

# *Providing Exemplary Service to Guests with Disabilities*

*Mineta San Jose International Airport*



**Training Standards Program**  
Division of Employee Services, Safety & Training  
Mineta San Jose International Airport

# Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel: Service for our Passengers

**51 million Americans have a disability.**

*On average, one out of every 10 travelers has some level of disability. Not just major disabilities -- but also the elderly and the injured. This percentage is growing as the baby boomers are aging.*



Your responsibility? Awareness of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (ACAA) and doing your part to provide exemplary service to passengers with disabilities.

## Nondiscrimination Laws

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed in 1990, mandates equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities.
- Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (ACAA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in commercial air transportation.
- The ACAA rules were published in March 1990 and recent Amendments became effective May 13, 2009.



## Customer Service

- An airport can be a stressful environment and poses challenges for all travelers. Imagine encountering those challenges with a disability --- now imagine how you can help alleviate those challenges.
- We want our passengers with disabilities to have a positive experience. Do your part by being kind, courteous, and knowledgeable.
- The key to providing exemplary service is knowing how to effectively interact with people with disabilities – we will teach you how.

## Golden Rules

- Everyone is a person first.
- Look for opportunities to assist.
- Ask what you can do to help.
- Listen and follow directions the best you can.
- Don't assume.
- Be pleasant and helpful.



# Scenario #1

## *Guests Who Use Mobility Devices*

## Individuals with mobility devices

- Speak directly to the person, not to a travel companion or assistant.
- Respect the passenger's mobility equipment and handle with care.
- Request permission before assisting.
- Move around obstructions to create direct eye contact.
- Try to be on same eye level, if possible.
- When giving directions, consider weather conditions, time constraints, distance and building level changes (ramps, stairs, etc.).
- Persons that are newly or temporarily disabled may be more inclined to accept assistance.

Click on picture to activate video.



## Scenario #2

*Guests Who Are Deaf  
Or Hard of Hearing*

## Individuals that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Get the person's attention. The best method is to wave, but it's also okay to touch the person on the shoulder or back of the arm.
- Determine the best method of communication.
- Have a pen and paper handy.
- Speak directly to the person.
- Speak clearly and at a normal speed. Be patient.
- If you need to speak loudly, do so for the entire conversation. Avoid sounding harsh.
- Provide a clear view of your face.
- Body language and facial expression should match the message.

Click on picture to activate video.



## Scenario #3

# *Guests Who Have Speech Impediments*

## Individuals with Speech Difficulties

- Listen, but if you have difficulty understanding, don't pretend you understand. Be patient.
- Repeat what you do understand for confirmation.
- Ask person to spell, rephrase or write down the information. Have pen and paper handy.
- If possible, ask questions that require short answers or a nod or shake of the head.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Move to a quieter location if necessary or possible.

Click on picture to activate video.



## Scenario #4

*Guests Who Are Blind  
or Visually Impaired*

## Individuals that are Blind or Visually Impaired

- Introduce yourself as an Airport employee and give your name.
- Address the person directly when starting a conversation.
- Ask the person how you can best assist.

*Click on picture to activate video.*



- Be aware that a noisy environment might be a distraction.
- Don't touch the person without asking permission.
- Don't engage with a guide dog without permission. Remember, they are working!
- Be specific when giving directions, but do not point!

## Blind or Visually Impaired (*continued*)

- To assist with seating, you should ask permission to place his or her hand on the back or arm of the chair.
- To act as a Human Guide, offer your elbow for the person to take.
  - When faced with an obstruction, straighten your arm behind you so the person knows to move in behind you.
  - When approaching steps or a slope, pause and explain what's ahead. Ask if they would like to hold on to the handrail.
- Keep in mind the importance and dignity of a cane.

# Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

- Display a calm, patient attitude.
- Act naturally and maintain eye contact.
- Be considerate. Maintain or enhance self-esteem.
- Focus on the person – not the disability.
- Avoid taking confrontational action or frightening the individual.
- Guests with any disability may have a service animal.

## Quiz on Effective Communication

*Take the following quiz – if you do not get all of the questions correct, please review that section again.*



## Questions: True or False

1. If possible, one should sit down when speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
2. When talking with a person who is deaf and is accompanied by a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the interpreter.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
3. The first thing to do when greeting a person who is using a guide dog is to kneel and pet the dog.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
4. You should always have a pen and pad of paper available.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
5. Asking a person with a speech impairment to repeat themselves will only make matters worse.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
6. Only people who are legally blind may bring service dogs into the Airport terminals.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
7. If you are not sure how to assist a person with a disability, asking them for advice will embarrass them. Just use your best judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
8. It is okay to touch the arm of a person who is deaf in order to get their attention before speaking to them.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
9. When giving directions to a person who uses a wheelchair, telling them about distance and ramps puts unnecessary emphasis on their disability.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
10. When guiding a person who is blind, let them take your arm.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False

# Answers

1. True	<i>For an extended conversation, pull up a chair if convenient. It is also okay to kneel on one knee.</i>
2. False	<i>Always talk with the person directly, not to a travel companion or assistant.</i>
3. False	<i>Never engage with a guide dog without first asking permission. Remember, they are working!</i>
4. True	<i>Absolutely! They can come in handy in a variety of scenarios.</i>
5. False	<i>Don't assume you know what the person is trying to say. Ask for clarification.</i>
6. False	<i>Anyone with any disability may utilize a service animal.</i>
7. False	<i>The person with the disability knows best the method and degree of assistance needed. Ask, then follow their direction.</i>
8. True	<i>The best method of getting the attention of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing is to wave, but is also okay to touch or tap the shoulder or back of the arm.</i>
9. False	<i>It is very helpful to persons who use wheelchairs to know distances, level changes, and ramp locations. You should also consider weather conditions and time constraints.</i>
10. True	<i>You should let the person know that you are to their right or left, and announce that your elbow is extended for them to take.</i>

## In Summary

Remember, emphasis and attention  
on the person, not the disability.

People with disabilities are people first,  
people who happen to have a disability.





## Thank you for completing the training on “Guests with Disabilities.”

- You will be called upon to help people with disabilities who will need your special support and patience.
- You will make a lasting impression in regards to their experiences at Mineta San José International Airport.
- You make the difference.
- All we ask for is an open mind, energy and enthusiasm.
- Please contact us if you need assistance with any ADA, ACAA or disability issues.

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