

Helping a Traveler With Special Needs

Whether your companion is traveling on crutches or toting cumbersome medical equipment, these steps can help ensure a safe and stress-free trip.

- **Use a travel agent.** Book your airline reservations well in advance through your travel agent and inform him or her about your companion's special needs. Curbside wheelchair service, first-row seating for easier boarding and deplaning, and other services may be available. Also check for restrictions on wheelchairs, motorized scooters, and items such as batteries, which may need to be removed and specially packed.
- **Verify hotel accessibility with an on-site representative.** Visit access-able.com for tips on how to research accessibility issues—stairs, roll-in showers, shuttle service—as well as current guidelines from the Department of Transportation.
- **Get up-to-date information about security screenings** and guidelines for traveling with medical equipment. Contact the Transportation Security Administration. Visit tsa.gov and go to "Travelers & Consumers," then "Persons with Disabilities & Medical Conditions," or call (866) 289-9673.
- **Stay informed about issues of interest to physically challenged travelers.** Learn more from the Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality. Visit sath.org.

—Kathleen Guthrie