

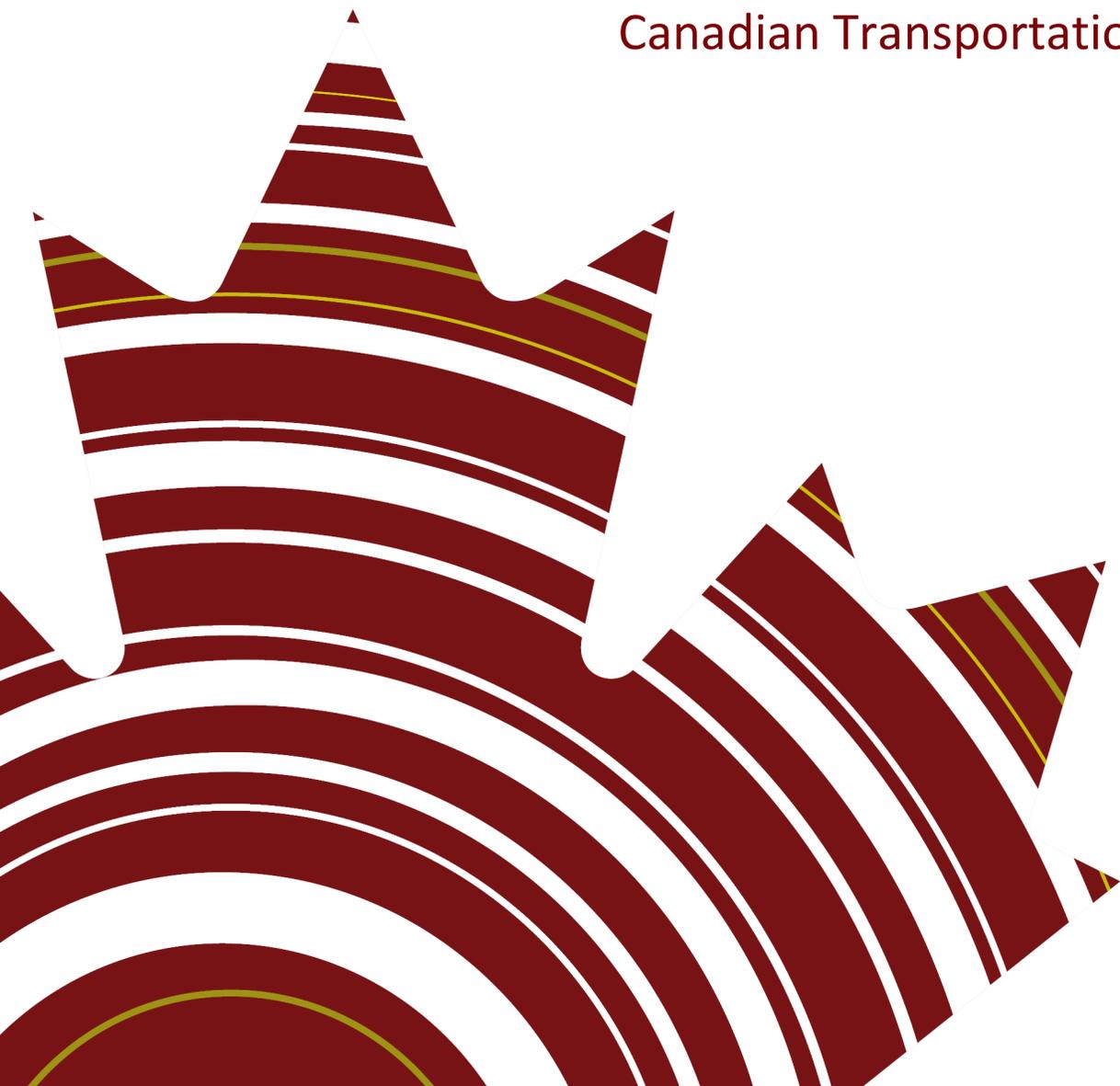


Canadian
Transportation
Agency

Office
des transports
du Canada

Take Charge of Your Travel: A Guide for Travellers with Disabilities

Canadian Transportation Agency



Canada 

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[Alternate formats](#) are available. Une [version française](#) est disponible.

Introduction

Preparing to travel? This guide will help. It will give you some ideas about how to plan and conduct your journey. It describes services designed to facilitate barrier-free travel on airplanes, trains, ferries and buses that cross a provincial/territorial or Canadian border. The guide can help you plan your trip with confidence, and to take charge of your travel experience!

You'll find one important piece of advice repeated throughout this guide: talk with your transportation service provider ahead of time. Let them know how they can help. When they know what you require and are provided with enough advance notice, you can expect to receive the services you need.

How to use this guide

This guide is set up to help you plan your trip and anticipate, and prepare for, the challenges that travel can present. It begins with some things to consider as select your carrier.

You'll find suggestions about how to make your reservations, either directly with the carrier, through your travel agent or online. We have also created a reservation checklist ([Annex A: Reservation Checklist for Persons With Disabilities: A Step-by-step Guide for Planning Your Travel](#)) that you can use to itemize your travel needs and facilitate a discussion with your travel agent or carrier.

Then we move on to look at your journey from start to finish. First, we'll talk about the terminal, then about getting on board. We'll describe some issues that can arise along the way, and how to plan ahead for your arrival at the other end. We'll also provide you with some advice about what to do when things don't turn out as you expected.

Broadly speaking, the CTA can provide you with accessibility-related guidance about travel on airplanes within Canada and internationally when travelling to/from Canada and accessing airports located in Canada, as well as on trains, ferries and buses that cross provincial/territorial borders or the Canadian border and accessing the terminals located in Canada that serve them. The CTA can also provide you with accessibility-related guidance concerning the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

Planning is key

As a traveller with a disability, you should not face barriers when you travel.

It is always a good idea to plan your trip ahead of time and know how to get help if you need it along the way. By planning early, you can get more information about your options and ensure that the carrier has enough time to provide the services you need.

Your preparations will make your travel easier and more enjoyable. Here are three useful steps:

- Determine your disability-related needs;
- Identify which carriers can best meet your needs; and
- Get written confirmation about your accessibility arrangements when you book your travel.

Finding information

It's always a good idea to gather information about your trip well before you go. Use your travel agent or the carrier as resources. Carrier websites and customer service staff can answer questions about the accessibility services that are available and what might meet your needs. If you need information in an alternative format, let your carrier know which format you require. For example, if the information is only available in paper format, let them know whether you would like a version in large print, Braille or in an electronic format. Larger service providers are also required to ensure that if information is made available in an electronic format, the format is compatible with adaptive technology that is intended to assist persons with disabilities and, if information is made available in an audio format, it is made available in a visual format upon request by a person with a disability (and vice versa). For more information, see the CTA's [*Communication with Persons with Disabilities: A Guide*](#).

It often pays to shop around. Canada's transportation system is complex, with a wide range of transportation service providers varying in size and resources. This means that services vary and some may not be available everywhere. While all carriers are required to meet the needs of travellers with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, some may be better equipped than others to meet your specific needs. Ask questions. Compare answers. You'll get more control over your journey.

Canadian standards for accessible transportation

There are Canadian regulations for accessible transportation that most federal transportation service providers must follow.

The [*Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations*](#) (ATPDR) provide a set of clear, consistent, specific and legally binding accessibility requirements for transportation service providers. The regulations are comprehensive and cover communication and personnel training; service and technical requirements for carriers and terminal operators; and requirements for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

The ATPDR apply to large carriers and terminals in modes of transport under federal jurisdiction – all air services, as well as most rail, bus, and ferry services that transport passengers across provincial/territorial or international borders – as well as the CBSA and the CATSA. Many ATPDR requirements apply only to Canadian transportation service providers, while some apply to both Canadian and foreign transportation service providers. For more information on the application of the ATPDR, see the CTA's [*Transportation service providers covered by the Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations: A Guide*](#).

The ATPDR are an important tool for making sure travel is accessible. However, transportation service providers not covered by the ATPDR are still required to provide accessible services. The CTA is considering whether and how to extend ATPDR requirements to the smaller transportation service providers not currently covered. In the meantime, the CTA expects smaller transportation service providers to comply with the following standards:

- [*Air Transportation Regulations, Part VII*](#) (apply to Canadian airlines operating airplanes with 30 or more seats within Canada)
- [*Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations*](#) (require certain transportation service providers to train their employees and contracted personnel on how to provide services to persons with disabilities)
- [*Removing Communication Barriers for Travellers with Disabilities*](#) (Communication Code)
- [*Aircraft Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities: Code of Practice for Fixed-Wing Aircraft with 30 or More Passenger Seats*](#) (Air Code)
- [*Accessibility Guidelines for Small Aircraft - Services for persons with disabilities on aircraft with 29 and fewer passenger seats*](#) (Small Aircraft Guidelines)
- [*Passenger Rail Car Accessibility and Terms and Conditions of Carriage by Rail of Persons with Disabilities*](#) (Rail Code)
- Accessibility standards for ferries: [*Ferry Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities*](#) (Ferry Code)
- [*Passenger Terminal Accessibility*](#) (Terminal Code)
- [*Accessibility of Non-National Airports System Air Terminals*](#) (Non-NAS Code)

You can find the ATPDR and associated guides, the regulations regarding training and air services, the codes of practice and guidelines on our [website](#). Alternatively, you can contact us at the [coordinates](#) provided at the end of this guide.

Travelling outside Canada

Our tips can also help you if you travel outside the country. Remember, though, that Canadian standards and rules generally don't apply in other countries (although the CTA has sometimes extended some Canadian standards and rules to Canadian carriers when they operate outside Canada). In some places, travel is very accessible, but in many other places, it is not.

A reminder: While a passport is an essential document for international travel, you may also need additional documents such as a visa, health certificate and/or proof of vaccination. If you are bringing any medication, ask about how it will be handled at security checkpoints. It is always a good idea to carry your medication in your carry-on luggage so it is within reach during travel or in the event of a flight delay or if your baggage is delayed or lost.

If you use a service dog, it is always advisable to ask ahead about what the rules and restrictions related to travel with a service dog are, including any quarantine or permit requirements that might apply in your destination country. It is also advisable to ask whether an international health certificate and/or proof of vaccination for your dog are required and to keep the required documentation for your service dog with you at all times while visiting foreign countries.

If you are planning on taking an international flight and bringing a mobility aid, your airline is required to offer you the opportunity to make a special declaration of interest for your aid. This declaration allows you to reflect the monetary value and a description of your mobility aid in case it is damaged, destroyed, lost or not returned to you within the usual time frame at your destination. A special declaration of interest is important because, without it, international instruments cap the carriers' limits of liability to a level far less than the value of most mobility aids. The impact of this is that, if an aid is lost, damaged or destroyed during a trip

and the traveller has not completed a special declaration of interest, they may only be entitled to reimbursement for a portion of the value of the aid. You can find out more about this on your airline's website.

Note: Some products sold over the counter in Canadian pharmacies require prescriptions in other countries, including the United States. You may not be able to bring your medication into another country without a prescription.

Ask before you go what you can and cannot take with you. For example, there may be restrictions on the types of oxygen devices that are permitted and on the number and types of batteries for mobility aids. There may also be restrictions on the types of emotional support animals that you can travel with and conditions on how they are transported. Look for information from your travel agency, carrier, government of the country you will be visiting, travel publications, and websites.

Take charge through your plan

From the information you have gathered, it's time to build your travel plan and book it, either through your travel agent or directly with the carrier, either by phone or online.

When you make your reservation directly with the carrier, mention your disability and explain your accessibility needs. Ask your carrier about the services and equipment they provide that will meet your needs. You can also check their website for information.

If your reservation is made through a travel agent or other third party, such as an online company that allows you to research and book travel, it is always a good idea to contact your carrier directly to confirm that your accessibility needs have been correctly communicated and that the carrier is aware of the services you require to meet your needs.

Advance notice and information and documents to support a service request

If you need any accessibility services from your carrier, it is recommended that you give them as much notice as possible. While in some cases, no advance notice is required, carriers are required to arrange most services for you when you give them at least 48 hours' notice. With less than 48 hours' notice, they must make a reasonable effort to do so. If a carrier requires you to provide information or documents (for example, a medical certificate) to assess your service requests, up to 96 hours advance notice may be required.

Note: If you provide advance notice but the notice period includes weekend or holiday days, your carrier may not be able to complete its assessment of your service request and, for that reason, may not be required to provide the service. It's therefore important that you make every effort to ensure that the advance notice includes at least two full business days.

Usually you do not have to provide information or documentation to support your service request. However, in some cases, such as when a traveller uses a mobility aid or an assistive device (for example, a portable oxygen concentrator), carriers may require information (for example, the weight and dimensions of the mobility aid) or documents (for example, a medical certificate regarding the need for medical oxygen during travel). Carriers may also want a traveller's health professional to talk to its medical staff to clarify the traveller's service needs and ensure they are in a position to meet them. Be clear on exactly what your service needs are and ask about the services you can get.

Note: If your carrier requests information or documents to support your service request, the carrier must offer to retain an electronic copy for at least three years. This will avoid you having to provide the same information or documents each time you travel with the carrier.

For more information on advance notice and supporting information and documentation, see the CTA's [Advance Notice/Supporting Documentation Requesting Services for Persons with Disabilities: A Guide](#).

Making arrangements to receive help

You can arrange to receive help throughout your journey, including:

- moving to/from a pick-up/drop-off area (curbside zone) of a terminal located in Canada;
- checking in;
- moving through the terminal, including through the security screening checkpoint;
- boarding, connecting, and disembarking;
- storing and retrieving baggage;
- moving to/from an on-board washroom;
- moving through the terminal's border clearance area; and
- obtaining accessible ground transportation from your destination terminal in Canada.

You should note that carriers are not required to provide assistance – or are only required to provide limited assistance – with:

- eating, taking medication, using the washroom;
- transferring to/from a passenger seat after departure and before arrival;
- orientation or communication; or
- physical assistance in the event of an emergency, including in the case of an evacuation or decompression.

If you need this help, ask your carrier about travelling with a support person.

The assistance provided by a support person is in addition to the assistance that the carrier is already required to provide to passengers with disabilities, which includes, for example, assisting the passenger with meals served by the carrier by opening packages, identifying food items and their location and cutting large food portions; assistance with boarding/disembarking, storing and retrieving carry-on baggage, and describing the layout of an aircraft, train, ferry or bus and the location of onboard amenities; or transferring the passenger between a mobility aid and their passenger seat before departure and after arrival.

A Canadian carrier must provide the adjacent seating for a necessary support person without charging you an additional fare or any other charges if you are travelling within Canada, except if that travel is part of an itinerary which includes travel outside Canada (for example, domestic legs of international flights).

Note: Your carrier is required to provide you with written confirmation about the accessibility services you will receive. This will help you to verify arrangements before you leave and again along the way.

You will also have to plan how you will get from home to the terminal and from the terminal to your final destination. In larger communities, there is a variety of accessible transportation available, from taxis and buses to rental cars. Smaller communities may have fewer choices. You may need to reserve ahead of time to make sure your ride is available to get you from point A to point B. Canadian terminal operators that have arrangements with ground transportation companies, must ensure that transportation from their terminals is accessible (see [On arrival](#) below).

Seats and cabins

Let your carrier know what your needs are for your seat or cabin. Based on the class of service that you have requested, your carrier must let you know what seats or cabins are available and have the equipment and facilities that would best meet your accessibility needs. Provide feedback to your carrier as it must consider your opinion before assigning you a seat or cabin.

Carriers cannot charge seat selection fees for accessible seating.

Note: If you wish to reserve specific accessible seating, you should make your request with your carrier well in advance of travel. Providing a carrier with adequate advance notice about the need for such seating will allow it to ensure that the seating is provided and, if necessary, make changes to seats that have already been assigned. In addition, if the seat that you wish to reserve is in an emergency exit row, there are regulatory requirements related to safety that must be met and the carrier may have to assess your capacity and capabilities to meet those requirements before permitting you to sit in such a seat.

A Canadian carrier must provide that additional seating at no additional charge for travel between points in Canada if you require additional adjacent seating to accommodate your disability, for example:

- for a support person to provide you with assistance during travel that your carrier does not provide;
- for your service dog because the floor space at your seat is insufficient; or
- if the nature of your disability is such that the limitation to a single seat would be a barrier to travel; for example, if you have a fused leg or a leg brace, or you are functionally disabled by obesity.

For international travel – including any portion of the itinerary that is for travel between points in Canada – carriers are required to provide additional adjacent seating but are permitted to charge the fare.

Note: for more information on additional seating, see the CTA's guides: [*Additional seating and the One Person, One Fare requirement for domestic travel: A Guide*](#) and [*Space for Service Dogs onboard transportation equipment: A Guide*](#).

You should be aware that your carrier may ask you to provide information or documents, including a medical certificate, to support your request for additional seating. Some carriers have a policy on who can be a support person so it's a good idea to ask about this ahead of time (for example, is there a minimum age or does the support person need to be physically capable of lifting the traveller with a disability or helping them to evacuate). If your support person does not meet the carrier's age requirement, but you believe that they are physically and otherwise capable of fulfilling all of the duties, you may wish to ask the carrier to make an individual assessment of your intended support person's capacity and capabilities.

Allergy buffer zones

If you have a severe allergy, let your carrier know well in advance of your travel but, at a minimum, 48 hours before your departure.

You can ask your carrier to establish a buffer zone around your seat. This means that:

- you will be seated in a bank of seats where the allergen is not located and that does not face a bank of seats where the allergen is located; and
- other passengers sitting in your bank of seats will be notified that there is a passenger with a severe allergy (without identifying you). They will also be told what you are allergic to so that they don't consume or use products that could trigger your allergy.

You can also ask to pre-board and clean your seat to remove potential allergens.

You should be aware that:

- there may be restrictions imposed by the Canadian Air Transportation Service Authority (CATSA) on the types of cleaning supplies that can be brought onboard in carry-on baggage; or
- your carrier may have a policy of providing the cleaning supplies themselves.

It is important that you bring any allergy medications that you might use, such as epinephrine auto-injectors and other prescription and non-prescription medications, in your carry-on luggage and make sure that you can quickly access them.

You may also want to bring your own food onboard if you have a food allergy.

Note: you may be asked to provide supporting information or documents, including a medical certificate.

For more information on travelling with a severe allergy, see the CTA's [Severe Allergies: A Guide](#).

Mobility aids and assistive devices

Your carrier is required to transport your mobility aid except in the following circumstances:

- if the weight of your mobility aid exceeds the capacity of the device used for boarding mobility aids. This could also happen if you need to remain in your mobility aid during boarding, for example when boarding a train or bus.
- if your mobility aid does not fit on the transportation equipment (for example, in the baggage compartment). If that happens, the carrier must tell you about alternative trips to your destination which can accommodate your mobility aid and offer to book this at the lesser of the fare for your original trip and the fare for the alternative trip. You can find information on the maximum weight and dimensions of mobility aids that a carrier can transport on its website.
- if you are travelling by air and transporting your mobility aid would jeopardize the safe operation of the airplane.

You should be aware that your carrier may ask you to provide written instructions for the disassembly/reassembly of your mobility aid if this is needed in order to store your aid during travel.

When you plan your trip, ask the following questions:

- Do I have to store my mobility aid during travel and, if so, when do I have to transfer out of my aid (at check-in or at the boarding gate/platform)?

- Can mobility aids be stored on board, or must they be carried in cargo/baggage compartments? Be prepared to provide the weight and measurements of your mobility aid.
- Is there an on-board wheelchair?
- Can the on-board wheelchair get in and out of the washroom?
- Which seats will be the most accessible for me (for example: seats with moveable armrests that facilitate transferring to/from an on-board wheelchair)?

Note: Ask your carrier whether you can remain in your mobility aid during travel. Ferries are generally large enough for this purpose, while new or modified trains and buses (with some exceptions) are required to have spaces for this purpose. If this is not possible, you may want to ask where your mobility aid will be stored during travel. A train, and each deck of a ferry, must be able to store at least 1 mobility aid. Where possible, an airplane or bus must permit the storage of a walker or manual folding wheelchair in the cabin.

Common assistive devices include a cane, crutches, a communication device (for example, a speech-generating device which translates typed messages into digitized speech), an orthotic positioning device (used to support and position a person who has postural problems), and a portable oxygen concentrator. If you need to use an assistive device while on board, your carrier is required to allow you to do this provided it is safe to do so. You should provide your reservation agent with information about your device, including whether it uses batteries or needs an onboard power supply. You may be asked to provide information or documents, including a medical certificate, regarding your use of the assistive device.

Note: Airlines have rules about the onboard use of oxygen. You can find information on their policies, including whether they provide an oxygen service or require the use of a portable oxygen concentrator instead.

For more information on travelling with a mobility aid or assistive device, see the CTA's [Travelling with mobility aids and other assistive devices: A Guide](#).

Arranging ground transportation

If you need ground transportation to/from the terminal, you might want to arrange this in advance. See the section on ground transportation in [On arrival](#) below.

Service dogs

Your carrier will usually require confirmation that your service dog has been trained for its role. It may do this when you make your reservation by asking you to provide a declaration attesting that your dog has been individually trained by an organization or person specializing in service dog training to perform a task to assist you with a need related to your disability. Your carrier may also require you to provide, before departure, an identification card or other document that is issued by such an organization or person and that identifies you and provides this same attestation.

Note: If you are unable to provide a copy of an identification card or other document in support of your service dog's training when you contact your carrier to make a reservation – for example, because you do not have access to a computer to send an electronic copy – you can ask your carrier whether you can make a verbal declaration and follow up with a copy of the required document.

Your carrier must ensure that there is enough floor space for your service dog to remain at your feet in a manner that ensures the well-being and safety of both you and your dog. You should provide your carrier with relevant information on your physical characteristics – such as long legs or the inability to bend a knee – and the size and other characteristics of your dog – such as its ability to maintain a curled position. In some cases, obstructions in the floor space will necessitate the use of floor space at an adjacent seat to ensure that you and your service dog can share the space safely and in reasonable comfort. If this is not possible because your dog is too large, your carrier must provide adjacent seating to provide sufficient floor space. The only exception is if you are travelling on a ferry that does not offer assigned seating.

A Canadian carrier must provide the adjacent seating without charging you an additional fare or any other charges if you are travelling within Canada.

For more information on travelling with a service dog, see the CTA's [Service Dogs: A Guide](#) and [Space for Service Dogs onboard transportation equipment: A Guide](#).

The terminal

It's time to go! It is essential for you to be aware of your carrier's check-in time to give yourself enough time to both get to the terminal and receive assistance to check in, drop any baggage and get through the terminal to the gate, including transferring to a boarding chair if you are travelling with your own mobility aid. Also, you should be aware that the carrier may require you to arrive at the terminal earlier than the regular check-in time to receive certain types of assistance. The carrier may also provide check-in and boarding gate cut off times that must be respected regardless of lineups at check-in and security.

Getting information about the terminal

Many terminals publish maps of their interiors on their websites so you can chart your own course ahead of time. Canadian terminals are also required to publish on their websites information on the following:

- where the drop-off/pick-up area (curbside zone) is located and how to request assistance to/from it;
- accessible ground transportation from the terminal;
- the location of service dog relief areas;
- accessible transportation between terminal buildings; and
- wheelchair and electric cart services.

Inside larger terminals, you will probably find a help desk near the entrance where you can get information and help. Some terminals have automated information kiosks, which must be accessible to persons with disabilities in Canada.

Curbside assistance when you arrive at the terminal

In Canada, terminal operators are required to provide you with curbside assistance. This will help you proceed from the curbside zone to the check-in area or, if there is no check-in area, to a representative of the carrier. Terminal operators are also required to provide you with assistance with your baggage, provide a wheelchair if you need one or help you with your own wheelchair, or provide you with guiding assistance if, for example, you are blind.

There are different ways to obtain curbside assistance (for example, using a telephone or buzzer system located outside the terminal) and you may have to arrive at the terminal at a particular time in advance to receive the service. You should find out:

- how to request curbside assistance at the terminal;
- how early to arrive at the terminal to receive the assistance; and
- where the terminal's drop-off and pick-up points for curbside assistance are.

It is important for you to tell the terminal operator what kind of curbside assistance you need so you get the right kind of help and avoid, for example, getting a wheelchair when what you really need is guiding assistance.

Note: Sometimes a carrier provides curbside assistance instead of the terminal operator. Your terminal operator will let you know if this is the case. Also, at bus stops, the bus operator must help you when disembarking to move between the bus and an area at the stop where you can wait.

For more information, see the CTA's [Curbside Assistance: A Guide](#).

Moving through the terminal

Getting from the carrier's check-in counter to the boarding area can be a voyage in itself. Boarding areas may be far away. Many terminals publish maps of their interiors on their websites so you can chart your own course ahead of time.

Checking in

When you check in, reconfirm that you will receive the services you requested when you made your reservation and received written confirmation (this is usually in your itinerary).

Your carrier is required, upon request, to help you through the terminal to the boarding gate/platform and all the way to your seat on board if needed. If you have a service dog, you may want to ask for directions to the relief area. Terminal operators must provide designated relief areas outside the terminal and on the secure side, which can be reached without having to leave the secure area and re-enter it.

Mobility aids at the terminal

If you use a power wheelchair or other large mobility aid, your carrier will usually need time to prepare it for the trip. This means that somewhere between check-in and boarding, you may need to transfer to a boarding wheelchair. However, your carrier is required to allow you to keep your mobility aid until it becomes necessary to store it and if you use a manual, folding wheelchair, your carrier will generally allow you to remain in it until boarding. Your carrier may have asked you to provide written instructions for the disassembly and reassembly of your mobility aid, but you may want to ask how your mobility aid will be secured and stored.

Security screening

If you are required to go through a security screening process, screening officers will want to see your boarding pass, and they may ask to see prescriptions if you bring your medications on board. Keep your passport, boarding pass, prescriptions and any other important travel documents close at hand.

In Canadian airports, it is the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) officers who screen passengers entering the secure zones and boarding areas.

If you ask, CATSA will:

- expedite the screening process by directing you – and your support person if you are travelling with one – to the front of the line or to a different line designated for expediting the screening process;

- permit a representative of an airline, or an individual with a security pass issued by an airline or the airport, to accompany you through the security screening checkpoint;
- assist you with proceeding through the steps of the security screening process, including by providing verbal or visual cues or additional instructions;
- make a private room available on request when a physical search is required; and
- assist you with the placement of your carry-on baggage and personal items on a screening belt and with their retrieval.

If you are travelling with an assistive device, support person or service dog, CATSA must make every reasonable effort to carry out the screening simultaneously with the screening of the assistive device, support person, or service dog. Also, if CATSA removes your assistive device for separate screening, it must immediately return it to you after it has been screened. If your mobility aid is removed for separate screening, CATSA must offer you a chair while your aid is being screened.

Note: CATSA provides useful information for travellers with disabilities about the screening process on its [website](#), including information for planning a trip and what to expect at screening checkpoints. You may want to consult the CATSA website prior to travel to familiarize yourself with the screening process.

For more information, see the CTA's [Requirements applicable to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority and the Canada Border Services Agency: A Guide](#).

Boarding

Your carrier can provide you with assistance with boarding and, if you are travelling on a ferry, help you in moving from a vehicle deck to a passenger deck.

Your carrier is required to allow you to board in advance of other passengers if:

- you have asked for help with boarding, locating your seat or cabin, transferring between a mobility aid and your seat, or storing carry-on luggage;
- you are blind or have any other visual impairment and you have asked for a description of the layout of the airplane, train, ferry or bus, or of the location and operation of operating controls at your seat; or
- you are disabled due to a severe allergy and have asked to clean your seat to remove any potential allergens.

Note: If you ask for this type of assistance, your carrier may require you to board before the other passengers or, if you arrive at the boarding area after the end of priority boarding, to board after the other passengers.

Onboard

Seating and layout

Once onboard, if you are blind or have any other visual impairment, your carrier is required – upon your request – to describe the layout of the transportation equipment, including the location of washrooms and exits, and the location and operation of any operating controls at your seat. You can also ask for help to find and transfer into your seat and to put away and retrieve your carry-on luggage.

Announcements

Once you've settled into your seat, take a moment to find the briefing card with safety information. Most carriers will provide a general safety demonstration before departure but are required to provide an individualized briefing and demonstration if you request one. Carriers are also required to make announcements (for example, regarding weather, delays, baggage retrieval, and connections) in an audio or a visual format upon request by a traveller.

Meals or snacks

The on-board crew are required to offer limited help with meals or snacks – opening packages, identifying food items and their location and cutting large food portions – but are not required to assist a passenger with feeding. If you are blind or have any other visual impairment, you can ask them to describe all the food and beverages that are offered or to provide you with a menu in large print or Braille. And, if you are travelling by train and you are unable to access the food-service car, you (and your support person, if you are travelling with one) can order a meal and have it served at your seat or in your cabin.

On-board wheelchairs and access to washrooms

On-board crew on trains and ferries, and on airplanes which have sufficiently wide aisles, can assist you to go between your seat and the washroom using an on-board wheelchair, including by assisting in your transfer between your seat and the on-board wheelchair. On an airplane, you can use the washroom that has the most space, regardless of where it is located, if you need an on-board wheelchair or the help of a support person or service dog to use the washroom. On-board crew are not required to assist a passenger inside a washroom.

Onboard entertainment

If there is on-board entertainment available, your carrier must assist you in using it, upon your request. If you have provided advance notice to your carrier that you would like a personal electronic device (for example, a tablet), your carrier will provide you with one and help you use it if you request assistance.

Note: If an on-board entertainment system on a Canadian carrier's transportation equipment does not offer content with closed captioning and audio description, the carrier must provide you with a personal electronic device if you ask for one. The device must be preloaded with entertainment content that offers closed captioning and audio description. Alternatively, this must be available through wireless streaming. The content available on the personal electronic devices must be the same as the content available through the on-board entertainment system or, when this is not possible, it must be reasonably similar to the content offered to other passengers.

A carrier cannot charge you for a personal electronic device. However, if it charges passengers for accessing on-board entertainment, it can charge you for using the personal electronic device that it provides to you on the same basis that it charges other passengers who access on-board entertainment content and who are travelling in the same class of service as you.

For more information, see the CTA's [On-board entertainment: A Guide](#).

Arrival

You've arrived at your destination! It's time to gather your baggage and head towards the exit of the terminal building or, if you are making a connection to continue your journey.

Disembarking

If your journey has ended, upon your request, your carrier is required to help you disembark from the aircraft, train, bus or ferry, retrieve your checked baggage, proceed to the general public area, and proceed to a location where you can receive assistance to get to the curbside zone. If you are continuing your journey, upon your request, your carrier is required to assist you in getting to a location where you can receive help from your connecting carrier.

Retrieving your mobility aid

Your mobility aid should be returned to you at your destination in the same condition as when you checked it in, however, damage can occur. If this is the case, having photos of your mobility aid can help establish that the damage happened while your aid was in the carrier's possession. It is recommended that you take two sets of photos: the first, just before giving your mobility aid to your carrier for transportation; and the second, of the damage to your mobility aid. The two sets of photos can then be compared, which can show the nature and location of the damage. Before leaving the terminal, be sure to complete a damage claim and provide it to your carrier.

If your mobility aid is damaged, destroyed, lost or not returned to you within the usual time frame after you reach your destination, depending on the circumstances, your carrier must:

- provide you with a temporary replacement aid that meets your needs;
- reimburse you for expenses you incurred as a result;
- arrange for the repair of your mobility or, if this is not possible, provide a suitable replacement or reimburse you for the full replacement cost; or

- if your mobility aid has been destroyed or lost, provide a suitable replacement or reimburse you for the full replacement cost.

Note: if you are travelling on an international flight, your airline is required to tell you about the option of completing a special declaration of interest, which is a document designed to protect the value of a traveller's mobility aid. A traveller states the monetary value of their mobility aid and provides a description of its identifying features in the special declaration.

A special declaration of interest is important because, without it, carriers' limits of liability for mobility aids carried on international flights are capped at a level far less than the value of most aids. This means that, if a mobility aid is lost, damaged or destroyed and the traveller has not completed a special declaration of interest, they may only be entitled to reimbursement for a portion of the value of the mobility aid.

Airlines that operate international flights are required to publish a notice on their websites about the option of completing a special declaration of interest.

Border clearance

If you are returning to Canada from another country, you must go through the border clearance process.

If you ask, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) will:

- expedite the border clearance process by directing you – and your support person if you are travelling with one – to the front of the line or to a different line designated for expediting the border clearance process;
- assist you with proceeding through the steps of the border clearance process, including by providing verbal or visual cues or additional instructions;

- assist you with completing a declaration card or by collecting a verbal declaration; and
- assist you with the placement of your personal items on a counter for inspection and with their retrieval, if you must undergo more extensive clearance.

Curbside assistance when you are leaving the terminal

When you are ready to leave the terminal, your carrier can help you reach the general public area and, if you want curbside assistance, to a specific place in the general public area where terminal staff can help you to get to the curbside zone. The particular place will depend on the terminal. It could be a service desk, or a place where there is an accessible telephone or buzzer system that you can use to request curbside assistance from the terminal operator.

Ground transportation

You will also have to plan on how you will get from the terminal to your final destination.

Terminal operators that have an arrangement with a company for ground transportation from the terminal – including by taxi, limousine, bus or rental vehicle – must ensure that vehicles can carry mobility aids (or any other assistive devices). The terminal operator must also ensure that there are rental vehicles that are equipped with hand-control systems.

Resolving problems

Sometimes things can go wrong with even the best-planned trip. If a problem arises or you have a concern related to your trip, let the transportation service provider know. Often, a discussion is all that's required to fix the problem or address the concern.

Keep your receipts and documents, and a record of who you talked with and when. It's a good idea to write a description of what happened as soon as you can, while the details are still fresh in your mind.

If you have tried to discuss your concern with the transportation service provider and aren't satisfied with the result, you can contact the CTA. You can also contact us as a first step to resolving your concern if that is your preference. Our staff can facilitate a conversation with the transportation service provider, which can lead to addressing the concern.

In the event that an informal discussion doesn't produce results, mediation may work. If you and the transportation service provider agree, you can have a CTA mediator who will work with you and the transportation service provider to produce a solution that both sides can accept.

If these processes don't work, then you can ask the CTA to formally investigate your complaint. To start the process, you will need to file a statement and, if available, supporting evidence. The transportation service provider will also be given an opportunity to file a statement and evidence. You will then be given a final opportunity to reply to the transportation service provider's statement and evidence. The CTA will make a binding decision. It can include corrective measures, a refund of the expenses that you incurred because of the problem, or compensation for pain, suffering, or willful or reckless practice.

For more information on how the CTA resolves accessible transportation complaints, see the CTA's [Accessible Transportation Complaints: A Guide](#).

We're here to help

For more information and guidance about accessible travel and the CTA's dispute resolution services, please contact us at info@otc-cta.gc.ca.

Annex A – Reservation checklist for persons with disabilities: A step-by-step guide for planning your travel

This checklist is for your personal use. It will help you identify your travel needs and can be used as a helpful summary when communicating with your travel agent or travel carrier.

Reminder:

- Advise carrier of the nature of your disability
- Obtain written confirmation of services to be provided

Information you should know about your trip

- Date of travel
- File/locator/booking/reservation number
- Service provider (carrier)
- Service provider contact information
- Departure time
- Check-in and Boarding Times
- Arrival time

Accessible services for persons with disabilities

1) Curbside assistance

- provided by terminal
- Provided by carrier
- Specify where the curbside zone is, how to obtain the assistance, when to request it, and when to arrive at the terminal to obtain the assistance:

Date confirmed:

More information:

2) Information in alternative format on

- itinerary
- rates
- disability-related services:

Alternative formats:

- electronic
- large print
- Braille

Date confirmed:

More information:

3) Seating that meets your needs

- moveable aisle arm rest
- moveable arm rest between seats
- near entrance
- additional leg room
- near washroom
- next to support person
- additional adjacent seating (for support person, service dog or you because of your disability)
- other:

Date confirmed:

More information:

4) Cabin on train or ferry

- wheelchair-accessible
- adjacent to another wheelchair-accessible cabin
- adjacent to wheelchair-accessible washroom (or can be reached using an accessible path or on same deck of the ferry)
- near to wheelchair-accessible shower

Date confirmed:

More information:

5) Accommodation for a severe allergy

- advise carrier of the type of allergy and symptoms
- provide additional information or documents required by carrier
- buffer zone
- pre-boarding to clean seating area
- cleaning supplies provided by :
 - carrier
 - passenger
- allergy medications in carry-on luggage (with prescriptions)

Does the carrier require additional information or documents (e.g. medical certificate)?

- yes
- no

If yes, specify:

Date confirmed:

More information:

6) Support Person

Is information or documentation (e.g. medical certificate) required by the carrier?

- yes
- no

If yes, specify:

Does the carrier have a policy on who can be a support person?

- yes
- no

If yes, specify:

Date confirmed:

More information:

7) Carriage of a mobility aid

- Type:
- Dimensions and weight:
- Type of batteries:
- Written instructions needed to disassemble/assemble:
- What is the process for completing a Special Declaration of Interest (for international air travel)?

Date confirmed:

More information:

8) Carriage of a service dog

- provide the carrier with the dog's height, width, and length in a standing position
- ask the carrier whether additional seating is needed
- ask the carrier what is required to confirm the dog's training and when this needs to be provided
- ask the carrier whether the dog must have a leash, tether or harness
- find out requirements for international travel (health certificate, vaccination records)
- carry documentation for the dog in your carry-on luggage
- transportation of supplies needed at destination. Is there a cost or any limitations on quantity? If yes, specify:

Note: if you want to travel with an emotional support animal, ask your carrier about its policy and any conditions of carriage that may apply.

Date confirmed:

More information:

9) Carriage of a small assistive device

Description:

Power source:

- on-board electrical supply
- batteries

Type of and duration of batteries:

Date confirmed:

More information:

10) Use of gaseous oxygen or portable oxygen concentrator on board and/or in terminals

- carrier-provided
- passenger-provided
- assistance to/from washroom with oxygen

Information or documentation to provide to the carrier. Specify:

Date confirmed:

More information:

11) Assistance with registration at check-in counter

Specify:

Date confirmed:

More information:

12) For departure, assistance to transfer from a passenger mobility aid

- at check-in counter
- at departure gate
- at airplane/vehicle door
- to a passenger seat

Date confirmed:

More information:

13) On arrival, assistance to transfer to a passenger mobility aid

- from a passenger seat
- at airplane/vehicle door
- at arrival gate
- at baggage carousel

Date confirmed:

More information:

14) Assistance to get to the boarding gate/platform

- electric cart
- wheelchair
- guiding

Date confirmed:

More information:

15) Assistance to get through the security screening checkpoint

Who provides the assistance:

- friend or family member
- carrier staff

If friend or family member, what is required to enable this? Specify:

Date confirmed:

More information:

16) Assistance with short distances and stairs

Specify type of assistance:

Date confirmed:

More information:

17) Assistance to board/disembark

Specify type of assistance:

Date confirmed:

More information:

18) Is an on-board wheelchair available?

- yes
- no

Date confirmed:

More information:

19) Is a mobility aid space available?

- yes
- no

Date confirmed:

More information:

20) Meal-related services provided on-board

- dietary requirements related to your disability (where an option)
- description of food & beverages being offered or menu in large print or Braille
- if no access to food-service car on train, meal served at seat or in cabin (also for a support person)
- opening packages
- identifying items and their location
- cutting large portions

Date confirmed:

More information:

21) Assistance to move to/from the onboard washroom (except by carrying)

Specify type of assistance:

Date confirmed:

More information:

22) Accessible on-board entertainment

- the on-board system provides content in closed captions and audio description
- the carrier provides a personal electronic device with content in closed captions and audio description

Date confirmed:

More information:

23) Assistance to get to a representative of another carrier at the same terminal

Specify:

Date confirmed:

More information:

24) Assistance to retrieve checked baggage

Specify:

Date confirmed:

More information:

25) Assistance through the border clearance process

- help completing the declaration card
- provide a verbal declaration

Date confirmed:

More information:

26) Assistance to get to

- the general public area
- a location in the general public area to receive curbside assistance
- a service dog relief area

Date confirmed:

More information:

27) Accessible ground transportation from terminal

- check terminal's web site to find out what is available
- reserve accessible rental vehicle

Date confirmed:

More information:
