

## Airline Policies and Travel Tips for Disability Travel & Special Needs Traveler

Essential Health Supplies Aruba shares tips and guideline for disability travel for all major Airlines traveling from the United States to Aruba.



Travel can be stressful at the best of times, but when you have to factor in a disability, getting from point A to point B can become that much more frustrating. Airlines know this and do their part to make air travel as comfortable and seamless as they can for every passenger. Since each airline is different, they may have differing policies where travelers with disabilities are concerned.

We're sharing some tips and information on what 7 major airlines that travel to Aruba for travelers who need extra support when flying.

### **United**

When flying with United, call the airline's disability desk (1-800-228-2744) 48 hours in advance of travel if you'll be traveling with an assistive device so they can ensure your device can be used in-flight. Any special needs you have should be mentioned when you make your reservation so the airline staff can do their best to help you. This includes the need for assistance getting to your gate, boarding, getting to your seat, deplaning or connecting.

Wheelchairs are available for use at each airport United uses, but if you don't see one when you arrive you can ask a skycap or agent for help. Aisle wheelchairs for transferring non-ambulatory customers to and from their seats on the aircraft are also available, as are on-board wheelchairs in

every aircraft with more than 60 seats. Some domestic and international airports may not have jet-bridges available for boarding, but in these cases, a passenger assist lift (PAL), mechanical lift, ramp or a stair chair may be used for boarding and deplaning.

In addition, certain seats on the aircraft are made available to passengers with a disability, but the request needs to be made at least 24 hours in advance of your scheduled flight. You can check your wheelchair or other assistive devices at the ticket counter or at the gate, and there is room for one collapsible wheelchair on board. If you want to use this space, request it when you identify yourself for pre-boarding. Finally, here are [United's disability policies](#).

## **Delta**

Delta personnel are available to assist passengers in boarding, deplaning and connecting with their flights, and most of the airline's aircraft are subject to federal accessibility requirements for passengers with disabilities. Depending on the type and age of the aircraft, accessible features of Delta's fleet include movable aisle armrests, wheelchair stowage locations, on-board wheelchairs and, on larger airplanes, wheelchair-accessible lavatories. Depending on the aircraft, they also provide movable aisle armrest seats so passengers who use aisle chairs to board the aircraft can more easily transfer into their seats. If your seat doesn't have a movable armrest and you need one, a gate agent or in-flight personnel can see if another seat with a movable armrest is available on your flight.

Delta also provides a designated location on board most aircraft for stowing one personal wheelchair on a first come, first served basis. The chair or scooter has to fit in a FAA-approved storage area and must be of the weight and size that will fit in the on-board location. You can also check your wheelchair at the ticket counter or the gate and use Delta's wheelchair equipment for travel within the airport. All of Delta's aircraft have an on-board wheelchair, and it can be used to move to and from the lavatory. Finally, here are [Delta's disability policies](#).

## **American Airlines**

When making your reservation with American Airlines, let them know if you'll need a wheelchair to get to your departure gate, and during your connection (if you have one). It's also a good idea to remind the airport agent that you'll need a wheelchair or other mobility assistance at your destination or connecting city.

Some airports have electric carts to assist customers in moving throughout the airport. These vehicles operate continuously, and are available for all customers. Upon request, pre-boarding assistance can be provided if you need it.

Flight attendants can help customers get from their seats to the aircraft lavatory and back during flight by using the on-board wheelchair. Every jet aircraft has a collapsible chair available for on-board use, and there are many seats available with moveable aisle armrests within the main cabin. American Airlines (and American Eagle jet aircraft) has a designated space in the cabin of each aircraft to accommodate one collapsible wheelchair. Non-collapsible wheelchairs or scooters are acceptable as checked luggage and can be checked in at either the ticket counter or the departure gate. Finally, here are [American Airlines' disability policies](#).

## **US Airways**

When traveling with US Airways, if you have a mobility disability and need special seating, call 800-428-4322 FREE (TTY 800-245-2966 FREE) at least 24 hours before your scheduled departure to ensure your needs are met. The airline can provide a seat in a row with a movable aisle armrest for passengers needing to transfer from a boarding wheelchair to their seat, or a bulkhead seat or other seat with more legroom for passengers with a fused or immobilized leg. The airline can also provide an on-board wheelchair but let them know 48 hours in advance if you need one.

US Airways offers pre-boarding for passengers with a disability who need extra time or assistance to board, stow accessibility equipment or be seated. They also offer boarding and deplaning assistance — if you need it, let a gate agent know. Also let the airline know if you need help stowing or retrieving carry-on items, and if you need a wheelchair at your destination or connection. The agent will make a note in your reservation and order your wheelchair.

US Airways and US Airways Express have designated priority space in the cabin of each aircraft to accommodate one collapsible wheelchair. Non-collapsible wheelchairs or scooters are acceptable as checked luggage, which you can check at the ticket counter or departure gate. Finally, here are [US Airways' disability policies](#).

## **Air Canada**

Customers with disabilities or other special needs should let Air Canada know when making their reservation. The more advance notice you can give, the more the airline can do to ensure ease of travel. Some of their special needs services include:

- Indicating any special needs or conditions with a notation on your boarding card
- Assistance with registration at the check-in counter
- Help moving to the boarding area, as well as boarding, getting into your seat, and deplaning
- Help moving around the airport – wheelchair assistance is available at the airport for this

- Stowing and retrieving your bags and mobility aids
- Assistance unwrapping and cutting food, and opening beverages

If you'll be traveling with an assistive device of any kind, let Air Canada know 48 hours in advance so they can ensure it meets the requirements for your specific aircraft. If you have any questions about getting your needs met, or to ensure that you will be comfortable on your flight, call the Air Canada reservations desk ( 1-888-247-2262 FREE) and ask for the medical desk with the details of your needs and reservation.

Air Canada stows most wheelchairs and mobility devices, either as checked baggage, or if there's room, on board. There are also wheelchairs on board most Air Canada aircraft for helping customers to the lavatory, or when boarding and deplaning. Finally, here are [Air Canada's disability policies](#).

## Southwest

If you're flying with Southwest and you need a wheelchair at the airport, or need other special assistance, it's best to inform the airline in advance, or as soon as you arrive at the airport so your requests can be fulfilled as quickly as possible.

Priority pre-boarding is available for those who have a specific seating need to accommodate their disability, or who need assistance in boarding the aircraft or stowing an assistive device. Should you need to pre-board you can request a pre-boarding document from the customer service agent at the departure gate. This document lets the boarding agent know that you need to pre-board.

A small wheelchair that can fit down the aircraft aisle is available at every gate and can be used if you need help getting into your seat. Each gate is also equipped with a Passenger Transfer Kit (PTK), which contains a slide board and a transfer sling. The sling is used to lift a customer requiring this type of assistance safely from his/her wheelchair into the small wheelchair and then into the aircraft seat. To make this transfer easier, at least the first two rows on most Southwest aircraft are equipped with movable aisle armrests.

Southwest checks most wheelchairs and mobility devices as long as they can be stowed safely, and there is space for one collapsible wheelchair, available on a first come, first served basis, aboard the aircraft. Finally, [Southwest's disability policies](#).

## JetBlue

Contact the airline ( 1-800-JETBLUE FREE) to add any special service you might need to an existing reservation. The more JetBlue knows about the type of assistance you need and the earlier

you make your request, the more they can do to help make your flight and time at the airport as comfortable as possible. For example, if you're not able to ascend or descend stairs, you should request special assistance with boarding and deplaning when you make your reservation so airport crew members can have the necessary equipment ready for you.

Airport wheelchair service is available at all airport locations, and JetBlue has specially-designed wheelchairs for any immobile customers to use in reaching their seats when boarding and deplaning.

Note that JetBlue doesn't offer curbside service at most of their airport locations so if you need help leaving the airport, make a request with a JetBlue crew member inside the terminal so they can provide the curbside assistance needed. Finally, here are [JetBlue's disability policies](#).

## **Spirit**

Depending on what kind of special assistance you need, you can request it when making a reservation online or through Spirit Airlines reservations to ensure you have everything you need for a comfortable journey.

Depending on the size of the item, customers can take wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches, or assistive devices, in addition to one carry-on item on board. You can also check your wheelchair at the ticket counter or the gate and use Spirit's wheelchair equipment. Spirit Airlines personnel can assist customers with disabilities in boarding, deplaning and connecting with their flights, and provide assistance in getting customers to and from gates. In addition, all of Spirit's aircraft have an on-board wheelchair.

Once you reach your destination airport, Spirit can help with deplaning and have your personal wheelchair ready for you at the gate or at the baggage claim. They will also provide transfer service on and off the aircraft using boarding or aisle chairs that are designed for aircraft aisles. If you're making a connection, assistance can be provided between flights using the airline's wheelchair service. Finally, here are [Spirit Airlines' policies on disabilities](#).

It's also a good idea to notify a customer service representative at the ticket counter at the time of check-in and upon arrival at the gate area if you're going to be stowing your wheelchair on-board. The wheelchair can't exceed a height of 40 inches, a length of 50 inches, a width of 13 inches, or weigh more than 70 pounds.

Frontier's customer service representatives will also make sure that passengers with a disability have the opportunity to board before the general boarding begins, and if you're stowing your wheelchair, will make sure it gets stowed properly. When you reach your destination, a customer service representative or flight attendant will bring your wheelchair to the front of the aircraft after all

Finally, here's [additional information about special needs passengers](#).

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