

# **AIRLINE PASSENGER SERVICE COMMITMENT**

28 March 2001

## **PREAMBLE**

Airlines in Europe have developed the Airline Passenger Service Commitment following consultation with representatives of Air Travellers, European Governments and the European Commission.

Strong competition between airlines has provided Europe's air travellers with an increased choice of airline, airport, price and service. The Airline Passenger Service Commitment contains non-legally binding commitments to deliver defined standards of service to air travellers. The code covers 14 areas: before travel, during travel and after travel. It describes the level of service air travellers may expect consistently from signatory airlines. It will enable air travellers to make a more informed choice of airline when planning their travel arrangements.

The airlines that are signatories to this Airline Passenger Service Commitment will continue to compete vigorously to meet the needs of customers by offering different products and different levels of customer service. They will endeavour to achieve the standards set out in this Airline Passenger Service Commitment on a consistent basis.

Signatory airlines will each develop their own individual service plans incorporating the Airline Passenger Service Commitment. Signatory airlines will establish staff training programmes and introduce changes to their computer systems to implement the Airline Passenger Service Commitment. During this implementation, some elements of the Airline Passenger Service Commitment may not be delivered immediately by every airline.

## **1. OFFER THE LOWEST FARE AVAILABLE THROUGH EACH OF ITS DIRECT OUTLETS**

- a. Each airline will offer the lowest appropriate fare available for which the passenger is eligible through its own telephone reservation system, through its own web site and through its own ticket offices for the date, flight and class of service requested.

- b. Each airline will inform passengers that different fares may be available through these different outlets.
- c. Each airline will inform the passenger about the applicable fare and any applicable fees, charges and taxes.

## **2. HONOUR THE AGREED FARE AFTER PAYMENT**

After payment for the ticket has been made, no fare increase will apply for the date, flight and class of service booked. However, any change in fees, charges and taxes will be subject to additional payment or refund.

## **3. NOTIFY PASSENGERS OF KNOWN DELAYS, CANCELLATIONS AND DIVERSION**

Each airline will notify passengers at the airport and on board an affected aircraft, in a timely manner, of the best available information regarding known delays, cancellations and diversions.

## **4. ASSIST PASSENGERS FACING DELAYS**

- a. Each airline will provide appropriate assistance, for example refreshments, meals, accommodation, to its passengers facing delays beyond two hours<sup>1</sup> provided that local conditions allow for such assistance to be delivered. This assistance may not apply in situations involving political unrest or long strikes in essential services or other exceptional circumstances beyond the airlines' control. Also, assistance may not be provided if to do so would further delay departure.
- b. The assistance described in paragraph 4a may not be offered on routes operated under public service obligations in accordance with the policy of the authority defining the obligation or when weather causes disruption on routes on which the regularity of operations is significantly affected by weather conditions or on routes of less than 300 km serving remote airports operated by aircraft with fewer than 80 seats.
- c. Each airline will produce a clear and concise statement of its policy, which will be made available to its passengers. This will include a list of routes on which any exceptions apply.

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<sup>1</sup> The assistance given to delayed passengers on an inclusive tour package will be in accordance with the published policy of the tour organiser.

## **5. ON TIME BAGGAGE DELIVERY**

Each airline will make every reasonable effort to deliver all checked baggage to the Arrivals Hall area as quickly as possible. In the case of mishandled checked bags, each airline will make every reasonable effort to deliver the mishandled bag to the passenger within 24 hours of its arrival at final destination, free of charge. Immediate assistance sufficient to meet the reasonable short-term needs of the passenger will also be offered by the airline.

## **6. ALLOW TELEPHONE RESERVATIONS TO BE HELD OR CANCELLED**

Each airline will allow the passenger either to hold a telephone reservation made directly with the airline without payment for a minimum of 24 hours or at the election of the airline, to cancel a reservation without penalty for up to 24 hours. If the airline chooses the second of these options, then the passenger will be entitled to a full refund without penalty. This offer is subject to applicable ticketing deadlines. Passengers will be advised which of these apply at the time of booking.<sup>2</sup>

## **7. PROVIDE PROMPT REFUNDS**

- a. Where a passenger claims and is entitled to a ticket refund, each airline will issue refunds within 7 business days for credit card purchases and within 20 business days for cash or cheque purchases for sales direct with the airline.
- b. Any taxes, fees and charges collected with the fare and shown on the ticket will be refundable where the ticket is not used. This will include non-refundable tickets and the payment will be made within the same time limits as above.

## **8. PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PASSENGERS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS PASSENGERS**

Each airline will publicise the services it offers for handling special need passengers, and for assisting passengers with reduced mobility in an appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> Some leisure airlines may decide to provide this facility only until 3 days before flight departure. This offer may not apply on routes operated by aircraft with fewer than 80 seats. Any such exclusion should be notified by the airline.

manner compatible with applicable safety regulations. In the context of passengers with reduced mobility the airlines commit themselves to support the attached paper on “Meeting the needs of people with reduced mobility”.

## **9. MEET PASSENGERS’ ESSENTIAL NEEDS DURING LONG ON-AIRCRAFT DELAYS**

The airline will make every reasonable effort to provide food, water, lavatories and access to medical treatment for passengers aboard an aircraft that is on the ground for an extended period of time without access to the terminal, as consistent with passenger and employee safety and security concerns.

NB: Airlines will make every reasonable effort not to keep passengers on board in long delays.

## **10. TAKE MEASURES TO SPEED UP CHECK-IN**

Airlines will set reasonable check-in deadlines and in coordination with the airports will take appropriate steps to avoid congestion in departure areas and take measures to speed up check-in to assist passengers to meet their check-in deadlines. Introduction of automated and e-ticketing systems, use of self service check-in and mobile check-in stations as well as providing for off airport check-in, fast track check-in and queue combing could be some of these measures.

## **11. REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS WHO ARE INVOLUNTARILY DENIED BOARDING**

In the event of a flight at departure time having more passengers than seats available, each airline will first seek volunteers who are prepared to stand down from the flight, subject to any security and/or operational constraints at the airport concerned.

## **12. PROVIDE INFORMATION TO PASSENGERS REGARDING AN AIRLINE’S COMMERCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS**

Airlines will provide their passengers with the following information relevant to their journey:

- A. At the time of booking:
  - I. Planned scheduled time of departure and arrival of the flights
  - II. Airport/terminal of departure and arrival
  - III. The number of en-route stops
  - IV. Any change of aircraft, terminal or airport

- V. Any conditions attached to the fare to be paid
- VI Name of carrier and flight number
- VII. If it is a smoking flight

In the event of substitution of operating carrier which has not previously been disclosed and which is not acceptable to the ticket holder, the passenger will be given the right to a refund or carried on the airline's next flight on which space is available in the same class.

B. With the confirmation invoice or with the ticket:

- I. Confirmation of flight times
- II. Free baggage allowance and liability limits
- III. Cabin baggage allowance

If, after purchase of the ticket, the airline makes a significant change to the scheduled flight time, which is not acceptable to the passenger, and the airline is unable to book the passenger on an alternate flight which is acceptable to the passenger, he/she will be entitled to a refund.

C. On request: (for the airlines own services and where available for services operated by other carriers)

- I. The aircraft type scheduled to be operated on the route and seat pitch
- II. Services normally offered on board
- III. Facilities for passengers with special needs and any charge made for using them (except for passengers with reduced mobility as provided for under Article 8)
- IV. Whether specific seats can be allocated or pre-booked
- V. Charges for excess baggage
- VI. Its Conditions of Carriage
- VII. Details of frequent flyer programme, if any
- VIII. Assistance programs for baggage lost, damaged or delayed
- IX. Details of the Airline Passenger Service Commitment

### **13. PROVIDE INFORMATION ON OPERATING CARRIER**

In case of flights operated under a code share, franchise or long term planned wet lease agreements, airlines will:

- I. Inform passengers of the name of the airline actually operating the flight. Passengers will be informed:

- upon reservation whenever such reservation is made through a distribution channel under the direct control of the airlines, i.e., airlines' own offices and agencies, airlines' telephone reservation center and airlines' own web sites; and
- at the airport upon check-in.

As regards reservation made through a channel, which is not under the direct control of the airlines, i.e. travel agencies and websites other than airlines' own websites, airlines will remind travel agents and web sites' operators to systematically inform passengers upon reservation accordingly.

- II. Make it clear through appropriate wording that the passenger's contract is with the marketing airline, i.e., the airline whose designator code appears on the flight coupon or routing slip next to the flight number.
- III. Inform passengers travelling on code shared services that the level of service may be different and the Airline Passenger Commitment may not apply.

## **14. BE RESPONSIVE TO PASSENGERS' COMPLAINTS**

Under normal circumstances, each airline will provide a substantive response to written complaints within 28 days from the date of receipt. When this does not permit sufficient time for the complaint to be properly investigated an interim response will be provided giving the reason for the delay. Each airline will designate a convenient point of passenger contact for all complaints and the address and/or phone number and departmental name of this customer service function will be provided in timetables, on websites and any other public information source and also be available at all travel agents accredited by airlines.

**DRAFT AS AT 12 MARCH 01**

**In Confidence**

**Not for circulation**

**AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS**

**MEETING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY  
(PRMs)**

(Presented by AEA, ERA and IACA)

**Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to improve the accessibility of air travel to people with reduced mobility by ensuring their needs are understood and provided for, and their safety and dignity are respected. It is aimed at airlines providing services and facilities at airports and on aircraft, and forms the basis on which a voluntary Code (or Codes) of Practice may be prepared. When preparing Codes, the appropriate provisions of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Document 30 (Section 5), and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO Annex 9) will be considered. These documents provide technical information and are produced, following consultation with the airline industry, by governmental agencies concerned with establishing standards and recommended practices.

**Definition**

A person with reduced mobility (PRM) is understood to mean any person whose mobility is reduced due to any physical disability (sensory or locomotory), an intellectual impairment, age, 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 .

**Basic assumptions**

1. PRMs have the same rights as other citizens to freedom of movement and freedom of choice. This applies to air travel as to all other areas in life.
2. Airlines, airports and related service providers have a responsibility to meet the needs of PRMs. PRMs also have a responsibility to identify their needs to the proper channels at the proper time.
3. Information must be made available to enable PRMs to plan and make their journey.

4. The cost of providing for the needs of PRMs must not be passed directly to the PRMs.
5. Disability should not be equated with illness and therefore PRMs must not be required to make medical declarations about their disability as a condition of travel.
6. Organisations representing PRMs will be consulted on issues relevant to PRMs. -
7. Staff will be given appropriate training in understanding and meeting the needs of PRMs.
8. Control and security checks should be undertaken in a manner which respects the dignity of PRMs.
9. PRMs must be enabled to remain independent to the greatest possible extent.

### **Airline Practices**

- No carrier will refuse a PRM except where he/she cannot safely be carried or cannot physically be accommodated. When the carriage of a PRM is refused, carriers will explain clearly and explicitly the reasons for refusal.
- When a PRM declares that he/she is self-reliant (self-sufficient and capable of taking care of all of his/her physical needs independently in flight), the airline should accept that declaration. The airline should then be under no obligation to provide on-board assistance which contravenes health, safety or hygiene requirements where such declaration has been made.
- Airlines will pursue technical and operational options for improving access and facilities on aircraft of all sizes, particularly when major refurbishment is undertaken.
- Where a direct route is not possible for a PRM, (e.g. because of small aircraft), airlines will endeavour to suggest an acceptable alternative.
- Regardless of the size of airport and aircraft, arrangements for embarkation and disembarkation should respect the dignity of PRMs.



- Airlines will, where space permits, provide on-board equipment/ facilities to aid the self-reliance of PRMs within limits of health, safety and hygiene.
- PRMs will have equal choice of seat allocation, subject to safety requirements. Airlines will explain clearly and explicitly the reasons for not allocating a specific seat when the request is not met for safety reasons.
- Certified Service Dogs will be carried in the cabin, subject to national importation and airline regulations. Where they are carried, there will be no charge.
- PRMs will not be charged for the carriage of basic mobility equipment or other essential disability assistive devices.
- Airlines must take all reasonable steps to avoid loss or damage to mobility equipment or other disability assistive devices. Where loss or damage occurs, airlines will make appropriate arrangements to meet the individual's immediate mobility needs.