

Americans with Disabilities Act:

*Providing Exemplary Service at the
Mineta San Jose International Airport*



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

Airport Customer Service and the American Disabilities Act



Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel



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.

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 were 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.



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.



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.



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.



- 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.

Scenario #5

Guests with Developmental Disabilities

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.

Question 1

1. If possible, one should sit down when speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair.

- True
- False

1. True

For an extended conversation, pull up a chair if convenient. It is also okay to kneel on one knee.

Question 2

2. When talking with a person who is deaf and is accompanied by a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the interpreter.

- True
- False

2. False

Always talk with the person directly, not to a travel companion or assistant.

Question 3

3. The first thing to do when greeting a person who is using a guide dog is to kneel and pet the dog.

- True
- False

3. False

Never engage with a guide dog without first asking permission. Remember, they are working!

Question 4

4. You should always have a pen and pad of paper available.

- True
- False

4. True

Absolutely! They can come in handy in a variety of scenarios.

Question 5

5. Asking a person with a speech impairment to repeat themselves will only make matters worse.

- True
- False

5. False

Don't assume you know what the person is trying to say. Ask for clarification.

Question 6

6. Only people who are legally blind may bring service dogs into the Airport terminals.

- True
- False

6. False

Anyone with any disability may utilize a service animal.

Question 7

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.

- True
- False

7. False

The person with the disability knows best the method and degree of assistance needed. Ask, then follow their direction.

Question 8

8. It is okay to touch the arm of a person who is deaf in order to get their attention before speaking to them.

- True
- False

8. True

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.

Question 9

9. When giving directions to a person who uses a wheelchair, telling them about distance and ramps puts unnecessary emphasis on their disability.

- True
- False

9. False

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.

Question 10

10. When guiding a person who is blind, let them take your arm.

- True
- False

10. True

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.

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 or disability issues.

Mineta San Jose International Airport Training Standards Program

***Division of
Employee Services, Safety & Training***