
Part I – Introduction

Introduction

This Guide is part of the *Access for All* program for people with disabilities at the Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). It can be used to assist you when you are flying to or from PHL and it can help you understand what is available at the Airport. The goal of this document is to provide a guide for anyone with a disability who has never flown before, or flies infrequently, specifically from or to PHL. The document is available in multiple formats online on the PHL website and is downloadable in PDF format. You may print the entire PDF or select the section that is most helpful to your situation.

This Guide is divided into five sections so that someone traveling with a disability can get to the information they want based on travel stage:

- I. Introduction
- II. Preparing for Travel and Getting to the Airport
- III. Ticketing and security
- IV. The secure side of the Airport
- V. Ending your travels at PHL

This Guide covers multiple types of disabilities, such people who use wheelchairs, those with psychiatric or mental health impairments, people who are blind or have vision impairments, people on the autism spectrum, and those who are deaf or hearing impaired. It is also intended to provide information about concerns related to flying with medical conditions like bowel and bladder issues, breathing conditions, and other conditions. If you have never flown before, the Guide may answer many of your questions, but it will probably not answer all of them.

The Guide has many different stories that cover a variety of situations; however, they may not cover your specific situation. Everyone has an individual situation. As you read through the Guide, make your own scenarios so that you get the most out of the Guide. A lot of common information about flying that can easily be found on other websites is not in this guide. Resources, such as phone numbers and website links, are provided so that you can request assistance in advance of your flight.

Below is a brief scenario that shows the whole process from preparing for travel, getting to the Airport, ticketing, security, and going through the secure side of the airport.

Mike and Ed both have **Asperger's Syndrome** and are going on their first flight together.

First, they planned their trip! They used the PHL website to find information for their trip. They started with the interactive map at maps.phl.org to get a lay-out of the Airport and looked at the Airport's selection of food and shops at [PHL Dining and Shopping | PHL.org](http://PHL.org). Next, they checked [Art Exhibitions | PHL.org](http://PHL.org), to see what visual arts there would be to look at. It is nice to have something to do when you have free time, and before the trip is a great time to plan. Mike and Ed also used the PHL website to research the location of their gate, restrooms, and other amenities like the quiet room

While planning, they wanted to understand if their flight offers food or beverage, and the cost, if any. They also checked their airline's website to understand important information like cancelations, baggage weight limits, and related fees. Additionally, they used the airlines website to understand the layout of the plane and map out their aisle and seat number.

Their next step was to plan transportation to the Airport. After studying the options, they decided on the best option for them. If needed, they purchased tickets or scheduled with the transportation provider ahead of time to make sure that they have a ride that will get them there on time.

Mike and Ed arrived at the Airport early enough to get through ticketing and security and still have time to eat before the flight. After spending time in PHL shops and getting a bite to eat, they made their way to the gate. They asked the gate attendant if they could board early to give them time to find their seats. Upon entering the plane, they needed to find their seats. When they needed any assistance, they just asked the gate attendant!

When traveling, it is important to keep safety and health in mind. Mike and Ed told other people their destination and travel plans. Also, they made sure that valuables like money, electronics, credit cards, and passports, were not visible or kept where they are available to other passengers.

Mike and Ed also planned for the unexpected. It's a good idea to think of possible, realistic things that you can pre-plan for and avoid. They knew what they will do if there was a long layover or a hotel or flight cancelation; if medication was lost, or if medical equipment was damaged or malfunctioned during the flight. Planning helped them be sure that they could deal with unexpected problems and continue to have an enjoyable trip even if something did not go as planned.