

Guidance on quality standards under Regulation EC 1107/2006

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Introduction

1. The aim of Regulation EC1107/2006 concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air ('the Regulation') is to ensure that such people have the same opportunities for air travel as those of others, in particular that they have the same rights to free movement, freedom of choice and non-discrimination. A copy of the legislation is at Annex A.
2. In relation to airports, the requirements of the Regulation deal mostly with the assistance that airports are required to provide to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (PRMs) to help them move around the airport and embark or disembark the aircraft (usually through a contracted service provider). Given this, it is imperative that airports set appropriate quality standards for this assistance to ensure that it is delivered to an acceptable standard.
3. It is also important that these service quality standards, and the performance against them, are made public so that PRMs can have the confidence to travel, knowing that their assistance needs will be met; and also so that they can hold the airport to account if the assistance provided by the airport did not meet expected levels. Making this information public may also allow PRMs to incorporate airport performance into their decisions over which airports to fly to and from. (This is consistent with our proposals for information for PRMs under our information duties under sections 83-93 of the Civil Aviation Act 2012, where we are proposing minimum standards in terms of the information available for PRMs, and its accessibility, on airport and airline websites.)
4. The purpose of this guidance is to help clarify the requirements of the Regulation in relation to the setting, monitoring, and publication of service quality standards, to ensure that the objectives of the Regulation are met, and to help give PRM passengers the confidence to travel, knowing that their assistance needs will be met.

CHAPTER 1**Publication of quality standards**

1. Article 9(3) requires airports to publish their quality standard documents. These should be separate to any service level agreement with the PRM service provider.
2. It is important to ensure that a passenger can identify quality standards quickly and easily on an airport's website. Quality standards documents should be published on the 'special assistance' sections of airport websites.

CHAPTER 2

What the quality standards should contain

Legal framework

1. The importance of setting, monitoring, and publishing service quality standards is recognised in Article 9 of the Regulation. Article 9(1) requires that airports with 150,000 commercial passengers or more 'set quality standards' for the assistance specified in Annex I of the Regulation and that these quality standards are published (Article 9(3)). Under Article 14 there is a specific obligation on the CAA, as the UK National Enforcement Body, to 'where appropriate...take the measures necessary to ensure that the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility are respected, including compliance with the quality standards'.
2. The Regulation states that airports must set the quality standards for the items listed in Annex I of the Regulation and that 'full account' must be 'taken of internationally recognised policies and codes of conduct...notably the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Code of Good Conduct in Ground Handling for Persons with Reduced Mobility (a copy is at Annex B). The airports must set quality standards, and determine resources for meeting them, in cooperation with airport users and 'organisations representing disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility'.
3. The Regulation also allows for airports to agree higher standards, or provide additional services, for PRMs travelling with particular carriers. However an airline may be required to pay an additional fee per passenger to the airport for this enhanced service.

The ECAC Code and service standards

4. The ECAC Code at paragraph 1.6 (service standards and performance monitoring) provides a number of timeframes and percentage standards for assistance (these metrics are covered in more detail in subsequent sections of this guidance). Paragraph 1.8 of the ECAC Code specifies also that there should be 'regular reviews to monitor the service provider's performance against the quality standards and to continually improve performance-monitoring systems.'
5. The Code also states that the metrics referred to in paragraph 1.6 'represent the minimum levels of service'. It is clear that they do not cover all the areas of assistance that airports are required to provide under Annex 1 of the Regulation. The Code proposes that the metrics in paragraph 1.6 should be supplemented

by a number of broader performance measures (paragraph 1.7 of the Code), including that

- all customers should be satisfied with the assistance provided;
- subject to pre-notification, 100% of departing customers who are at the designated point within the stipulated time should reach their aircraft in time to enable timely pre-boarding and departure;
- all employees, including the management, who deal directly with the travelling public at airports, should receive at least annual customer service training in the 'skills needed to communicate with disabled people' and disability awareness training.

6. It is the CAA's view that airports should implement every recommendation in the ECAC Code. The recommendations will deliver a performance framework that is compliant with Article 9 of the Regulation. It also, more meaningfully, should ensure that airports are able to give PRMs the confidence to travel knowing that their assistance needs will be met; to allow PRMs to incorporate information on the performance against the standards in their consumer decision-making; and to enable PRMs to better hold the airport to account if the assistance provided by the airport does not meet their expectations.

Departing passengers

7. Each quality standards document should include a requirement, as set out in the ECAC Code (paragraph 1.7), that 'subject to pre-notification, 100% of departing customers who are at the designated point within the stipulated departure time should reach their aircraft in time to enable timely pre-boarding and departure'. This will ensure that all passengers who have pre-notified at least 48 hours before travel and arrive either at check-in, or at a designated point, at the times requested by the airline (or if no time is provided arrive no later than one hour at check-in, or two hours at a designated point, before the flight time (Article 7 of the Regulation)) will be provided with assistance that will get them to their flight on time.
8. For passengers who have not pre-notified 48 hours before travel, the airport (or PRM service provider) must make 'all reasonable efforts' to get PRMs to the gate on time (Article 7(3)). The CAA's view is that airports should not attempt to quantify this in terms of a percentage. However, airports should note that the European Commission, in its 'Interpretative guidelines'¹ for the Regulation, expects airports 'to take a proactive role in seeking to meet any request for assistance'.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/air/doc/prm/2012-06-11-swd-2012-171_en.pdf

9. Airports should record any incident where a PRM passenger's flight has departed without them. The information recorded should include the reason for the missed flight.
10. The ECAC Code (paragraph 1.6) stipulates targets for waiting times at landside 'designated points', including those outside the terminal building, once PRMs have made themselves known and before assistance is provided. These should be adopted as minimum standards and it should be made clear that this includes all 'designated' points within the terminal boundary or under the direct control of the airport. In addition to standards that measure time taken to move PRMs, airports should use qualitative metrics (see section on passenger surveys) in order to get a fuller assessment of performance.

Transit passengers

11. In order to meet the obligation listed under Annex 1 of the Regulation to 'reach connecting flights when in transit', each document should state that, subject to 'minimum connection times', all passengers who have pre-notified at least 48 hours prior to travel should reach their connecting aircraft to enable timely pre-boarding and departure. For those that have not pre-notified, airports must 'make all reasonable efforts' to ensure that the passenger reaches the gate on time (again, the CAA's view is that this should not be quantified).
12. Airports should record any incident where a PRM passenger's flight has departed without them. The information recorded should include the reason for the missed flight.

Arriving passengers

13. The ECAC Code only recommends targets for arriving passengers in relation to waiting times for assistance to disembark the aircraft.
14. Airports should endeavour to measure the passenger journey on arrival in totality (i.e. from gate to designated arrival point). However, there are factors which delay passengers that are outside the airport's control, such as time spent at baggage reclaim and immigration.
15. Given these difficulties, the CAA's view is that airports need not stipulate quantitative metrics for waiting times for the assistance provided during the arriving passenger journey so long as, once the PRM passenger is disembarked, the airport assists the passenger through the airport in one continuous 'movement', i.e. directly from the arrival gate, through immigration and baggage reclaim, and to the final designated point, without a break in the assistance. However, if an airport uses 'holding' areas where PRM passengers have to wait for further assistance once disembarked from the aircraft, it should set targets for waiting times in these holding areas in a similar format to that of the ECAC time metrics.