

Utah's Travel Guide for People With Disabilities

Traveling with a disability has come a long way. Awareness of the needs of the disability community has risen tremendously and there are a growing number of travel agencies specializing in disability services. Easter Seals of America estimates approximately 50 million Americans have disabilities. Not only are physical accessibility features of transport and destinations important for those with disabilities, but understanding from staff is vital in making a travel experience smoother and more enjoyable.

Why Come to Utah?

- ◊ Over 24 Million travel each year to Utah's 5 National Parks, 14 ski areas and scenic byways
- ◊ Salt Lake City was host to the 2002 Winter Olympics
- ◊ Utah is home to 43 State Parks
- ◊ Utah is home to 6 National Forests: Ashley, Dixie, Fishlake, Manti-LaSal, Uinta, and Wasatch-Cache
- ◊ Utah is home to 7 National Monuments
- ◊ Over 900 movies were filmed here in Utah



Are We There Yet? Traveling Well With a Disability

By Anne Hampson Boatwright
Georgia DD Council

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 states that persons with disabilities will receive equal treatment under the law and not be discriminated against. While there are compliance standards to meet general needs, the diversity of disabilities is wide, so it's paramount that each individual or their parent or caregiver know their condition and specific needs. Most experts agree that the overarching rule of thumb for traveling with a disability is preparation. Speech therapist Mickey Rosner, a nearly 30-year employee of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta who works with low verbal and nonverbal children, says, "Don't wing it! There are too many variables in traveling to leave it to chance. With the vast array of local organizations and Internet resources, one has many options to get educated and empowered for traveling and actually having a good time." The following tips and resources empower travelers with developmental disabilities:

1) Know the triggers. Sounds, smells, types of movement, transitions, any sensory input having a negative effect on the person with a disability is one to be aware of and anticipate in a travel context. Does a certain odor trigger migraines or pain? Do

the fluorescent or neon airport lights feel extremely harsh and chaotic? Do unfamiliar foods or food brands cause anxiety? Do crowds of people or multiple noises, and intercom messages overwhelm? These potential problems can be headed off at the pass with a little forethought and planning.

2) Know what is calming. Rosner works with many children on the autism spectrum and notes that they are visual learners, not auditory, which is why verbal reasoning won't work to assuage anxiety or agitation. Using social stories – a written or visual guide illustrating a process, social interaction, behavior or situation – several times before a trip can prevent the traveler from being blindsided by procedures.

3) Have a Plan B ... and then a Plan C. Jan Marie Love, a licensed professional counselor specializing in play therapy with Easter Seals of North Georgia child centers, says, "It's critical to have several backup ideas for a sudden behavior change," she advises. Working with the person's therapist will be useful in brainstorming a plan and it's important to remember that each diagnosis is completely individualistic and so is the management plan.

Top Accessible Places in Utah

1. State Capitol Building
Salt Lake City
2. Temple Square
Salt Lake City
3. Discovery Children's Museum Salt Lake City
4. Hill Aerospace Museum
Clearfield
5. Bear River Bird Refuge
Brigham City
6. Capitol Reef National Park
7. Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area
Farmington
8. East Canyon State Park
Morgan
9. Dinosaur National Monument Vernal
10. Canyonlands National Park
11. Palisade State Park Manti
12. Hogle Zoo Salt Lake City
13. Red Butte Garden
Salt Lake City
14. Natural History Museum
Salt Lake City



Delicate Arch



Hill Aerospace Museum



Hogle Zoo

Famous People

From Utah

Karl Malone & John Stockton

Former NBA players

Butch Cassidy

Train and Bank Robber

Mario Capecchi

Nobel prize winner

Brigham Young

Founder of Utah.

James Woods

Actor

Steve Holcomb

Olympic Bobsled Athlete

Loretta Young

Actress

The Osmonds

Famous Band



Karl Malone



John Stockton



Loretta Young



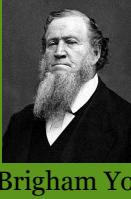
James Woods



Butch Cassidy



Mario Capecchi



Brigham Young



The Osmonds

4) If possible, choose the ideal time of day for the main or most difficult part of the journey.

5) If possible, do a dry run. If the destination is local, drive to it and show it to the traveler before the actual vacation or event date.

6) Have a doctor's note and number with clear diagnoses and necessary medications ready and available. For those with "invisible" disabilities not obvious to travel staff and passengers without disabilities, some reactionary behavior may be perceived as a bad attitude or severe immaturity, when in reality they're related to the neurological disorder and need to be understood as such.

DisabilityTravel.com suggests the doctor's endorsement be on letterhead, lending credibility to the situation.

For Mobility-Related Disabilities

1) Call ahead to all destinations to inform the business or organization of your needs. Informing the booking staff of the disability and accompanying needs will start the process of arranging appropriate accommodations.

2) Make several hard copies of the wheelchair or mobility device information. Dawn Alford, public policy director of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)

and seasoned traveler with a neuromuscular disability, suggests keeping it to one page and recommends laminating or encasing them in a plastic covering. The document should include device specifications such as dimensions, weight, its capabilities like "tilt and recline," and how to properly fold and store it to ensure proper handling, avoid unnecessary damage, and how to repair breakages.

3) Bring spare parts and tools.

Alford, who has gotten her preparation down to a science, says wheelchairs can take some real abuse while traveling. If you don't have a companion who knows how to take the chair apart and repair it, the instructions should help with this.

4) Allow extra time. Travel snafus can of course happen with anyone, but it's more complicated when a mobility device is involved. Allow for extra time to make sure devices and other assistive measures are dealt with patiently. Beyond these basics, there are specific considerations for certain types of travel.

Road Trips

Most families with people with disabilities are much more familiar with issues involved in driving as it's done nearly every day. There are many wonderful places to visit in Utah that are equipped to handle visitors with disabilities, from state parks and historic sites to tourist attractions. Go to <https://www.visitutah.com/plan-your-trip/accessible-utah> to learn about what Utah has accessible for people with disabilities. Here are ideas to make traveling by car easier:

1) Purchase seat belt buckle covers and use the child door locks to keep children with disabilities safely in place without distracting the driver.

2) Have a no-mess activity to help pass the time, or anxiety aid like a fidget ball.

3) Create a visual aid to represent how many hours you've traveled and how many are left. Use a timer so the person can count down the hours or minutes until the next stop or activity. This minimizes the perceived endless, limitless space they're in and allows them to chart progress and move through transitions.

4) For bus travel, notify the bus line in advance (at least 48 hours.) Most of the major carriers have provisions for people with disabilities, though there are limits with certain accommodations. All

motor coach companies in the United States are required by law to provide accessible transportation to individuals with disabilities. This includes providing assistance to those with vision loss, hearing loss, walking difficulties, those needing a breathing apparatus, those who use a wheelchair, electric scooter or other mobility aids, and passengers with service animals. Independent operators however are more selective in the disability services they provide. There is priority seating at the front, help getting on and off the bus, storage for mobility aids and taking a wheelchair on the bus.



Road and Rail Trip Resources

Greyhound Bus

<https://www.greyhound.com/en/help-and-info/travel-info/customers-with-disabilities>

Rail

<https://www.amtrak.com/accessible-travel-services>

National and State Parks

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/accessibilityforvisitors.htm>

<https://www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm>

Camping

<http://koa.com/find-a-koa/>
Call the KOA campground to find out about ADA sites in the KOA campground you visit in the United States.

<http://utahstate-parks.reserveamerica.com/> or call 1.800.322.3770 to reserve an accessible campsite in Utah.

Ride UTA Paratransit Utah

801-287-2263

<https://www.rideuta.com/Rider-Info/Accessibility/>

Ride UTA Bus, Rail and Frontrunner for People with Disabilities Utah

<https://www.rideuta.com/Rider-Info/Accessibility/Riders-With-Disabilities>



Air Travel

Much has changed over the decades to make air travel workable for people with disabilities. Alford, who has Spinal Muscular Atrophy, learned through trial and error how to make traveling more efficient and less stressful. For people with developmental disabilities, preparation is a must to help the traveler have more predictability. "People don't realize how much extra planning is involved," Alford says. "Because I've had many experiences, both good and bad, I've learned what to do to make things go more smoothly, and I want to share them with readers to help them feel empowered. It makes a world of difference to be proactive." The following tips are compiled from her suggestions as well as from online sources:

For People with Disabilities Who Use Wheelchairs

1) Book flights well in advance and fill out forms on airline websites.

The Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality (SATH) suggests travelers seek the airline's customer service, the hotel concierge or front desk and tour guides to explain the situation. Ask for needed accommodations, such as preferred airline seating (bulkhead or aisle) individualized lodging (quiet or adjoining rooms) and specific dietary requests (i.e., food allergies).

2) Create a one-sheet document

with extra copies for multiple personnel on outbound and return flights of wheelchair specs and handling instructions, personal contact information, flight information in case flight attendants have questions after the traveler is already seated on the plane. Not all baggage handlers are aware how heavy some equipment is, and the procedure for storage is not always intuitive either so instructions are necessary.

3) Bring bubble wrap and duct tape to cover fragile parts of the equipment (like joy stick and switches). If the traveler requests, he can take his wheelchair up to the gate and, assuming early arrival, explain his process for ensuring protected equipment parts.

4) Request the crew forward wheelchair handling instructions to the Aircraft Load Agent (ALA) crew at the destination city. They can send it from the departing office to arrival city personnel.

5 Ask the pilot to radio ahead to the arrival city to request the ALA crew manager assign someone to meet them in their plane seat. This adds an extra layer of security. Alford says the captain has a lot of influence – when he radios, it usually happens! Foster that relationship by introducing yourself the captain upon boarding, make your case, and explain the value of the chair to strengthen the urgency of the situation.

Airline Resources

http://www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/traveling-with-us/special-travel-needs/disabilities.html

<https://www.alaskaair.com/content/travel-info/accessible-services/overview.aspx>

<https://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/travel/specialneeds/disabilities/default.aspx>

<https://www.southwest.com/html/customer-service/unique-travel-needs/customers-with-disabilities-pol.html>

Salt Lake City International Airport Accessibility

<https://www.slcairport.com/customer-assistance/accessibility/>



6) Consider applying to TSA (Transportation Security Administration) Precheck®, a precheck screening program requiring membership that allows passengers an expedited screening if they qualify. This means being exempt from removing shoes, laptops, 3-1-1 liquids, belts or light jackets during the screening process. Certain airlines participate. Applications can be found on the TSA website and membership involves a fee that is good for five years.

7) For problems, call the TSA Cares hotline. A helpline that provides travelers with disabilities and those with special conditions answers to questions about the security screening process, TSA Cares is to be used *before* arrival at the airport. It's only available during the business hours listed on the website.

8) Know your rights! Review the Air Carrier Access Act. A free Disability Hotline provided by the Department of Transportation (DOT) provides general information to consumers about the rights of air travelers with disabilities, respond to requests for printed consumer information, and assists air travelers with time-sensitive, disability-related issues that need to be addressed in "real time."

For Intellectual, Cognitive and Other Developmental Disabilities

1) Participate in Wings for Autism Program. These free events are produced by The Arc, a national, community based organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They partner with an airline, local city and sometimes a healthcare organization for disabilities to create this experience. The program essentially is an airport rehearsal, specially designed for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families and aviation professionals to alleviate some of the stress experienced when traveling by air. A simulated experience created in a safe and structured learning environment with extra interaction from airline staff acquaints the passengers with the process and help them acclimate to the stimulation before actually taking a trip. Families practice entering the airport, obtain boarding passes, go through security and board a plane. The plane then taxis around the runway so kids can feel the movement and hear the engine sounds. The first Wings in Georgia was held in April 2016 with another planned for next year.

2) Check the airline's disability page of their website for all disability services.

TSA Resources

TSA offers a precheck card. To get a TSA precheck card you will need to fill out an application on their website at <https://www.tsa.gov/precheck>. The application program fee is \$85 dollars. Once after you fill out the application, you will be asked to do a 10 minute background check. After the background check is complete you can enjoy your card.

TSA offers a disability notification card that tells security about your disability and your medical condition.

TSA has a helpline for people with disabilities that are traveling. The phone number is (855) 787-2227 or you can e-mail TSA cares and the e-mail address is on the website at tsa.gov/travel/passenger-support.

To learn more about TSA pre check visit there website at <https://www.tsa.gov/precheck>



For Travelers with Any Kind of Disability

1) Book flights well in advance.

Notify travel and hospitality staff to help companies serve passengers better, and give them peace of mind. Make a call the day before to confirm plans or correct misinformation.

2) Avoid connecting flights if possible. Flying direct can save unnecessary time and hassle unless getting to airplane bathrooms is impossible; then several flights might be a better option.

IndependentTraveler.com suggests planning at least 90 minutes between flights, two hours if going through customs or security.

For Travelers with Visual Impairment or Blindness

1) Airline: If you book by phone or letter, always inform your travel agent of your disability and if you will be traveling with a guide dog so that airport personnel and flight attendants can give you the service you need. Be sure that the information is included in your flight booking. This will ensure that the airline is able to offer you the services you need such as preboarding, a guided tour of the aircraft and large-type menus for meals. On US domestic flights and in Canada, guide dogs are accepted As a matter of course. However, if traveling abroad, some island states have strict anti-rabies laws which

restrict the entrance of all animals. You should determine if any country you intend to visit is one of these by contacting consulates or the airlines.

2) Rail: In the US and Canada you can ask the assistance of the rail company in boarding the train and finding your seat. Give a reasonable amount of time to ensure that there is someone available. The same will normally apply in Europe and other countries which operate modern rail systems.

3) Bus: In North America, Greyhound Bus is the only company operating a nationwide city-to-city service and they will give you every assistance in boarding, announcing your destination, and any other help you may need.

Happy
Traveling
&
Welcome to
Utah

Tour Groups for People with Disabilities throughout the United States

Trips R Us

Framingham ,Massachusetts

<http://www.tripsrus.org/>

Ventures Travel

Plymouth, Minnesota

<http://www.venturestravel.org/>

Trips Inc.

Eugene ,Oregon

<https://www.tripsinc.com/>

Search Beyond Adventures

Cameron Park ,California

<http://www.searchbeyond.com>

Hammer Travel

Wayzata, Minnesota

<http://hammertravel.org/>



State Of Utah Resources

People with Disabilities watching wildlife in Utah
<http://wildlife.utah.gov/watchable-wildlife-for-disabled.html>

Travel Center
www.accesstravelcenter.com/utah.html

National Ability Center
<http://www.discovernac.org/>

Moab Utah Disabled Guide
<http://www.moab-utah.com/rack/disabled.html>

