carrier or airport operator.

3.15 Air carriers 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 Air carriers should accept a person with a disability's self-assessment as to whether they are able to travel independently and attend to their own needs onboard the aircraft. However, in some circumstances, for reasons of safety, a carrier may determine that it is necessary for a person with a disability 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 air carriers 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, a carrier's concern that a passenger with a disability 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 their personal care needs should be accepted.

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

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

Seat reservations – General

3.20 Air carriers should have seats that are designated as accessible for persons with disabilities. Air carriers may choose to block those 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. Where carriers charge for advanced seat selection, carriers should waive the charge for persons with disabilities in order that they may select the seat that best meets their needs.

3.20.1 Air carriers are encouraged, but are not required, to provide persons with disabilities upgrades to a higher class of service if this can better meet their needs.

3.21 Where a person identifies the nature of his or her disability, an air carrier 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 a person with a disability and their assistant), subject to safety limitations. Where seats are not allocated in advance, the person should be able to pre-board and choose the seat which best meets their needs, subject to safety limitations.

Seat reservations for persons travelling with service animals

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

3.23 Air carriers should not impose charges for transporting service animals.

3.24 Air carriers should have a dialogue with the person with a disability in advance of the flight to help determine the amount of space required to ensure that the person with a disability and their 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, air carriers should indicate in the record of a person's reservation the disability-related services that the carrier will provide to the person and provide a written confirmation of such services.

3.26 Air carriers 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 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 the carrier has undertaken to provide to a person with a disability at the time of reservation. Where medical information is provided to the carrier, passengers should be advised that this data will be transmitted to personnel who need this information in order to provide the services.

3.27 When an air carrier, its agent or a tour operator receives a notification of the need for assistance, it should transmit the information as soon as possible to the departments, teams and organizations that will deliver the assistance (i.e. 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.

Section 4 – ARRIVAL AND MOVING THROUGH THE AIRPORT

Timely service

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

Use of facilities

4.2 Air carriers and airport operators should provide assistance using airport facilities to passengers with disabilities, such as assistance getting to and from washrooms and use of 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, hearing, dexterity, or speech impairment. Personnel staffing information desks should be provided the training required for handling requests for information from persons with disabilities with efficiency and sensitivity.

Check-in services

4.4 Airport operators and air carriers 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 operators and air carriers should provide assistance at the check-in counter to persons with disabilities. Check-in staff should have appropriate training to handle requests, and respond to the needs of persons with disabilities, e.g., assigning appropriate seating.

Availability of wheelchairs

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

Baggage assistance

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

Seating

4.8 Airport operators should provide 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 and customs areas, and baggage retrieval areas. Seating should not be placed where it would block evacuation routes.

Leaving persons with disabilities unattended

4.9 Where a person using a wheelchair who is not independently mobile awaits assistance with boarding or disembarkation, airport operator or air carrier 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 operators and air carriers 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 to inform this review.

Section 5 – AIRPORT FACILITIES

Consultations in planning stages

5.1 Airport operators should ensure that, from the first phase of planning, plans for new construction and renovation of airport facilities open to the public meet the 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 ICAO¹ and Airport Council International (ACI) for guidance on the building and planning requirements which will ensure access by persons with disabilities.

Accessible routes and passageways

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

5.3 Airport operators should have an accessible route of travel for boarding and disembarking aircraft.

5.4 All areas in the terminal building 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 parking areas.

5.5 Airport operators should ensure that new barriers are not created on 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.

¹ Doc 9184 — Airport Planning Manual -Part 1, Master Planning (2nd Edition, 1987)

Wayfinding

5.7 Airport operators should incorporate wayfinding methods which 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 or 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 the 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 for gate or departure area numbers. Signs should be at eye-level with letters, symbols or pictograms that are glare-free, in high contrasting colours and of 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.

Automated kiosks

5.11 Airport operators and air carriers should ensure that automated kiosks are accessible and identified with the universal symbol of accessibility. Automated kiosks provide travel-related services such as: confirming check-in; verifying photo 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 Communication systems

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

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

5.14 Airport operators should ensure that there are accessible public telephones [both landside and airside, for example in arrival and departure areas, boarding gates, baggage claim areas] that allow a person who uses a wheelchair, is blind or visually impaired, has a speech impairment, or is Deaf or hard of hearing to use the machine independently. For example, people who are Deaf or hard of hearing use telephone typewriter devices (TTYs) or require that the equipment be compatible with hearing aids, have volume control for those who do not have a hearing aid, and some kind of visual indication that their requests for assistance have been received.

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

Public announcements

5.16 Airport operators and air carriers should ensure that public announcements concerning delays, schedule changes, gate changes, connections, and claiming of baggage are made visually and verbally.

Arrival/departure monitors

5.17 Airport operators should install some monitors at eye level (1.5 metres above the floor +/-25 mm) in each area where monitors are used. Where monitors are placed above eye level, they should be placed so that they can be easily seen by persons with disabilities, including those using a wheelchair. 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 the monitors should be in plain language that is easy to read and should avoid the use of acronyms.

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

Seating areas

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

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

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

5.23 Air carrier and airport 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. Airports should ensure that staff and volunteers are made aware of the relieving areas so they know how to facilitate access for travellers to the relieving area and on to their connecting flights. There should be a safe path of travel between the terminal 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, one should be easily accessed from secured areas 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 providing a fenced in area, located away from high traffic areas, providing a garbage can or other container for the hygienic disposal of waste, and providing a water source to facilitate the cleaning of the area by staff. In addition, terminal operators may wish to consider providing plastic bags for cleanup. Signage should be provided which reminds users to clean up after their animals.

Maintenance of accessible equipment

5.27 Airport operators and air carriers, where they own, lease or operate the airport facility, should ensure that accessibility features are maintained in proper working order. Where airport operators own and operate boarding devices or equipment, they are to be properly.

Section 6 – SECURITY SCREENING

Maintain 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 audibly and visually, as needed, to advise passengers of the following:

- a) when to proceed into the security area;
- b) directions for placing carry-on baggage and other materials on the belt for x-ray;
- c) when they can proceed through the security screening device;
- d) when the security inspection is complete and they can continue to the next step.

Security screening options

6.3 Security personnel should offer a physical search in the place of metal detection screening, with the option of it being performed in a search area which is not open to public viewing.

Passes for non-travelling companions

6.4 Where 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 someone of their choosing, in addition to carrier or terminal staff, through secured areas to boarding areas.

Section 7 – BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING THE AIRCRAFT

Boarding and disembarking assistance

7.1 Airport operators and air carriers should provide assistance for persons with disabilities comprising of staff trained and qualified to meet their needs, from arrival at the airport terminal until they are seated on board the aircraft, and vice versa, and the appropriate equipment to assist them.

7.2 Services should include:

- a) Assistance with boarding and disembarking the aircraft;
- b) Transferring the person between the person's own mobility aid and a wheelchair, boarding chair or other mobility aid provided by the airport or air carrier;
- c) Transferring the person between a wheelchair or mobility aid to their seat and vice versa;
- d) Assistance with stowing and retrieving carry-on baggage, including mobility aids and other disability assistive devices;
- e) Assistance in proceeding to the baggage retrieval area, including the completion of immigration and customs procedures;
- f) Assistance in retrieving checked baggage if the persons with disabilities have difficulty to retrieve their checked baggage; and
- g) Assistance in proceeding to the general public area and on request 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 pre-board (i.e. prior to all other passengers) and disembark separately (i.e. before or after all other passengers) as this is generally more dignified and less stressful for the passenger and more efficient for the airline. Assistance in getting on and off aircraft should be provided promptly to passengers.

7.4 Air carriers, and airport and ground handling operators should co-operate to ensure, where practicable, that people who use wheelchairs may use their own wheelchairs to move to and from the aircraft door. This may not be possible with some powered wheelchairs. For example, it may not be practical to allow an individual to remain in their own wheelchair at airports where wheelchairs have to be carried up and down stairs at the gate which could potentially place staff at risk of injury.

7.5 Air carriers and airport operators should provide the timely return of the wheelchairs and other mobility aids as close as possible to the door of the 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 passenger requests otherwise.

7.6 Air carriers 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 operators and air carriers, including airport ground handlers and carriers that self-handle, should ensure that boarding equipment that provides safe and dignified boarding and disembarking of passengers with disabilities is available for use at their terminal. Airport operators and air carriers should ensure that boarding equipment is properly maintained.

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

Transfer of mobility aids

7.9 Airport operators and air carriers should ensure that a means is available to securely transfer mobility aids to or from the boarding level in preparation for carriage, avoiding as far as practicable the hand-carrying of power wheelchairs and other large aids, to minimize the risk of damage to the mobility aid and the risk of injury to personnel handling the aid.

Section 8 – ON BOARD AIR CARRIER SERVICES

Carriage of assistive devices and mobility aids

8.1 Mobility aids and assistive devices should be accepted in addition to the air carrier's standard baggage allowance (checked and carry-on baggage). Mobility aids and assistive devices should be accepted free of charge.

8.2 Air carriers should allow the carriage, where stowage space permits, of manually operated folding wheelchairs and small disability aids in the passenger cabin. Disability aids should take priority in the cabin over crew luggage and other passengers' carry-on items.

8.3 Where wheelchairs cannot be carried in the passenger cabin, air carriers 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 the 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 When it is necessary to disassemble and package a mobility aid, air carriers must also unpackage and reassemble the aid and return it as quickly as possible to the passenger with a disability. Mobility aids should be returned to passengers in the same condition in which they were received. Air carriers should encourage passengers to provide instructions regarding the disassembly and assembly of their mobility aid.

Signage on board

8.7 Signage should be positioned to avoid shadows and glare. Characters and symbols should be presented in contrasting colours (light on dark and dark on light). Letters should be sans serif. Many countries have their own standards regarding the height at which signs are placed and the size of characters, symbols and pictographs. When symbols and pictographs are supplemented with Braille, it should be located under the symbol or pictograph.

Seat allocation

8.8 Passengers with disabilities should be assigned seats that meet their needs, subject to safety requirements, e.g., a seat with a movable armrest for passengers who cannot easily transfer over a fixed

aisle armrest; a seat which provides additional legroom for a passenger who cannot bend their leg; or a seat close to a washroom or exit for a passenger with a mobility impairment. Once seats are assigned, persons with disabilities should not be moved from the seats that are most appropriate for them, other than for safety reasons. In cases of an equipment change, persons with disabilities should be reassigned an appropriate seat.

8.9 Air carriers 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 passengers with disabilities. When a passenger with a disability requests a seat with less than 24 hours notice in advance of the flight, carriers should make a reasonable effort to provide appropriate seating.

Service animals

8.10 (a) Where the use of a service animal is required by a person with a disability, air carriers should provide seating with sufficient space so 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 carrier or purchased by the passenger in order for there to be enough floor space for the animal to lie down.

(b) Air carriers should not impose charges for transporting service animals.

(c) Air carriers should take the steps necessary to comply with foreign regulations (animal health regulations), if any, needed to permit the legal transportation of a passenger's service animal into a foreign airport. States are encouraged to minimize such restrictions whenever possible to facilitate travel by persons requiring assistance animals.

(d) Persons with disabilities and their service animals should be accommodated with enough floor space for the service animal to travel safely at the person's seat and without extreme discomfort to the animal or the person. The accommodation should ensure that the animal is able to carry out its duties without contravening safety regulations.

(e) Air carriers should have a dialogue with the person with a disability in advance of the flight to help find the sufficient space for their service animal, and consider the following when determining the required amount of floor space:

(i) that the service animal should not have to stay in a tight curl for any significant period of time. The space should allow the animal other positions besides curling, especially for long flights.

(ii) that 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. The entry path should be wide enough for the animal to get in and out of the row without having to be squeezed through the space.

(iii) no part of the animal should have to extend into an aisle in the way of carts or people walking.

(iv) sufficient space is required to allow the person with a disability to sit with their legs and feet in a position which will not result in the service animal lying on the person's feet or legs.

(v) the person should be able to avoid having to place their legs over a service dog in a confined space which may result in injury to the person if the dog is startled or gets up quickly for any reason.

(vi) the assigned seat for the person with a disability and their service animal should have the fewest impediments under the seat (e.g., electrical boxes, entertainment and safety equipment, footrests, seat fasteners) to reduce the chance that the service animal will become injured or accidentally damage equipment.

(f) If an aircraft is changed at the last minute or if the person fails to check in on time resulting in a change to their pre-assigned seat (which was determined to have enough space for the person and the service animal), air carriers 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 or without injury or extreme discomfort.

(g) Only if no other alternative for appropriate seating is available on the passenger's flight should the air carrier discuss other alternatives, such as traveling on a later flight with more room.

Communication of safety briefing and information on equipment features

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

8.12 Air carriers should ensure that verbal descriptions are provided for information that is presented in a visual format and that audible information is 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, air carriers should provide oral, written or visual information about the equipment features of the aircraft (such as the location of call buttons and washroom features).

On-Board wheelchairs

8.14 Aircraft with accessible washroom facilities should be equipped with an on-board wheelchair. Aircraft which are not equipped with an accessible washroom should carry an on-board wheelchair when a passenger with a disability requests one, subject to the aircraft being capable of stowing and restraining 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 which are movable 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 Air carriers should make periodic enquiries during a flight about the needs of a person with a disability.

Moving through the cabin

8.17 Air carriers should provide assistance to persons with disabilities to move to and from the aircraft washroom. This would not include carrying.

Services NOT required of operators

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

- a) Assistance in eating;
- b) Assistance within the washroom or assistance with elimination functions; and
- c) Provision of medical services, including administering medication.

Section 9 – AIRCRAFT

Accessible aircraft features

9.1 Air carriers 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, where size and aircraft type permit. For example:

- a) Aircraft should be equipped with an accessible washroom;
- b) Signage should be positioned to avoid shadow areas and glare. Aircraft should have tactile directional signage to assist the movement of vision-impaired passengers around the cabin.
- c) Lighting on an aircraft, except reading and other lighting under the control of a passenger, should be directed and controlled so as not to create glare or shadows. Lighting should not result in any sharp contrasts in intensity in the passenger cabin.
- d) Integrated boarding stairs on an aircraft should have uniform riser height and uniform tread depths, and a first step on and a last step off of a height that does not exceed the uniform riser height; tread surfaces should be firm and non-slippery and should not create glare; the top outer edge of each step should be marked by a contrasting colour strip; and handrails should be provided on both sides.
- e) Handrails should be sturdy, rounded, smooth and slip-resistant; be 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% 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 about the passenger cabin.

- i) An on-board wheelchair should have a design that permits 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.
- j) Tactile markers should be installed to indicate rows.

Physical accessibility of aircraft

Accessible washrooms

9.2 On aircraft with washrooms, 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:** The doorway should be wide enough to accommodate a person with a disability using an on-board wheelchair and there should be enough space outside the door to manoeuvre that wheelchair. The door 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 use easily. These devices should be operable with one hand and 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 area.
- d) **Toilets:** The toilet should be at a height and location that allows a person with a disability using an on-board wheelchair to make an easy transfer. The toilet should have a flush control that is colour contrasted from its surrounding area. A person with a disability should be able to operate the flush control with a closed fist and minimal force, or the flush control should be automatically controlled. The toilet 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 so that a person in an on-board wheelchair can use them. Grab bars should be rounded, free of any sharp or abrasive element and slip-resistant. Grab bars should be colour contrasted from their surrounding area or marked with a contrasting colour strip that runs the full length of the bar.
- f) **Sinks, Faucets and Other Controls:** The sink should be positioned so that a person using an on-board wheelchair can use it. Faucets and other controls should be colour contrasted

from their surrounding area. A person with a disability should be able to use the faucet with a closed fist and minimal force or the faucet should be automatically controlled.

- e) Accessories: Accessories, such as soap dispensers, towel dispensers and waste receptacles, should be easy to use for a person with a disability using an on-board wheelchair. These accessories should be a different colour than their surrounding area and identified by tactile signs.
- f) Mirrors: The mirror should be mounted so that a person using an on-board wheelchair can access it.
- g) Call Buttons: The washroom should have a call button that is a different colour from its surrounding area and be identified by a tactile sign. The call button should be positioned so that a person using an on-board wheelchair has easy access to it and can operate it with one hand and minimal force, and not require fine finger control, tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist.

Stowage space for mobility aids

9.3 (a) Air carriers should carry at least one passenger-owned manually operated folding wheelchair in addition to small aids in the passenger cabin, consistent with safety and security requirements, and where there is sufficient space.

(b) Storage in the cabin of passengers' manual wheelchairs should have priority and take place when the person using the wheelchair pre-boards.

(c) Air carriers should give priority to wheelchairs and other mobility aids for stowage in the baggage compartment over other baggage and cargo.

Section 10 - CONNECTIONS AND LEAVING THE AIRPORT

Loss or delay of or damage to mobility equipment

10.1 In the case of a lost, damaged, unduly delayed or destroyed mobility aid resulting in the mobility aid not being available to the person with a disability upon the person's arrival at their destination, airport operators and air carriers 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 the disability, and provided at no extra charge.

10.3 Airport operators and air carriers 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 passengers with disabilities can make their onward travel arrangements.

10.4 If the aid is damaged during carriage and it can be repaired quickly and adequately, carriers should arrange for the repair of the aid at no expense to the person, and return it to the person as soon as possible.

10.5 If an aid is damaged during carriage and it cannot be repaired adequately or if an aid is lost and cannot be located, air carriers should reimburse the person according to applicable Conventions. However, air carriers are encouraged to reimburse the person for the full replacement cost of the aid.

Baggage retrieval

10.6 Airport operators and air carriers should assist persons with disabilities with baggage retrieval if requested.

Section 11 - GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Availability of accessible ground transportation

11.1 Airport operators and air carriers 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 operators and air carriers 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 operators and air carriers, or ground handling operators as appropriate, should provide 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 (e.g. published in large print or Braille; available in audio; or on an accessible Web site).

Ground transportation within the airport

11.3 Airport operators, air carriers or ground handling operators should provide vehicles or equipment for the transport of persons with disabilities within the 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 operators, air carriers, 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 where 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 must be trained in correct and safe procedures for boarding and disembarking. Service animals should be permitted to accompany the customer in the passenger compartment of the vehicle.

Accessible transportation between airports

11.6 Airport operators or air carriers, 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 the customer in the passenger compartment of the vehicle. Ground transportation vehicles should be able to accommodate the size 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.

Section 12 - COMPLAINTS

12.1 Airport operators and air carriers should:

- a) have processes available for passengers with disabilities to make complaints about the level or quality of service;
- b) have specially trained human resources available to passengers with disabilities to resolve problems [whether in person or by phone] in a timely manner, at no cost to the passenger;
- c) ensure that the complaints process is accessible to persons with disabilities, who may who may need assistive technology such as TTYs, or similarly effective technology, and accessible web sites;
- d) provide reasonable means for passengers with disabilities to file a complaint. Air carriers and airport operators should accept both verbal and written complaints;
- e) inform the public about their complaints procedure 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 when they become aware that the person is not satisfied with the solution provided.

Section 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 country.

13.2 The general responsibility of the enforcement body should be to conduct regular monitoring of service providers to ensure 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.

— END —