

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION



Working to Make Air Travel Accessible
September 17, 2013

Office of Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement

- Ensure that TSA security screening policies, procedures and practices comply with all applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders and policies and do not discriminate against travelers on the basis of disability, race, religion, ethnicity, gender or national origin.
- Advise on the impact or potential impact of new and existing screening procedures on members of the disability and multicultural communities.
- Develop, manage, and strengthen partnerships and outreach with community leaders from disability and multicultural interest groups.



Disability Branch

- Collaborates within TSA on screening of travelers with disabilities and medical conditions.
- Conducts outreach to the disability community on the state, local and national level.
- TSA Cares and Passenger Support Specialist Program.
- Resolves civil rights complaints from travelers with disabilities.



TSA's Disability Coalition

- Approximately 50 organizations representing an array of disabilities and medical conditions, including:
 - AARP
 - National Council on Aging
 - American Diabetes Association
 - Susan G. Komen for the Cure
 - Easter Seals
 - National Council on Disability
 - United Spinal Association
 - Organizations representing those with hearing disabilities
 - Organizations representing those with visual disabilities
 - Autism Society of America
 - Organizations representing survivors of sexual trauma



Disability Coalition, cont.

- Outreach is conducted with coalition members and others through:
 - Meet 3 times a year by teleconference.
 - Meet once a year at TSA Headquarters for a conference.
 - Meet with coalition members one-on-one at TSA Headquarters or headquarters of organization.
 - Speak at national conferences, local support groups, teleconferences and webinars.
 - Develop materials for distribution via listservs, websites, or hard copies.



Feedback Sessions – Summer 2013

- 5 feedback teleconferences to help with revision of procedures.
- Feedback sessions for groups representing:
 - visual disabilities and service animals,
 - hearing disabilities,
 - mobility disabilities,
 - cognitive disabilities, and
 - other medical conditions.



Overall Feedback

- Consistency, consistency, consistency.
- Training, training, training.
- Communication, communication, communication.
- General customer service.
- SLOW IT DOWN . . .



Feedback from Visual Disabilities and Service Animal Groups

- **SERVICE ANIMAL RELIEF AREAS NOT AVAILABLE.**
- Being required to remove equipment or separate from service animals.
- Not given options that best suit them or their service animal.
- Lack of appropriate instructions during the process.
- Access to personal belongings.
- General lack of workforce knowledge and preparedness.



Feedback from Mobility Groups

- Consistent availability of ADA lanes.
- Consistent availability of chairs at the front and back of the checkpoint.
- Consistent availability of wooden canes.
- Accessibility of PreCheck.*
- Patdown required of those who cannot get out of wheelchair.
- Lack of thorough screening of wheelchairs.



Feedback from Hearing Disability Groups

- Don't know when to exit the AIT.
- Don't know if they have alarmed the metal detector.
- Angry reactions from workforce.
- Lack of appropriate communication (speaking to companion, not facing individual, etc.).
- Lack of signage and other visual cues.
- Lack of captions on videos.
- Lack of available printed materials or writing materials.



Feedback from Medical Condition and Cognitive Disability Groups

- Lack of recognition of hidden disability (e.g., denied access to disability lane).
- Lack of options.
- Screening of medically necessary liquids.
- Screening of medical devices.



FY 2013 Complaints

- 300 disability-related complaints received.
 - 117 complaints considered as civil rights complaints.
 - 60 complaints about failure to accommodate
 - 71 about inappropriate screening on basis of disability
- Top 5 disabilities:
 - Wheelchair/scooter
 - Medically necessary liquids
 - Insulin pumps
 - Internal medical devices
 - Mobility aids



FY 2013 Complaints, cont.

- 68 pending resolution (as of September 1, 2013).
- 232 complaints closed.
 - Withdrawn, failure to proceed, referred to other, informal resolution, formal response.
- 0 civil rights violations found (through formal process).
- 68 informal resolutions.
 - Additional training.
 - Assistance with upcoming travel.



Complaints from Travelers with Disabilities and Medical Conditions

- Travelers with complaints should be directed to TSA-CRL@tsa.dhs.gov
- Disability-related civil rights complaints must be received in writing from the individual with the disability or medical condition (reasonable accommodations are provided).
- If a traveler needs to file a complaint by telephone, he or she should call TSA's Contact Center: 1-866-289-9673.



Resources Available

- TSA Cares cards.
- Mock boarding programs.
- Presentations.
- Informational pieces.
- Making connections.

TSA.ODPO@tsa.dhs.gov

