



March 16, 1993

**THIS LETTER WAS SENT TO ALL MAJOR AND
NATIONAL U.S. PASSENGER AIR CARRIERS**

Dear

The DOT rule on air travel by individuals with disabilities (14 CFR Part 382) obligates U.S. air carriers to begin providing specified accessibility features on certain aircraft. This letter, which is being sent to all Major and National passenger airlines, is offered as a reminder about those requirements. We are also enclosing some newly available technical guidance for implementing the provision on accessible lavatories.

Lavatories

Under §382.21(a)(3) of this rule, a Part 121 aircraft with more than one aisle in which lavatories are provided shall include at least one accessible lavatory. This requirement applies to all such aircraft that:

- were ordered after April 5, 1990, or
- were delivered after April 5, 1992, or
- have a lavatory replaced after April 5, 1990.

The minimum functional specifications for an accessible lavatory are described in §382.21(a)(3) of the rule. Among other things, the lavatory must permit an individual with a disability to enter, maneuver within as necessary to use all of the lavatory facilities, and leave, by means of the aircraft's on-board wheelchair. The lavatory must afford privacy, and must provide door locks, accessible call buttons, grab bars, faucets and other controls, and dispensers usable by handicapped individuals, including wheelchair users *and* persons with manual impairments.

Following issuance of the rule on air travel by persons with disabilities, it became apparent that more extensive compliance guidelines on accessible lavatories would be helpful. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Design Guidelines was formed, with representatives from airlines, airframe manufacturers, disability advocacy groups, and government. This group recently released a document called "Suggested Guidelines for Accessible Lavatories in Twin Aisle Aircraft," which provides practical design details for the incorporation of such lavatories in these aircraft.

I have enclosed a copy of these guidelines. Although compliance with §382.21(a)(3) of our rule is mandatory, use of the guidelines is voluntary. However, aircraft equipped according to these guidelines shall be deemed by DOT to be in compliance with §382.21(a)(3). Additional copies of the guidelines are available from the Air Transport Association of America, Attention: Specification Orders.

Other Accessibility Features

Section 382.21 of our rule also requires movable armrests on aisle seats, priority stowage space in the cabin for a passenger's folding wheelchair, and provision of an on-board aisle chair. The number of seats on an aircraft determines which of these features are required on that aircraft. Unlike the requirement for accessible lavatories, these provisions are not limited to twin-aisle aircraft. However, similar to the requirement for accessible lavatories, these other accessibility features are required only on Part 121 aircraft (with the specified number of seats) that:

- were ordered after April 5, 1990, or
- were delivered after April 5, 1992, or
- undergo replacement of cabin interior elements after April 5, 1990.

All Part 121 aircraft that have more than 60 seats and an accessible lavatory (even if not *required* to have an accessible

lavatory) must have an on-board aisle chair, regardless of when the aircraft was ordered or delivered.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Hoyte B. Decker, Jr.

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Enclosure