

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS
TITLE 14--AERONAUTICS AND SPACE

CHAPTER II--OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
(AVIATION PROCEEDINGS)

PART 250--OVERSALES

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Authority: 49 U.S.C. chapters 401, 411, 413, 417.

Source: ER-1306, 47 FR 52985, Nov. 24, 1982, unless otherwise noted.

Sec. 250.1 Definitions.

"Airport" means the airport at which the direct or connecting flight, on which the passenger holds confirmed reserved space, is planned to arrive or some other airport serving the same metropolitan area, provided that transportation to the other airport is accepted (i.e., used) by the passenger.

"Carrier" means (a) a direct air carrier, except a helicopter operator, holding a certificate issued by the Board pursuant to sections 401(d)(1), 401(d)(2), 401(d)(5), or 401(d)(8) of the Act, or an exemption from section 401(a) of the Act, authorizing the transportation of persons, or (b) a foreign route air carrier holding a permit issued by the Board pursuant to section 402 of the Act, or an exemption from section 402 of the Act, authorizing the scheduled foreign air transportation or persons.

"Comparable air transportation" means transportation provided to passengers at no extra cost by a carrier as defined above.

"Confirmed reserved space" means space on a specific date and on a specific flight and class of service of a carrier which has been requested by a passenger and which the carrier or its agent has verified, by appropriate notation on the ticket or in any other manner provided therefor by the carrier, as being reserved for the accommodation of the passenger.

"Large aircraft" means any aircraft that has a passenger capacity of more than 60 seats.

"Stopover" means a deliberate interruption of a journey by the

passenger, scheduled to exceed 4 hours, at a point between the place of departure and the final destination.

"Sum of the values of the remaining flight coupons" means the sum of the applicable one-way fares, including any surcharges and air transportation taxes, less any applicable discounts.

[ER-1306, 47 FR 52985, Nov. 24, 1982, as amended by ER-1337, 48 FR 29680, June 28, 1983]

Sec. 250.2 Applicability.

This part applies to every carrier, as defined in Sec. 250.1, with respect to flight segments with large aircraft in (1) interstate or overseas air transportation and (2) foreign air transportation originating at a point within the United States.

Sec. 250.2a Policy regarding denied boarding.

In the event of an oversold flight, every carrier shall ensure that the smallest practicable number of persons holding confirmed reserved space on that flight are denied boarding involuntarily.

Sec. 250.2b Carriers to request volunteers for denied boarding.

(a) In the event of an oversold flight, every carrier shall request volunteers for denied boarding before using any other boarding priority. A ``volunteer'' is a person who responds to the carrier's request for volunteers and who willingly accepts the carriers' offer of compensation, in any amount, in exchange for relinquishing the confirmed reserved space. Any other passenger denied boarding is considered for purposes of this part to have been denied boarding involuntarily, even if that passenger accepts the denied boarding compensation.

(b) If an insufficient number of volunteers come forward, the carrier may deny boarding to other passengers in accordance with its boarding priority rules. However, the carrier may not deny boarding to any passenger involuntarily who was earlier asked to volunteer without having been informed about the danger of being denied boarding involuntarily and the amount of Board-mandated compensation.

[ER-1337, 48 FR 29680, June 28, 1983]

Sec. 250.3 Boarding priority rules.

(a) Every carrier shall establish priority rules and criteria for determining which passengers holding confirmed reserved space shall be denied boarding on an oversold flight in the event that an insufficient number of volunteers come forward. Such rules and criteria shall reflect the obligations of the carrier set forth in Secs. 250.2a and 250.2b to minimize involuntary denied boarding and to request volunteers, and shall be written in such manner as to be understandable and meaningful to the average passenger. Such rules and criteria shall not make, give, or cause any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any particular person or subject any particular person to any unjust or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage in any respect whatsoever.

(b) [Reserved]

[ER-1306, 47 FR 52985, Nov. 24, 1982, as amended by ER-1337, 48 FR

29680, June 28, 1983]

Sec. 250.4 Denied boarding compensation tariffs for foreign air transportation.

(a) Every carrier operating flights in foreign air transportation departing from the United States shall file tariffs governing such transportation that provide compensation for passengers holding confirmed reserved space who are denied boarding involuntarily from an oversold flight that departs without those passengers. The tariffs shall incorporate the amount of compensation described in Sec. 250.5 and the exceptions to eligibility for compensation described in Sec. 250.6. Carriers subject to this section that offer free or reduced rate air transportation in lieu of the cash payment as provided in Sec. 250.5(b) shall file a tariff stating that acceptance by the passenger of the alternative compensation is voluntary and that the value of the transportation benefit offered is equal to or greater than the cash payment otherwise required.

(b) The tariffs shall specify that the carrier will tender the appropriate compensation on the day and the place the involuntary denied boarding occurs.

(c) A carrier that does not provide the protections of this part on its inbound foreign flights may not file tariffs with the Board concerning its oversales practices for those flights.

[ER-1337, 48 FR 29680, June 28, 1983]

Sec. 250.5 Amount of denied boarding compensation for passengers denied boarding involuntarily.

(a) Subject to the exceptions provided in Sec. 250.6, a carrier as defined in Sec. 250.1, shall pay compensation to passengers denied boarding involuntarily from an oversold flight at the rate of 200 percent of the sum of the values of the passenger's remaining flight coupons up to the passenger's next stopover, or if none, to the passenger's final destination, with a maximum of \$400. However, the compensation shall be one-half the amount described above, with a \$200 maximum, if the carrier arranges for comparable air transportation, or other transportation used by the passenger that, at the time either such arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the airport of the passenger's next stopover or if none, at the airport of the passenger's destination, not later than 2 hours after the time the direct or connecting flight on which confirmed space is held is planned to arrive in the case of interstate air transportation, or 4 hours after such time in the case of foreign air transportation.

(b) Carriers may offer free or reduced rate air transportation in lieu of the cash due under paragraph (a) of this section, if (1) the value of the transportation benefit offered is equal to or greater than the cash payment otherwise required, and (2) the carrier informs the passenger of the amount of cash compensation that would otherwise be due and that the passenger may decline the transportation benefit and receive the cash payment.

[ER-1337, 48 FR 29680, June 28, 1983]

Sec. 250.6 Exceptions to eligibility for denied boarding compensation.

A passenger denied boarding involuntarily from an oversold flight shall not be eligible for denied boarding compensation if:

(a) The passenger does not comply fully with the carrier's contract of carriage or tariff provisions regarding ticketing, reconfirmation, check-in, and acceptability for transportation;

(b) The flight for which the passenger holds confirmed reserved space is unable to accommodate that passenger because of substitution of equipment of lesser capacity when required by operational or safety reasons;

(c) The passenger is offered accommodations or is seated in a section of the aircraft other than that specified on the ticket at no extra charge, except that a passenger seated in a section for which a lower fare is charged shall be entitled to an appropriate refund; or

(d) The carrier arranges comparable air transportation, or other transportation used by the passenger at no extra cost to the passenger, that at the time such arrangements are made is planned to arrive at the airport of the passenger's next stopover or, if none, at the airport of the final destination not later than 1 hour after the planned arrival time of the passenger's original flight or flights.

[ER-1337, 48 FR 29680, June 28, 1983]

Sec. 250.7 [Reserved]

Sec. 250.8 Denied boarding compensation.

(a) Every carrier shall tender to a passenger eligible for denied boarding compensation, on the day and place the denied boarding occurs, except as provided in paragraph (b), cash or an immediately negotiable check for the appropriate amount of compensation provided in Sec. 250.5.

(b) Where a carrier arranges, for the passenger's convenience, alternate means of transportation that departs before the payment can be prepared and given to the passenger, tender shall be made by mail or other means within 24 hours after the time the denied boarding occurs.

[ER-1394, 49 FR 43625, Oct. 31, 1984]

Sec. 250.9 Written explanation of denied boarding compensation and boarding priorities.

(a) Every carrier shall furnish passengers who are denied boarding involuntarily from flights on which they hold confirmed reserved space immediately after the denied boarding occurs, a written statement explaining the terms, conditions, and limitations of denied boarding compensation, and describing the carriers' boarding priority rules and criteria. The carrier shall also furnish the statement to any person upon request at all airport ticket selling positions which are in the charge of a person employed exclusively by the carrier, or by it jointly with another person or persons, and at all boarding locations being used by the carrier.

(b) The statement shall read as follows:

Compensation For Denied Boarding

If you have been denied a reserved seat on (name of air carrier), you are probably entitled to monetary compensation. This notice explains

the airline's obligation and the passenger's rights in the case of an oversold flight, in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board.

Volunteers and Boarding Priorities

If a flight is oversold (more passengers hold confirmed reservations than there are seats available), no one may be denied boarding against his or her will until airline personnel first ask for volunteers who will give up their reservation willingly, in exchange for a payment of the airline's choosing. If there are not enough volunteers, other passengers may be denied boarding involuntarily in accordance with the following boarding priority of (name of air carrier): (In this space carrier inserts its boarding priority rules or a summary thereof, in a manner to be understandable to the average passenger.)

Compensation of Involuntary Denied Boarding

If you are denied boarding involuntarily, you are entitled to a payment of "denied boarding compensation" from the airline unless:

(1) You have not fully complied with the airline's ticketing, check-in, and reconfirmation requirements, or you are not acceptable for transportation under the airline's usual rules and practices, or (2) you are denied boarding because the flight is canceled; or (3) you are denied boarding because a smaller capacity aircraft was substituted for safety or operational reasons; or (4) you are offered accommodations in a section of the aircraft other than specified in your ticket, at no extra charge, (a passenger seated in a section for which a lower fare is charged must be given an appropriate refund); or (5) the airline is able to place you on another flight or flights that are planned to reach your final destination within one hour of the scheduled arrival of your original flight.

Amount of Denied Boarding Compensation

Passengers who are eligible for denied boarding compensation must be offered a payment equal to the sum of the face values of their ticket coupons, with a \$200 maximum. However, if the airline cannot arrange "alternate transportation" (see below) for the passenger, the compensation is doubled (\$400 maximum). The "value" of a ticket coupon is the one-way fare for the flight shown on the coupon including any surcharge and air transportation tax, minus any applicable discount. All flight coupons, including connecting flights, to the passenger's final destination or first 4-hour stopover are used to compute the compensation.

"Alternate transportation" is air transportation (by an airline licensed by the CAB) or other transportation used by the passenger which, at the time the arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the passenger's next scheduled stopover (of 4 hours or longer) or final destination no later than 2 hours (for flights within U.S. points, including territories and possessions) or 4 hours (for international flights) after the passenger's originally scheduled arrival time.

Method of Payment

The airline must give each passenger who qualifies for denied

boarding compensation a payment by cash or check for the amount specified above, on the day and place the involuntary denied boarding occurs. However, if the airline arranges alternate transportation for the passenger's convenience that departs before the payment can be made, the payment will be sent to the passenger within 24 hours. The air carrier may offer free tickets in place of the cash payment. The passenger may, however, insist on the cash payment, or refuse all compensation and bring private legal action.

Passenger's Options

Acceptance of the compensation may relieve (name of air carrier) from any further liability to the passenger caused by its failure to honor the confirmed reservation. However, the passenger may decline the payment and seek to recover damages in a court of law or in some other manner.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 3024-0003)

[ER-1306, 47 FR 52985, Nov. 24, 1982, as amended by ER-1337, 48 FR 29681, June 28, 1983; ER-1392, 49 FR 40401, Oct. 16, 1984; ER-1394, 49 FR 43625, Oct. 31, 1984]

Sec. 250.10 Report of passengers denied confirmed space.

Every carrier shall file, on a quarterly basis, the information specified in BTS Form 251. The reporting basis shall be flights originating or terminating at, or servicing, a point within the United States. The reports are to be submitted within 30 days after the quarter covered by the report. The calendar quarters end March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31. ``Total Boardings'' on line 7 of Form 251 shall include only passengers on flights for which confirmed reservations are offered. No reports need be filed for inbound international flights on which the protections of this part do not apply.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2138-0018)

[Doc. No. 43872, 51 FR 30475, Aug. 27, 1986, as amended at 60 FR 66726, Dec. 26, 1995]

Sec. 250.11 Public disclosure of deliberate overbooking and boarding procedures.

(a) Every carrier shall cause to be displayed continuously in a conspicuous public place at each desk, station, and position in the United States which is in the charge of a person employed exclusively by it, or by it jointly with another person, or by any agent employed by such air carrier or foreign air carrier to sell tickets to passengers, a sign located so as to be clearly visible and clearly readable to the traveling public, which shall have printed thereon the following statement in boldface type at least one-fourth of an inch high:

Notice--Overbooking of Flights

Airline flights may be overbooked, and there is a slight chance that a seat will not be available on a flight for which a person has a confirmed reservation. If the flight is overbooked, no one will be denied a seat until airline personnel first ask for volunteers willing to give up their reservation in exchange for a payment of the airline's choosing. If there are not enough volunteers the airline will deny boarding to other persons in accordance with its particular boarding priority. With few exceptions persons denied boarding involuntarily are entitled to compensation. The complete rules for the payment of compensation and each airline's boarding priorities are available at all airport ticket counters and boarding locations. Some airlines do not apply these consumer protections to travel from some foreign countries, although other consumer protections may be available. Check with your airline or your travel agent.

(b) Every carrier shall include with each ticket sold in the United States the notices set forth in paragraph (a) of this section, printed in at least 12-point type. The notice may be printed on a separate piece of paper, on the ticket stock, or on the ticket envelope. The last two sentences of the notice shall be printed in a type face contrasting with that of the rest of the notice.

(c) It shall be the responsibility of each carrier to ensure that travel agents authorized to sell air transportation for that carrier comply with the notice provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

(d) [Reserved]

(e) Any air carrier or foreign air carrier engaged in foreign air transportation that complies fully with this part for inbound traffic to the United States need not use the last two sentences of the notices required by paragraph (a) of this subsection.