



# Manual Wheelchair Air Travel Checklist

Are you planning to fly with your wheelchair? Here are a few tips to help you prepare. The ADA requires airlines to accommodate passengers with disabilities, including wheelchair users. Airlines require you to make your reservation at least 24 hours in advance, so that the airline can properly accommodate you. Here are a few tips we have learned over the years flying with wheelchairs.

## Baggage allowances:

1. A wheelchair will not count towards your baggage allowance.
2. A second wheelchair (sports wheelchair) does not count towards baggage allowance.
3. You can take 1 medical bag which does not count towards baggage allowance. An example would be a medicine table or folding shower/toilet chair. Some baggage people will make you open the bag to show them the medical equipment to get the exemption so be prepared to show your stuff.

## Where to check your chair?

1. If you are traveling with a primary wheelchair only, you will check it at the end of the jetway. Get a gate check tag from the gate agent, and your wheelchair will be returned to you at the jetway when you get off the plane.
2. When you make your flight reservation, you can note in the reservation that you will require mobility assistance.
3. If you will require an aisle chair to get from the jetway to your seat, make that request at the time you reserve your flight. Airlines have aisle chairs available, but they are not located at every gate and may take a significant amount of time to arrive at the gate if they are not requested in advance.
4. Request pre-boarding when you arrive at your gate to give you additional time to board the plane.
5. If you have a second sports wheelchair, you will check that one in at baggage check-in.

## Travel Resources:

1. In the USA, you can contact TSA Cares 72 hours before your flight and they will arrange to have someone meet you at baggage check-in and help you through check-in, security and to the gate. If you are traveling internationally, they will also assist you through customs once you return to the US. TSA Cares (855) 787-2227.
2. Airports will also have people you can contact to help you, check your airport for details. When you're traveling internationally, if you go through the same airline at different airports, they will set up a process to get you through faster.
3. Airlines' customer service can also provide services and set people at different airports to help you get through.

## Prep your chair for travel:

1. Remove loose items that can (and will be lost), seat cushions, and sideguards get lost all the time.
2. Leave nothing hanging. Clip ratchet straps and seat belts.
3. If you have a removable and expensive seat back, remove it and carry it on the plane along with your cushion.

## Check your chair when you get it back:

1. When you get your chair back, whether on the jetway or in baggage claim, check and report any problems to the airline immediately. It is exponentially harder to make a claim once you have left the airport.
2. Things to check for:
  - a. flat tires
  - b. bent wheels
  - c. deeply scratched handrims
  - d. bent or broken brakes
  - e. uneven casters
  - f. uneven push
  - g. clearly broken parts or frame

It is very important to report any issue to the airlines as soon as possible. The airlines will pay to fix broken and UNSAFE equipment. It is a hassle, but worth it if they mess your frame up or they break your wheels.