

## New report ranks airlines on wheelchair access

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: A new ranking by InsureMyTrip has named the best—and worst—airlines for wheelchair accessibility in 2025, shedding light on ongoing challenges faced by travelers with disabilities.

The report arrives as several US carriers are currently challenging new federal protections for passengers with disabilities in court.

Using data from the US Department of Transportation (DOT), the study analyzed the mishandling rates of wheelchairs and scooters reported in 2024. It also factored in passenger reviews mentioning “wheelchair” and social media sentiment to gauge overall customer experience.

The airlines assessed were drawn from the DOT’s Air Travel Consumer Report. Their performance was standardized into a score ranging from 0 to 10, reflecting how effectively they accommodate wheelchair users.

According to ranking, Frontier airlines recorded the poorest

performance in handling wheelchairs and scooters in 2024, scoring a mere 2.19.

The carrier mishandled 535 mobility devices, accounting for 1.76pc of the 30,448 boarded. Customer sentiment was overwhelmingly negative, with 83pc expressing dissatisfaction.

Over half (51pc) of reviews referencing “wheelchair” assigned Frontier a 1-star rating.

Close behind, American Airlines Network ranked second lowest with an overall score of 3.25. The airline mishandled 2,635 wheelchairs and scooters out of 161,287 boarded, reflecting a higher volume but a comparatively lower mishandling rate.

Nevertheless, 59pc of customer sentiment was negative, and 25% of wheelchair-related reviews were rated at 1 star.

Spirit Airlines and Allegiant Air placed third and fourth worst respectively. Spirit registered the highest mishandling rate at 2.07pc, with 576 devices mishandled. Allegiant mishandled 207 out of 27,575 boarded.

Despite its lower mishandling percentage, Allegiant faced more severe customer backlash, with 32pc of wheelchair-related reviews rated 1 star—compared to Spirit’s 28pc.

United Airlines Network ranked fifth worst, mishandling 1,511 wheelchairs and scooters out of 156,528 boarded.

On the other hand, JetBlue places first as the best airline overall for wheelchair users with a positive sentiment of 97pc – the highest in the study.

In addition, 51pc of travel reviews including ‘wheelchair’ were 5-star reviews. In 2024, the airline mishandled 464 wheelchairs and scooters, which equates to 1.59% of all boarded mobility devices.

Delta Air Lines Network is second with the lowest percentage of mishandled mobility devices in 2024. Just 0.63pc (464) of their 155,000 boarded wheelchairs and scooters were mishandled. From 901 reviews, they had 436 reviews containing ‘wheelchair’ that received 5-stars.

In third position, Alaska Airlines Network which mishandled 547 wheelchairs and scooters in 2024, out of 35,430. Overall, they had a positive sentiment rating of 58pc, while 58pc of reviews mentioning 'wheelchair' are 5-star ratings.

Hawaiian and Southwest Airlines are in fourth and fifth position respectively, with Hawaiian Airlines having 66pc positive sentiment online, while Southwest has a 50-50 split for both positive and negative.

Hawaiian Airlines also had 37pc of their reviews mentioning 'wheelchair' at 5-star, while Southwest Airlines had 61pc.

Hawaiian Airlines did have a lower number of boarded wheelchairs and scooters. Of the 14,997 mobility devices boarded only 156 were reported as mishandled, while Southwest had the largest number of boarded mobility devices in the study.

In 2024, there were 260,565 mobility devices boarded and 3,744 were reported as mishandled.

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