

The 2011 Global Congress on Travel Risk Management

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Challenges in Travel by People with Disabilities

Presented By:

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LEX FRIEDEN

Lex Frieden is Professor of Biomedical Informatics and of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) and he is Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Baylor College of Medicine. Mr. Frieden also directs the ILRU – Independent Living Research Utilization Program at TIRR Memorial Hermann in Houston. ILRU is a research, training and technical assistance program on independent living for people with disabilities and seniors.

Mr. Frieden has served as chairperson of the National Council on Disability, president of Rehabilitation International, and chairperson of the American Association of People with Disabilities. He is recognized as one of the founders of the “independent living” movement in the early 1970’s, and he was instrumental in conceiving and drafting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

A graduate of Tulsa University, Mr. Frieden has been honored as a Distinguished Alumnus. He holds a master’s degree in social psychology from the University of Houston where he completed doctoral requirements in rehabilitation psychology, and he has been awarded an honorary doctorate in law (LL.D.) by the National University of Ireland. He has received two Presidential Citations for his work in the field of disability.

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Challenges in Travel by People with Disabilities



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Presenter



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Presenter



- Wendy Wilkinson is an Attorney and Director of the Southwest ADA Center at ILRU
- Past experience includes serving as Principal Investigator on "Legal Protections for People with Disabilities", a project of the Research and Training Center on Managed Care and Disability
- Published a number of articles on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability related issues.



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Population

- Nearly a billion people with disabilities worldwide
- 54 million in the USA
- Perhaps 75 million in the USA by 2020

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Disabilities Include

- Mobility
- Sensory
- Cognitive
- Psychiatric
- Emotional
- Chronic Health Conditions

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Numbers Growing

- Aging Population is Growing
- Number of Disabled Travelers is Growing
- Number of Complaints about Travel is Growing

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Industry Response Slow



- Airlines
- Hotels and Motels
- Restaurants
- Theaters and Sporting Venues
- Recreational Attractions
- Rental Car Companies
- Taxis, Limos, and Small Buses
- Trains
- Passenger and Cruise Ships and Ferries

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Physical Access



- Ramps
- Doorways
- Table-heights
- Elevators

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Sensory Access



- Signage
- Auditory – announcements
- Visual – instructions
- Alarms

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Cognitive Access

- Directions
- Intuitive Activities
- Reading Level



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Emotional Access

- Animal Supports
- Color and Sound



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Chronic Conditions

- Distances
- Diets
- Availability of Electrical Power
- Availability of Refrigeration
- Availability of Certain Medicines



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Safety Issues

- Announcements
- Briefings and Preparation
- Egress Access
- Shelter Access
- Transportation Access
- Physical Assistance

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United Airlines Disability Advisory Board

- Information Management
- Personnel Coordination and Availability
- Personnel Attitudes and Training
- Equipment Transporting

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Challenges In Travel by People with Disabilities

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Traveling with a Disability: What You Need to Know

Wendy Wilkinson,
Southwest ADA Center at ILRU



Independent Living Research Utilization
A Program of TIRR Memorial Hermann
1-800-949-4232



www.tirr.org



Objectives for today



- **Review** airline travel information for individuals with disabilities.
- Discuss the **obstacles** facing travelers with disabilities.
- Increase **understanding & knowledge of the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)**.
- **Share tips** for travelers with disabilities.
- **Identify resources** for better understanding



Some Statistics



- **Who is flying?**
 - 31.49% of people with disabilities (approximately 17 million people)
 - 40.10% of travelers without disabilities took at least one flight of over 100 miles in 2001

Source:

U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
2002 National Transportation Availability and Use Survey
www.bts.gov/publications/freedom_to_travel/html/table_28.html



Travel Dollars \$pent



- **\$13.6 billion spent by travelers with disabilities** on an annual basis
- **\$3.3 billion** spent on airfare
- Revenues could easily **double** if certain needs were met and obstacles were removed

Source:
Press Release: Disability Travel On The Rise Despite Barriers To Access
August 1, 2005
Open Doors Organization
http://opendoorsdp.org/_wsa/page3.html



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Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)



- Airport Accessibility
- Aircraft Accessibility and Wheelchair Issues
- Requirements Concerning Services
- Accommodations for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Attendants and Service Animals



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Arranging Your Transportation



- Taxis- must provide accessible transportation but are not required to provide assistance.
- Public Transportation- Para Transit & Fixed Route
- Private Transportation



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At the Airport: Security

Let the Security Officer know if you need assistance removing and putting your shoes back on your feet when additional screening is necessary.

Let the Security Officer know if your shoes cannot be removed because of your disability so that alternative security procedures can be applied to your shoes.

Security Officers will inspect your wheelchair or scooter. These inspections will be conducted while you remain in your wheelchair or on your scooter if you indicate that you cannot get out of your wheelchair or off your scooter.

Any assistive devices may be subject to ETD or X-ray inspection.

You should not be required to transfer from your wheelchair to another chair or be lifted out of your chair during the inspection process.

You may request a pat-down inspection in lieu of going through the metal detector or being hand-wanded. You do not need to disclose why you would like this option.

Information provided by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at: http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/editorial_1567.htm


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At the Airport: Security

Don't hesitate to ask a Security Officer for assistance with your mobility aid and carry-on items as you proceed through the security checkpoint.

Let the Security Officer know your level of ability. For example: whether you can walk, stand, have limited arm movement, or if you cannot stand and/or walk through the walk-through metal detector. This will expedite the screening process.

Ask the Security Officer for assistance if you need help walking through the metal detector.

Inform the Security Officer about any special equipment or devices that you are using and where this equipment or device is located on/in your body.


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At the Airport: Security

You should be allowed to remain in your wheelchair if you indicate that you are unable to stand and/or walk through the metal detector.

You may request a pat-down inspection in lieu of going through the metal detector or being hand-wanded. You do not need to disclose why you would like this option.

If you have a disability, condition, or implant, that you would like to remain private and confidential, ask the Security Officer to please be discreet when assisting you through the screening process.

Information provided by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at: http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/editorial_1567.htm


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At the Airport: Security

- You should be offered a private screening before the beginning of a pat-down inspection if the pat-down will require the lifting of clothing and/or display of a covered medical device.
- You should be offered a disposable paper drape for additional privacy before the beginning of a pat-down.
- Your companion, assistant, or family member may accompany you and assist you during a private or public screening. After providing this assistance, the companion, assistant, or family member will need to be rescreened.

Information provided by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at:
http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/editorial_1567.shtml



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At the Airport: Prosthetics, Implants, etc.

- If you have implanted medical device, that you would like to remain private and confidential, ask the Security Officer to please be discreet when assisting you through the screening process.
- You have the option of requesting a private screening at any time during the screening of your prosthetic device, cast or support brace.
- Security Officers will need to see and touch your prosthetic device, cast or support brace as part of the screening process (this does not apply to prosthetics that are the result of a mastectomy.)
- Security Officers will not ask nor require you to remove your prosthetic device, cast, or support brace.
- During the screening process, please do not remove or offer to remove your prosthetic device.

Information provided by TSA:http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/editorial_1371.shtml



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At the Airport: Prosthetics, Implants, etc.

- CCastScope technology provides security officers with a means to ensure that a cast or prosthetic does not contain a concealed threat while maintaining the dignity and privacy of the passenger. TSA began deploying CastScope machines to several major airports nationwide in 2008.
- Walkers, crutches, canes, and other devices that can fit through the X-ray machine must undergo X-ray screening (with exception of white collapsible cane)
- Ask the Security Officer for assistance (arm, hand, shoulder to lean on) until you are reunited with your device.
- Supplemental personal medical oxygen and other respiratory-related equipment and devices (e.g. nebulizer, respirator) are permitted through the screening checkpoint once they have undergone screening.
- Only you can disconnect yourself to allow for your oxygen canister/system to be X-rayed.

Information provided by
TSA:http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/editorial_1371.shtml



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At the Airport: Persons with Hearing Disabilities



- If the screening process is unclear to you, ask the Security Officer to write the information down.
- If you can read lips or are hard of hearing, ask the Security Officer to look directly at you and repeat the information slowly.
- If you need to communicate with the Security Officer, inform her/him of your disability and the way in which you can communicate. TSA Security Officers are trained to provide whatever assistance they can to persons with hearing disabilities.
- It is not necessary to remove hearing aids or the exterior component of a cochlear implant at security checkpoints.
- It is best if you wear your hearing device while going through the metal detector.
- If you use a hearing dog, you and the dog will remain together at all times while going through the security checkpoint.

Information provided by TSA



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At the Airport: Persons Traveling with Service Animals



- If you have a service animal, you are encouraged to inform the Security Officer that the animal accompanying you is a service animal and not a pet. This will provide you with an opportunity to move to the front of the screening line since the Security Officer may need to spend more time with you.
- It is recommended that persons using an animal for assistance carry appropriate identification. Identification may include: cards or documentation, presence of a harness or markings on the harness, or other credible assurance of the passenger using the animal for their disability.
- At no time during the screening process will you be required to be separated from your service animal.
- Security Officers have been trained not to communicate, distract, interact, play, feed, or pet service animals.
- The Security Officer should ask permission before touching your service animal or its belongings.
- You must assist with the inspection process by controlling the service animal while the Security Officer conducts the inspection. You are required to maintain control of the animal in a manner that ensures the animal cannot harm the Security Officer.

Information provided by TSA



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Ready to Fly?



Assistance At The Airport-At your request, airline personnel are required to assist you with the following:

- To board and exit the plane.
- To move to and from seats.
- To use an on-board wheelchair
- To move to and from the lavatory.
- To store and retrieve carry-on luggage.
- To transfer between gates.



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Carry-on Limits

Exceptions:

- Rx & OTC medications
- life support and life sustaining liquids (bone marrow, blood products, transplant organs);
- Mastectomy products liquids; and
- Cooling gels or sprays for heat sensitive medications
- It is recommended (not required) that passengers bring along any supporting documentation (ID cards, letter from doctor, etc.) regarding their medication needs. It is recommended, not required, that the label on prescription medications match the passengers boarding pass. If the name on prescription medication label does not match passenger, the passenger should expect to explain why to the security officers.



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Carry-on Limits

Wheelchair Storage On-Board Storage

- Wheelchairs and other assistive devices do not count toward a limit on carry-on items.
- Assistive devices or parts of assistive devices may be stored in overhead compartments or under seats in accordance with safety regulations for carry-on items.
- If an on-board closet is large enough for a folding wheelchair, priority must be given for wheelchair storage in this space.
- You must pre-board the plane if you want to store your wheelchair in the on-board closet. Baggage Compartment Storage
- Wheelchairs must be given priority over cargo and other baggage in the baggage compartment.
- Wheelchairs must be among the first items retrieved from the baggage compartment when the plane lands.
- Wheelchairs and other assistive devices must be returned in a timely manner and as close as possible to the airplane door.



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Service Animals

- The definition of service animals includes guide dogs, signal dogs, psychiatric service animals, and emotional support animals. Air carriers are required to allow service animals traveling with persons with disabilities to sit with them in the cabin of the aircraft. Passengers traveling with pets, as opposed to service animals or emotional support animals, do not have any rights under the ACAA. To determine whether a passenger with a disability is entitled to travel with a service animal, air carriers may ask questions and request documentation in certain circumstances.



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Service Animals



- Types of Animals Serving People with Disabilities:
 - Dog Guide, or Seeing Eye® Dogs
 - Hearing, or Signal Dogs
 - Mobility assistance Dogs.
 - sSigDogs --- Social Signal Dogs
 - Alert / Response Dogs
 - Psychiatric Service Animals



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How will They Know?



- The questions that may be asked and the level of documentation that may be required will vary depending on the individual's disability and the type of service animal. The purpose for the variation in requirements is because:
 - 1) many people traveling with a service, comfort or psychiatric support animal may have a hidden disability so the need for a service animal is not apparent and
 - 2) the reason an individual with an obvious disability requires a service animal is not always evident.



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Service Animals



- As evidence that an animal qualifies as a service animal, an air carrier must accept identification cards, other written documentation, presence of harnesses, tags, or the credible verbal assurances of the passenger with the disability using the animal. If an air carrier is not certain of the animal's status, even after being told that an animal is a service animal, additional questions may be asked, including: "What tasks or functions does your animal perform for you?," "What has the animal been trained to do for you?," and "Would you describe how the animal performs this task or function for you?"



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Service Animals



- For emotional support or psychiatric service animals, air carriers may request very specific diagnostic documentation 48 hours in advance of a flight. The documentation must be:
 - current (not more than one year old);
 - be on letterhead from a licensed mental health professional;
 - must state that the person has a mental or emotional disability recognized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV); and
 - state that the animal is needed as an accommodation for air travel or for activity at the individual's destination. The documentation should also state that the health professional is treating the individual and include the date and type of the mental health professional's license and the state or other jurisdiction in which it was issued. It does not need to state the individual's diagnosis.



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Service Animals



- In-flight services and facilities do not have to be provided to service animals. Individuals traveling with the animals must provide for the animal's food, care, and supervision.
- In the terminal, air carriers must provide animal relief areas. They also must provide escort service to individuals traveling with service animals to these areas, upon request



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Service Animals



- Unusual animals such as miniature horses, pigs, and monkeys may be allowed to travel as service animals. To determine whether the animal will be allowed in the cabin, the air carrier may take into account the animal's size, weight, and whether the animal would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or cause a significant disruption in cabin service. If the animal would pose or cause any of these things, the animal may have to travel in the cargo hold. In addition, if there are restrictions on any of these animals at the final destination point of travel, the animal may not be allowed to fly at all. Other unusual animals such as snakes, other reptiles, ferrets, rodents, and spiders may be denied boarding as they may pose other safety and public health concerns.
- Foreign carriers are required to transport only dogs as service animals.



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Service Animals



- Dept. Of Transportation (DOT) is not changing definition at present, and will be issuing guidance to airport operators and authorities to develop policies to allow non-dog service animals into airport authorities some time in the near future. Additionally, they'll be making it clear that the third party businesses --- the restaurants and other service providers have to comply with the new ADA.
- General Complaints Number for FAA ADA Complaints: 847-294-7209



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Service Animals



- Service animals cannot be denied passage because other passengers are offended or annoyed by animals.
- Any service animal may be denied boarding privileges if the animal barks, growls, jumps on people or misbehaves in ways that indicate the animal has not been trained to behave properly in public settings, poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or poses a significant risk of disruption of cabin service



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Service Animals



- People with disabilities can sit in any seat with their service animal unless they block an aisle or an area designated for emergency evacuation. If they cannot be accommodated in a requested seat, then they must be given the opportunity to move to another seat within the same class of service. A person with a disability may request a bulkhead seat or another seat that better suits their needs.
- A person traveling with a service animal may ask to pre-board.
- Air carriers are not required to make modifications that would constitute an undue burden or would fundamentally alter their programs. In order to accommodate a service animal, a carrier does not have to ask another passenger to give up all or most of the space in front of their seat (This is rarely necessary, since most service animals fit comfortably at the feet of the handler, beneath the seat in front of the handler.)
- Carriers may try to find someone willing to share their foot space. Carriers can voluntarily reseat a person traveling with a service animal to a business or first-class seat to accommodate a service animal, but are not required to do so.



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Air Travel Tips:

- Be courteous.
- Explain exactly and clearly what assistance you will require.
- Request to pre-board aircraft.
- Request wheelchair to be stored on-board if on-board storage is provided on aircraft (you must pre-board to receive this priority).
- If you encounter a problem, ask to talk to the Complaints Resolution Official (CRO).
- Request that your wheelchair be returned to you at the gate.
- Put your name and address on your wheelchair.
- Tape assembly instructions to your wheelchair
- Before landing, remind the flight attendant to arrange for your wheelchair to be returned to you at the gate.



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Air Carrier Complaints?

- If you have a complaint regarding noncompliance with the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA), contact the CRO. Airlines must have a CRO available in person or by phone at every airport. You may also contact the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) at: United States Department of Transportation Aviation Consumer Protection Division 400 7th Street SW Washington, DC 20590 1-800-778-4838 (Voice) 1-800-455-9880 (TTY)



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Hotels & Lodging

- The U.S. Department of Justice adopted new rules concerning reservations that will come into effect March 15, 2012.
- There should be no requirement or inherent advantages in booking an accessible room using one method if this requirement or advantage does not exist for booking a non-accessible room.



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Hotels & Lodging:
Accommodation Considerations

Disability:

- Mobility impairment/
Wheelchair user
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Psychiatric disability
- Intellectual disability
- Diabetes
- Learning disability
- Short stature

Activities:

- Stay overnight
- Dine in restaurant
- Attend party or event
- Attend meeting or conference
- Patronize bar/lounge
- Use pool and/or fitness center

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Hotels & Lodging

Rooms with accessible features should be evaluated, and described with enough specificity to allow a potential guest with a disability to determine whether the accessible features can meet their needs; this information needs to be available across various reservation systems employed by hotel management.

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Hotels & Lodging: Here's why

Accessible guest rooms in hotels and on cruise ships that comply with the letter of the law for accessible rooms often pose one problem – the height of the bed.

- Furniture Risers
- Recently, the hotel industry has begun to provide extra padded mattresses that make the beds high off the floor. These are not accessible to wheelchair users who make lateral transfers from their wheelchair onto the bed. The recommended height to the top of the mattress is 18 – 20 inches above the floor.
- If you enter a room with a bed too high, call the front desk and after explaining your issue request that maintenance come to your room and lower the bed to the appropriate height.

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Hotels & Lodging: Here's why

- Sometimes the bed is too low for transfer and while the individual can get into bed independently, he/she may have difficulty getting out of the bed. If this is the case, have the hotel raise the bed. Or another problem often overlooked is the need for a space under the bed to accommodate a lift for people who need them to transfer into and out of bed. There are products on the market that can assist with this.
- Some travelers carry a set of these furniture risers which come in heights of 3 or 5 inches. United Spinal member, Stuart Jacobs, has found that "for approximately \$20.00 per set of four furniture risers, I can travel with the comfort that when I get to the hotel or on the cruise I will be able to get in and out of bed independently".



General Accommodation Examples:

- Provide print information in large print, Braille, or electronic formats
- Read menus or documents to the guest
- Orient the guest to the hotel, including the lobby, their room, and all areas in and around the hotel
- Assist with finding signature line on guest checks, registration forms, etc.
- Offer to trim a corner off a key card so the guest knows which way to put it in the door.



Communicating Effectively with Guests Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

- Write notes back and forth
- Speak clearly and don't cover your mouth
- Use gestures and body language
- If someone is interpreting for the guest, speak directly to the Deaf person, not to the person interpreting



Communicating Effectively with Guests Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:



- Have equipment available for making guest room accessible for a Deaf guest
 - TTY
 - Vibrating alarm
 - Doorbell and telephone alert signals
 - Volume control for phone
- Assist Deaf guest in hooking up and using equipment.



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Guests with Service Animals



- The ADA requires you to allow service animals throughout the hotel even if you have a "no animals" policy
- Service animals are working animals and you should not pet or distract them
- People with all types of disabilities use various types of service animals
- Identify areas outside where service animals can relieve themselves



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Usable Rooms for Guests Who Are Blind



- Provide as much information about the room and its features as possible.
 - Thermostat
 - Phone and TV remote control
 - Outlets
 - Internet access
 - Toiletries
 - Drape cords or rods



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Usable Rooms for Guests Who Use Wheelchairs

• Leave showerhead near faucet where reachable

• Be sure all items in the room are reachable from a seated position. For example:

• Lamps	• Towels	• Iron
• Phones	• Hair dryer	• Ironing board
• Coffee pot	• Toiletries	• Blankets
• Alarm clock/radio	• Showerhead	• Computer cords

 
 

Usable Rooms for Guests Who Use Wheelchairs

• Accessible Bathrooms

• Roll-In Showers



 
 

Transportation

• *Complementary* transportation offered by a hotel should be accessible. This means that if a hotel offers a courtesy shuttle service within a certain radius around the area of the hotel, they must make sure to offer this same service in an accessible form of transportation- ie: Wheelchair accessible van or taxi, etc.

 
 

Questions?



Contact Us:



DBTAC Southwest ADA Center
1-800-949-4232
Email: swbtac@ilru.org
Website: www.southwestada.org



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