

American airlines launches tags for mobility devices

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Washington DC: American Airlines has become the first U.S. airline to launch an automated tag for mobility devices. This innovation is part of the airline's commitment to improving the handling of wheelchairs and mobility devices across its network. Developed by American's Technology team, the tags are now used in airports where American and its regional partners operate.

Julie Rath, American's Senior Vice President of Airports, Reservations, and Service Recovery, stated, "American is committed to improving the travel experience for our customers who use wheelchairs and mobility devices. Streamlining the check-in and tagging process is an industry-leading effort that will help us further improve how we handle wheelchairs for our customers who entrust us to transport their devices on their journey."

The new automated tags replace the previous manual ones and include

customer- and device-specific data such as itineraries, delivery points, device weight, battery type, and the number of items removed and taken on board. This information ensures more accurate and consistent handling of the devices and provides enhanced visibility throughout the travel journey. Automation allows the device's information to be easily shared across frontline team members' applications, ensuring they have the right information at the right time.

American Airlines has implemented multiple improvements to enhance the travel experience for customers with mobility devices. These actions have led to a nearly 13% improvement in handling mobility devices from the first half of 2023 to the first half of 2024.

Hands-on training for team members: In partnership with an outside organization, American offers in-person mobility device training to its Airport Customer Service and Customer Operations team members and vendor partners. This training supplements comprehensive web-based training provided to all airport team members.

Investing in airport infrastructure: Wheelchair movers have been deployed, and lifts are being installed at the airline's hubs and other airports with high mobility device traffic. These measures help lower the risk of damaging mobility devices and reduce team member injuries.

Streamlining the traveler experience: American has made it easier for customers to add and maintain wheelchairs and other mobility devices as part of their travel profiles. Starting this fall, customers can access their saved travel preferences, such as traveling with a mobility device or service animal, and apply their details to any upcoming trip when managing on aa.com. This digital management ensures the airline has the necessary information to transport devices safely and securely.

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