

TRAVELING WITH A DISABILITY DURING THE HOLIDAYS CAN SOMETIMES FEEL LIKE SOLVING A PUZZLE – FINDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES, PLANNING AHEAD, AND MAKING SURE EVERYONE IS COMFORTABLE. CELEBRATIONS CAN BE A BIT LIKE OBSTACLE COURSES, BUT WITH A LITTLE EXTRA SUPPORT, KINDNESS, AND UNDERSTANDING WHILE TRAVELING, WE CAN MAKE SURE THE HOLIDAY MAGIC REACHES EVERYONE, MAKING IT A TRULY JOYFUL AND INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL OUR FRIENDS!

TRAVELING WITH A DISABILITY

What can we do to make travel safe and accessible for everyone?



SECURITY

For someone with a disability, security procedures may require lots of time and patience. Mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or crutches, must undergo inspection. For those with medical devices or prosthetics, explaining their necessity and function becomes a part of the security interaction. The layout of security areas might be challenging for those with mobility issues.

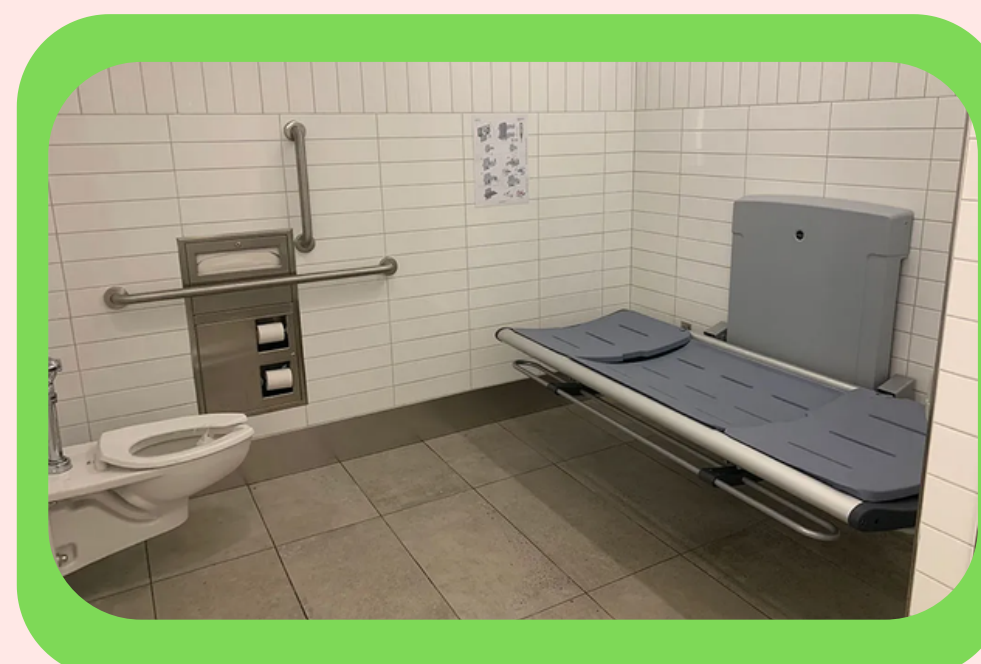


WHAT CAN WE DO?

Be patient in lines and allow those with extra mobility needs to pass.

BATHROOMS

People may use special tools like briefs, catheters or ostomies to empty their bodies (not a toilet) and they need space to care for their needs. Others may need bars, raised toilet seats or space to safely use the restroom. Without an accessible bathroom, being in public spaces isn't always possible.



This is the accessible bathroom in the N terminal at SeaTac. It has bars, open spaces and an adult changing area.

MEDICATIONS

When people take medications, they often need to take them at a certain time of day– that's really hard when you are moving across time zones! It's also a challenge to plan out how much medication you will need for an entire trip– what if you get delayed and run out of medication?



PROTECTING EQUIPMENT

A very real and scary possibility is the potential that a person's medical equipment could become damaged during the journey. It's not just a piece of equipment; it's a lifeline that enables freedom and accessibility. Damage to a wheelchair could mean facing unexpected challenges, limitations, and a disruption of plans. Fortunately, lawmakers are working to find solutions to this issue.



UNEXPECTED CHANGES

Imagine planning every detail meticulously, only to have unwelcome surprises like delays or weather issues pop up. For individuals with anxiety, these unforeseen alterations can feel like a rollercoaster of emotions, making it difficult to enjoy the journey. The uncertainty of what's around the corner can be overwhelming. Whether it's a change in plans, delays, or unexpected events, these disruptions can trigger stress and anxiety.



For individuals with sensory differences (like autism or ADHD), crowded airports or busy spaces may feel overwhelming and noisy. Being in chaotic spaces can feel painful for some of our friends. People with migraines may be triggered by smells and lights of an unfamiliar environment.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Creating spaces that are calm or making sure there are quiet corners can help people find a safe place in a busy area. We can also help our friends access tools like earbuds, headphones, masks or sunglasses. It's also important that you are understanding and kind when a person is struggling.



Traveling with food allergies can present unique challenges, turning what might be a routine aspect of a trip into a carefully researched event. From navigating unfamiliar restaurants to working through language barriers regarding dietary restrictions, the potential for an allergy trigger can make travel a really tricky (and scary) adventure.

Some people also rely on feeding tubes or special medicines that allow them to access nutrition. Traveling with medical equipment can be really challenging and involves a lot of planning and preparation.

FOOD

WHAT CAN WE DO? When planning for your snacks, consider avoiding common allergens when eating in public spaces.