

Airport Assistance Request Kit

Describe the task that needs support

Age is not a service request. Walking, standing, wayfinding and transfers are different tasks.

Complete this kit with the traveler. Ask which parts they want help with and which they prefer to manage themselves. Write a practical description such as “I can walk to my seat, but long terminal walks are difficult.” Record only relevant information, not a full medical history.

1. Identify the operating airline for every segment, including the return.
2. Separate airport mobility or guided assistance from TSA screening support and personal care.
3. Confirm where support begins and ends, and how the next team receives the request.
4. Make the written plan usable by the traveler: clear type, familiar wording and one accessible storage place.

Important distinction

Required disability assistance on U.S.-covered flights is not an optional concierge purchase. Routine assistance generally does not require advance notice, although specific services or equipment may. Ask early and verify the exact requirement.

Worked example: Maya and her mother

Illustrative two-flight itinerary; assistance is confirmed with both operating carriers.

Need	What the family records
Walking	Can walk short distances; needs help with long terminal distances.
Aircraft access	Can transfer to a seat; stairs must be discussed for the actual flight.
Departure	Report at the staffed airline check-in point specified in the confirmation.
Connection	Ask who meets the arriving flight and transfers to the next gate.
Arrival	Agree the handoff near the specified baggage-claim meeting point.

Maya initially writes “wheelchair booked.” She replaces it with the actual meeting point, contact and handoff details. She also asks whether her mother wants Maya to speak on the call or simply take notes. The mother keeps the plan herself.

The vague phrase in our plan

Our clearer description of the actual need

Ask for the help you actually need

Describe the task that is difficult. You do not need to make your needs sound smaller.

Long terminal distances

Standing in a queue

Finding the next gate

Aircraft stairs or boarding transfer

Hearing / understanding announcements

Traveling with my own mobility device

What I can do comfortably

Where I need assistance

U.S. context

This kit helps organize a request. Airline disability assistance is not a paid upgrade. Eligibility and procedures depend on the service and journey; confirm details with the operating airline.

Use this booking-call script

Adapt the words below to your situation; ask the airline to read the arrangement back.

Start here

"I am traveling on [flight/date]. I need assistance with [specific tasks]. I can manage [tasks]. Please help me arrange assistance for departure, any connection, and arrival."

1. Ask exactly where to meet assistance and when to arrive.
2. Ask who handles each connection and arrival handoff.
3. Ask how to update the request if the flight or gate changes.
4. Ask for written confirmation or a reference you can save.

Person / department / date contacted

Reference / where confirmation is stored

What remains unconfirmed

Record every airport handoff

Complete one sheet per direction. A request in the booking does not replace checking in with staff.

Stage	Meeting point / contact / confirmed
Departure entrance to check-in	
Check-in through screening	
Gate and boarding	
Connection: arrival to next gate	
Final arrival to baggage	
Baggage to agreed pickup point	

Who should I tell when I arrive?

What should I do if the meeting point is empty?

Say it out loud

“Before you leave, please tell me who is helping with the next step and where I should wait.”

Your own mobility device

Use the manufacturer's instructions and the airline's equipment process.

Device make / model

Dimensions / weight / folding details

Battery type and rating, if applicable

Manufacturer's safe handling instructions stored at

Airline equipment contact / reference

Photograph the device's condition privately before handover.

Label removable parts; ask what stays with you.

Confirm where and how the device will be returned.

Ask whether advance notice or special approval is needed.

Do not improvise a repair

Battery, disassembly and lifting procedures are device-specific. Provide instructions; ask trained staff to confirm the handling plan.

A simple handoff card

Show this to staff if explaining the same thing repeatedly is tiring. Keep it with your travel papers.

Preferred name

I need help with

I can manage on my own

Please communicate with me by

My next flight / destination

My companion / contact, if I choose to share

My equipment must be handled this way

Share only what is needed

A practical description is usually more useful on this card than a full medical history. Keep any detailed health documents private.

If assistance does not arrive

Stay at an identifiable, staffed location when possible and make your location clear.

1. Tell the airline desk your flight number, location and agreed assistance.
2. State the next deadline: "Boarding closes at ___. What happens next?"
3. If the problem is unresolved, ask the airline for its Complaint Resolution Official (CRO) on a U.S.-covered disability issue.
4. Record the response, time and next action; keep your request confirmation.

Time / location / staff role

What was promised / next update time

What actually happened

Screening help is a separate service

TSA Cares concerns the security checkpoint. Airline assistance covers the airport journey; confirm both when you need both.

Before you leave home

Use this final check for every leg, including a return flight on a different carrier.

Operating airline has recorded my request.

I know the arrival time and meeting point.

Connections and arrival assistance have been discussed.

Equipment instructions and confirmations are accessible.

I know where to seek help if arrangements fail.

Last reconfirmed with / date

Unanswered question and my next action

Official sources to check before travel

[U.S. DOT: Wheelchair and guided assistance](#)

[TSA Cares: screening assistance](#)

[U.S. DOT: Aviation consumer protection](#)

For current route-specific instructions, also check your operating airline and relevant provider.

The call, the read-back and the record

Use this script as a prompt, not a promise of what every airline offers.

“We are planning travel on these flights. The traveler needs help with [specific task] and can independently manage [specific task]. How should this be added to each booking? Where should they report at departure? Who arranges the connection and arrival handoffs?”

1. Ask how to confirm that the request reached each operating carrier.
2. Read back the date, flight, airport and starting meeting point.
3. Ask about your own mobility device, boarding method or other needs separately.
4. Save the reference and the official contact route for changes.

Contact date / airline / representative or channel

Request reference / confirmation stored at

What we still need confirmed

Screening support

For U.S. screening questions, use TSA Cares separately. It does not arrange the entire terminal journey or continuous personal care.

If the handoff is not happening

State the location, flight, time and missing help clearly.

“I requested assistance and am waiting at [location]. My flight is [number] and boarding is [time]. Please confirm who is coming and where I should wait.” If you are calling for a parent, tell staff how to identify and contact the traveler without sharing unnecessary personal information.

1. Ask a staffed airline desk or the confirmed assistance contact for an update.
2. For an unresolved U.S. disability-accommodation problem, ask for the airline’s Complaints Resolution Official (CRO).
3. Record the time and the next action promised. If the itinerary changes, reconfirm support on the replacement flights.
4. After the trip, retain factual notes for any complaint and improve the return plan.

Problem / location / time

Who was contacted / what was promised

New itinerary and handoff changes