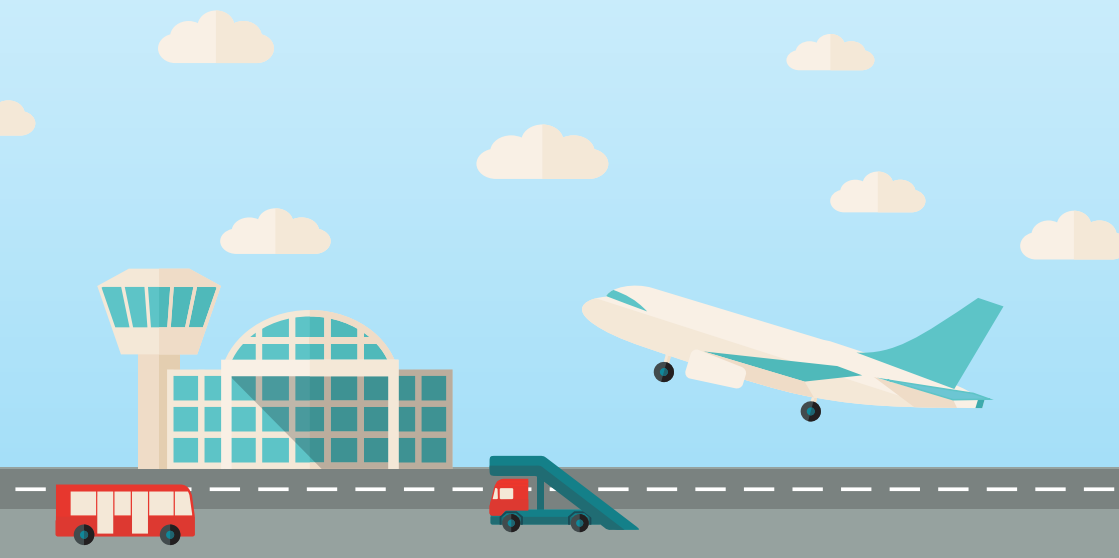


Easy-to-Read Guide for Accessible Air Travel in Hong Kong



Your Rights & Obligations To Air Travel



平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION



DISCLAIMER

All the information contained in this Easy-to-Read Guide are for reference only, and they are no substitute for legal advice. If you have any enquiries or you need further information, please contact the Equal Opportunities Commission.

COPYRIGHT

This work is copyright © EOC. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Ordinance, Cap. 528, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Published in December 2017

ABOUT EASY-TO-READ GUIDE

What is the purpose of this Easy-to-Read Guide?

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) cares about the needs of persons with reduced mobility (PRMs), including older people and persons with disabilities. This Easy-to-Read Guide aims to help you understand accessible air travel, provide an overview of the rights and obligations of PRMs as air passengers and offer helpful tips on making journeys accessible and smooth.

In 2015, the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) of Hong Kong released the Guidance for Airline Operators in Hong Kong: Facilitation of Persons with Reduced Mobility in Air Travel (CAD Guidance) to the Hong Kong registered air operators. Based on the CAD Guidance, the EOC issues this Easy-to-Read Guide and hopes that other non-Hong Kong registered air operators will adopt similar PRM-friendly measures.

You may notice the provision of accommodations for PRMs will vary across airlines and countries. You are advised to check and contact your travel agent, airlines and corresponding airports prior to your journey.

Who is PRM?

PRM in this Guide refers to any person whose mobility is reduced due to age or any disabilities (temporary/permanent) and requires appropriate attention and adaptation of services in using air transport.

What is in this Guide?

It offers advice to air passengers when they are –
Planning a trip / Booking a flight / At the airport / On board.

You can find this Guide at the EOC website: www.eoc.org.hk.



Foreword

Hello everyone! I am Yu Chui-yee, a wheelchair fencer and an amputee. Although I wear a prosthesis in my daily life, living in Hong Kong is reasonably convenient. Being also an athlete, I have to travel by plane to take part in competitions. Every time when our team travels for overseas competition, with some of us being wheelchair users and some crutch users, we need to bring along with us our competition wheelchairs, fencing bags and personal luggage as well. It is quite a big event whenever we do the check-in at the airport.



All our wheelchairs need to be checked in as baggage. And the wheelchairs provided by the airlines can be returned at the boarding gate, thereby allowing wheelchair users to move around freely within the restricted area. Upon boarding, they need to be transferred to a Sky chair to be transported to the plane's cabin. If the journey involves a transit, wheelchair users normally will not be able to use their own wheelchairs at the transit airport. Instead, they need to use wheelchairs provided by the local airport. As such wheelchairs are not custom-made, the seats may be too wide for the users. Also, the users cannot

self propel the wheelchair and need assistance from their companions or members of the airport staff. If the transit time is long, it will be more inconvenient for them. However, I was once able to retrieve and use my own wheelchair while on transit in Europe. Maybe Europe is more concerned and conscious about the needs of wheelchair users.

As our wheelchairs must be checked in as baggage, they sometimes get damaged in the handling process. On one occasion, one of our team members' wheelchair had its frame so warped that he could not sit in it! Fortunately, this happened on his journey back to Hong Kong. Although compensation could be claimed, the team member had to use a back-up wheelchair for a week, which caused much inconvenience to his everyday life!

Therefore, for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and other passengers with special needs, it is very important that airlines and their staff understand and support barrier-free air travel.

Overall, as a PWD, travelling by plane is quite convenient. Having said that, when planning a trip, we should first find out the barrier-free design and arrangements at the transit and destination airports. When booking air tickets, we can ask the airlines in advance for special services. Such barrier-free services include arranging for wheelchair pick-up at the check-in counter and the boarding gate, and priority boarding. I hope that all PWDs can learn more about their rights and obligations when travelling by air and enjoy their flights!

YU Chui-ye, M.H.

Member of the Equal Opportunities Commission



Your Rights & Obligations to Air Travel

Right to Fly

Airline operators should not refuse to accept a reservation for a flight or to embark passengers with a valid ticket on the grounds of their disability or reduced mobility, except for operational or safety reasons.

Passengers who are not self-reliant are accepted to fly, but are obliged to be accompanied by another person who is capable of providing the assistance that can meet the safety requirements set by the CAD.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities promotes the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities (PWDs). It is recommended that appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to PWDs access, on an equal basis with others, to transportation and its facilities.

Disability Discrimination Ordinance

Under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO), the definition of disability is broad and covers most illnesses and impairments a person may encounter. PWDs are protected against discrimination while receiving facilities and services in relation to transport or travel under the DDO.

The DDO offers protection against discrimination in the provision of goods, services and facilities on aircrafts even when PWDs are flying outside Hong Kong, providing the aircrafts are registered in Hong Kong.

Plan Your Trip

- While planning your trip, remember to check whether the accessible service, facilities and relevant information you need are provided by the travel agent, tour operator, airline and airport.
- You have the right to ask for the said information by different means of communication, for example, phone, internet or website; and to request alternative content formats, such as large print and audio format, if necessary.
- If you set for a multi-city itinerary, make sure to check if the flights are operated by the same or multiple airlines so that you will not miss related information in the planning stage. If you need any assistance, try to make your request as specific as possible so that service providers can plan ahead and be ready to accommodate your needs.
- Take into consideration all practical concerns about your mobility, and choose the best way to communicate your travel needs with service providers before booking your ticket.





Book Your Flight

Advance Notice

It is helpful to notify the travel agent and airline of your need for assistance at the time of booking. In order to allow sufficient time for providing the assistance, you are suggested to make the notification at least 48 hours before the published time of departure of the flight.

Safety Restrictions

You must keep in mind that there are safety rules that apply to the carriage of PRMs and the medical and mobility equipment as well. Before booking the flight, you are advised to enquire about those rules and restrictions, and check if your medical and mobility equipment is allowed to be carried into aircraft cabin or has to be checked-in before boarding, and whether extra charges will be incurred regarding the carriage of your equipment.

Proof of Disability

There should be no requirement to prove your disability or reduced mobility. Proof of disability, such as General Practitioner's letter, should only be requested when fraud is suspected.

The only case to show medical clearance is when the safety or well-being of any passengers (including the PRM) cannot be reasonably assured arising from a medical condition.

Seating Arrangement

Subject to safety requirements and availability, you can reserve a seat that best meet your needs. You should communicate with the airline and explain your request on seating arrangement if necessary.

However, operational difficulties such as a change of aircraft, may affect seating allocations.

You can also request to sit next to your accompanying person, if any.

Accompanying Person

In order to ensure flight safety, you are required to be accompanied by a personal assistant if you are not self-reliant.

Not being self-reliant means if

- you cannot unfasten your seat belt on your own;
- you cannot leave your seat and reach an emergency exit unaided;
- you cannot retrieve and fit a lifejacket;
- you cannot don an oxygen mask without assistance;
- you cannot understand the safety instructions given by the crew in an emergency situation.





Medical and Mobility Equipment

You have the right to carry essential mobility equipment such as wheelchair and walking frame free of charge, subject to aviation regulation, operational or safety restrictions. You are advised to enquire about these rules and restrictions in advance. Mobility equipment which are not essential for the flight journey may incur an extra charge, such as motorised scooter.

If you need to carry gaseous oxygen / air cylinders for medical use, it should comply with the Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (ICAO Doc 9284), such as the restrictions of no more than 5 kg gross mass per cylinder. The airlines have discretion to approve the carriage of such cylinder or to supply medical oxygen. You are advised to check with respective airline, and ask if any charges will be incurred.

As for medicines, you should bring along with the supporting documentation from a relevant qualified medical professional.

Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs

PRMs may require the company of assistance dogs or guide dogs. Airlines registered in Hong Kong allow only dogs which comply with the definition of guide dogs or assistance dogs to be carried in an aircraft passenger compartment to accompany the owner. For other airlines, you need to consult the airline concerned about their policy on the carriage of such dogs.

Please notify the airline as soon as possible if you need to travel with a guide dog or an assistance dog in cabin. Airline staff will ask the person with visual impairment to produce proof that the dog has been trained by a recognised body, a recent letter written from a medical doctor illustrating why the person is required to travel with the dog, as well as the special permit and related documents issued by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). The airline may not accept carriages of such animals unless the required documentation is provided. Also, the owner of the dog needs to provide the original documents while check in to the flight at the airport and arriving at the destination.

As such, you should also allow sufficient time for obtaining approval from the AFCD which includes the application for a special permit (which exempts assistance dogs/guide dogs from quarantine when they come back to Hong Kong) and an in-cabin exemption letter for your assistance dog/guide dog. You need to prepare your dog to go through the anti-rabies vaccination as well as the rabies antibody test for complying with the requirement.

As AFCD has time requirement for the vaccination and antibody test, you are strongly advised to apply well in advance and make allowances for paperwork time. When you start planning your journey, you should contact AFCD as soon as possible to ask for details. You also have to check beforehand whether the destination imposes any restrictions on assistance dog/guide dog, such as vaccinations or a quarantine period.

According to the CAD Guidance, a guide dog or an assistance dog should be attached to the owner's seat belt during take-off, landing and in turbulence. In cruise phase, it would be acceptable for the dog to be subject to less constraint. No extra charge should be incurred provided that additional seat is not required. The dog and its owner are not allowed to be seated in a row adjacent to an emergency exit.





At the Airport

Help Phones and Porter Service

Dedicated 24-hour help phones are located throughout the terminals and departures kerbs of Terminal 1. Porter service to help carry baggage is available in all terminals including the entrances along the departures kerbs and other drop-off points to check-in counters, and from the Baggage Reclaim Hall to pick-up points for ground transport, at a charge. For service booking, please refer to Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) website.

Tactile Guide Paths and Braille Maps

Tactile guide paths are installed from the special needs vehicle drop-off points in both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 connecting all the way to the nearest customer service counters. Braille maps with audio facility guide are installed along these tactile guide paths.

Checking-In

Depending upon your needs, you can request special arrangements while you are checking in. For example, people with hearing impairment may request the airlines to provide a means for the identification for facilitating them in passing through immigration, customs and boarding.

In-Terminal Transport

Electric vehicles service is available at the two service counters at Terminal 1 and Mid-Field Concourse to carry passengers to and from their aircraft gates at a charge. For service booking, please refer to HKIA website.

On Board

Boarding the Flight

In case you need to transfer from wheelchair, subject to the safety restrictions, you can request a seat with movable armrest, if such seats are available.





Accessible Information

You should have equal access to the essential flight information. When flight-related announcements are made orally and visually, they should be expressed in simple and clear language with appropriate illustrations. You can ask cabin crew to explain in-flight information such as dinner menu, emergency procedures, safety information, etc, if required.

Cabin Crew Assistance

PRMs may request reasonable assistance to be provided by cabin crew, for example, the stowage and retrieval of any hand baggage and/or mobility aid.

However, cabin crew should **NOT** be expected to provide personal care for PRMs which includes:

-  Feeding (except for opening food containers and describing catering arrangement);
-  Medicating;
-  Toileting (except for assisting a passenger to move through the cabin in an on-board wheelchair);
-  Lifting (passengers requiring lifting must travel with a personal assistant providing such assistance).

Leaving the Aircraft

You can ask for assistance in leaving the aircraft. Priority for receiving assistance would be given to passengers who notify their needs before the departure of the flight.

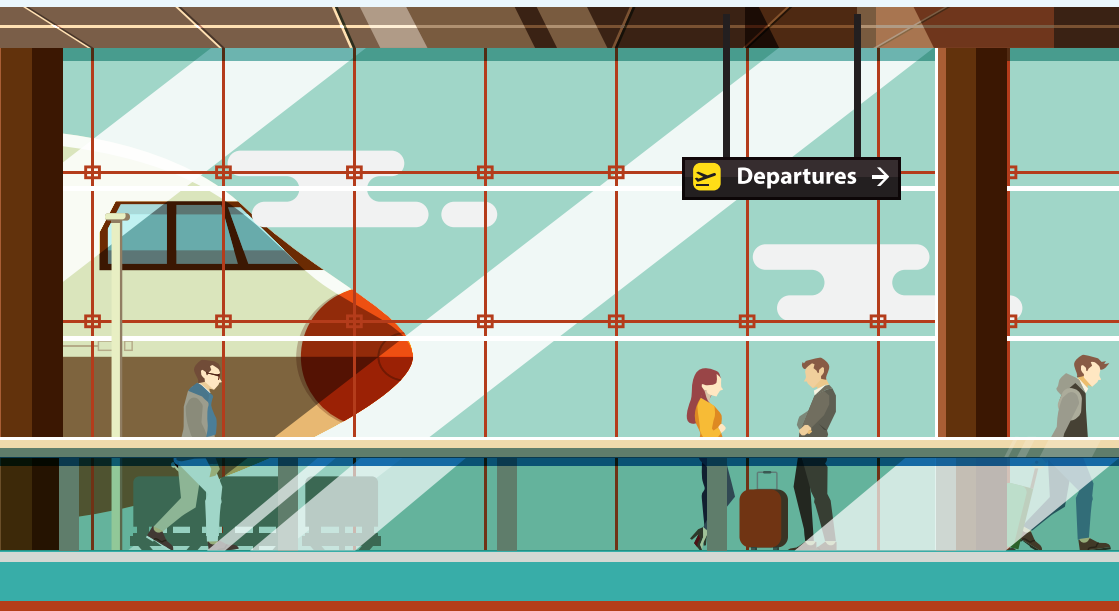


Check Before You Fly

Will you:

- be travelling alone?
- need to be accompanied by a carer?
- need to be accompanied by a guide dog?
- carry medical and mobility equipment?
- need help getting around the airport?
- need help with baggage and boarding?
- need help if boarding the plane via stairs instead of air bridge?
- need special seating arrangement?

If you are a person with reduced mobility and your answer is yes to any of the above questions, you may need to check with the travel agent, the tour operator, the airline and the airport concerned to see if assistance can be provided.



相關資訊 Related Information

《給香港註冊航空公司的指引：協助行動不便人士使用航空服務》

Guidance for Airline Operators in Hong Kong:

Facilitation of Persons with Reduced Mobility in Air Travel

<http://www.cad.gov.hk/english/pdf/CAD800.pdf>

《殘疾歧視條例》 Disability Discrimination Ordinance

http://www.eoc.org.hk/eoc/graphicsfolder/showcontent.aspx?content=ordinance_ddo



聯絡 Contact



機構 Organization	電話 Tel	網址 Website
漁農自然護理署 AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT	(852) 2150 7065	www.afcd.gov.hk
民航處 CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT	(852) 2910 6355	www.cad.gov.hk
香港國際機場 HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	(852) 2181 8888	www.hongkongairport.com
國泰航空 CATHAY PACIFIC	(852) 2747 3333	www.cathaypacific.com
港龍航空 CATHAY DRAGON	(852) 2747 3333	www.cathaypacific.com
香港航空 HONG KONG AIRLINES	(852) 3916 3666	www.hongkongairlines.com
香港快運航空 HONG KONG EXPRESS	(852) 3902 0288	www.hkexpress.com



平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

地址 Address: 香港黃竹坑香葉道 41 號 16 樓
16/F., 41 Heung Yip Road,
Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong

電話 Tel : 852-2511 8211

傳真 Fax : 852-2511 8142

電郵 Email : eoc@eoc.org.hk

網址 Website : www.eoc.org.hk