

SOFIA AIRPORT

APPROVED:
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SOFIA AIRPORT:


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QUALITY STANDARDS for assistance provided at Sofia Airport to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (PRM) when travelling by air

1. General.

Regulation (EC) 1107/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council obliges all European airports to provide a special assistance to persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility (*PRM*), during their use of air transport.

EC Regulation 1107/2006, Article 9 and ECAC Doc. 30, Part I, section 5, Annex 5-C, 1. 'Code of Good conduct in ground handling for Persons with Reduced Mobility' states, that each European airport should develop Quality standards in accordance with which assistance to PRMs should be given.

Sofia Airport, in its capacity of an airport operator has created "Quality standards for assistance provided at Sofia Airport to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (PRM) when travelling by air" together with the airport Users' Committee and the Disability Forum in Bulgaria.

The above mentioned Standards are in accordance with EC Regulation 1107/2006, Annex 1 and ECAC Doc. 30, Part I, Section 5 and the annexes are applied to the assistance of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility, using or intending to use passenger air services on departure from, transit through, or on arrival at Sofia Airport.

Assistance to PRM comes under the responsibility of Sofia Airport authority and is provided free of charge by the Passenger Personal Assistants Department, Operations Division.

2. Definition.

"Disabled person" or "person with reduced mobility" (PRM) means any person whose mobility when using transport is reduced due to any physical disability (sensory or locomotor, permanent or temporary), intellectual disability or impairment, or any other cause of disability, or age, and whose situation needs appropriate attention and the adaptation to his or her particular needs of the service made available to all passengers.

3. Classification of PRM.

Assistance is provided to the following passenger categories:

Characteristics	IATA PRM code	Assistance needed
PRM cannot walk or stand, must be carried to the cabin seat	WCHC	2 passenger assistants, an aisle chair on a contact stand; (Ambulift on a remote stand)
PRM cannot ascend/descend steps, but is able to move inside the aircraft	WCHS	1 passenger assistant, wheelchair to/from aircraft on a contact stand, (Ambulift on a remote stand)
PRM cannot walk long distances but can walk up and down steps	WCHR	1 passenger assistant, wheelchair can be used to/from gate or aircraft steps.
Passenger with vision impairment	BLND	1 passenger assistant
Passenger with hearing impairment	DEAF	1 passenger assistant (only if they expressly request assistance)
Passenger with vision and hearing impairments	BLND/DEAF	1 passenger assistant
Passenger with intellectual or developmental disability	DPNA	1 passenger assistant (only if they expressly request assistance)

4. MEDA and STCR cases.

Passengers with IATA code **MEDA** and **STCR** are not PRM assistances (IATA Resolution 700).

MEDA: Medical cases, for which in order to fly, passengers need to get permission from the air carrier. Sofia Airport provides assistance to this category of passengers only in case when wheelchair assistance (transfer) is needed.

STCR: Passenger on a stretcher. Medical cases, for which in order to fly, passengers need permission from the air carrier. The airline is responsible for getting an access to the aircraft both for the medical staff and the ambulance of the medical institution. The handling (physical carry) of a passenger on a stretcher is given by the medical staff. Sofia Airport only provides an Ambulift/highloader for embarking/disembarking (vertical transportation). The airline has to pre-notify Sofia Airport about the need of the Ambulift at least 24 hours in advance.

5. PRM assistance pre-notification.

For the purpose of staff planning and delivering an on-time assistance to PRMs, it's essential that Sofia Airport is pre-notified. Thus Sofia Airport will guarantee the required assistance.

In accordance with *EC Regulation 1107/2006*, PRMs have to inform their travel agency or airline for their particular need for assistance at least **48** hours before the published time of departure (STD) and this information should be correctly (via SITA PAL/CAL messages) passed to Sofia Airport at least **36** hours prior to the published departure time.

Pre-notification should include the following information:

- Passenger's name;
- Date and flight number;
- Relevant IATA PRM assistance code.

If the PRM fails to request assistance in advance, Sofia Airport management will make all reasonable efforts to provide the assistance needed according to the quality standards set in this document.

6. Pick-up points.

6.1. On departure:

6.1.1. Clearly signed pick-up points with intercom for announcing the PRM staff:

- Outside Departure hall and inside at the information desk;
- Public parking Terminal 2 (level -1 and level -2);
- Public parking Terminal 1;
- At the exit of metro station;

6.1.2. Check-in desk for the relevant flight.

6.2. Upon arrival:

Based on the request of the PRM, the assistance will be provided till the following spots:

- Arrival hall;
- Bus stop/metro;
- Taxi stand;
- Public parking;

7. Description of assistance.

Sofia Airport provides the following assistance to PRMs:

- Assistance from specially dedicated PRM zones or from pick-up points to check-in counter;
- Assistance at check-in counter;
- Assistance with security procedures;
- Assistance with customs and emigration procedures;
- Assistance through the terminal to the departure gate;
- Assistance during boarding/disembarking the aircraft (to/from the aircraft seat, if necessary);
- Assistance with customs and immigration procedures;
- Assistance at the luggage belt (assistance with all PRM passenger luggage);
- Assistance at lost and found counter, if necessary;
- Assistance from the baggage hall to a designated point;
- Assistance with connecting flights when in transit (airside and landside);
- Assistance when using commercial outlets and toilet facilities, if required;
- Providing a supplementary wheelchair, if required;

The above assistance is provided subject to the following conditions:

- Assistance at departure will be guaranteed only if the PRM arrives at the pick-up points **not later than one hour** before the published departure time (STD). If this time is not observed Sofia Airport will make all reasonable efforts to assist the PRM board the flight in time, but the final decision is of the responsible carrier.
- Every PRM is entitled to a seamless service, this means without handover and interruption of service.

- PRMs shall be boarded prior to all other passengers on departure and, on arrival, shall be disembarked after all other passengers. Exceptions will be made if the PRM was announced at the last moment or at the request of the airline or at apparent operational necessity.
- In case a PRM travels in his own wheelchair (manually operated or electrical), Sofia Airport will guarantee the comfort of the PRM by letting him use his personal wheelchair as long as possible – on departure till the moment of pre-boarding, on arrival by presenting the personal wheelchair at the door of the aircraft (according to approved Procedure).
- The wheelchair battery and its controls must be protected from inadvertent operation. This is the task of airline or GH staff, as EC Regulation 1107/2006 does not change the distribution of the tasks of liability in between airport and airline. Empty wheelchair is considered as baggage.
- The final safety decision on whether such equipment can be carried (DGR issues or physically the size of an aircraft) is a matter for the air carrier. Where carriage is refused an air carrier should record details as to the reason for that refusal. A detailed written and accessible explanation should be provided to PRM.
- Air carriers and their agents remain liable in case of damage to mobility equipment in accordance with International, EU and national law.
- In case the PRM travels with a recognized assistance dog, it will be handled in accordance with the rules for carriage of the airline.
- Manual lifting of a PRM (WCHS, WCHC) when boarding/disembarking of the aircraft is forbidden, except in cases of force majeure/emergency.

8. Response time.

Departing Passengers:

Pick-up point	Pre-booked PRM average waiting time	Non pre-booked PRM average waiting time
T2	For 80% -not more than 5 min For 100% - not more than 10 min	For 80% -not more than 15 min 100% - 20 min
T1	For 80% -not more than 10 min For 100% - not more than 15 min	For 80% -not more than 20 min For 100% - not more than 30 min

Arriving Passengers:

T2 and T1 Aircraft side	100% on arrival	For 80% - not more than 15 min of “on chocks” For 100% - not more than 25 min
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9. Training of staff.

In accordance with EC Regulation 1107/2006 and ECAC Doc 30, Part I, Section 5, Annex 5-G, Sofia Airport is providing:

- Training of PRM staff – initial training for newly appointed staff upon beginning and refresher training on a yearly basis.
- Training of airport staff who is in direct contact with the travelling public (e.g. Check-in agents, Lost and Found agents, Information desk staff, Border police, Customs, Security, Retailers, Business lounges) – basic training and refresher training every two years.

10. Equipment.

Sofia Airport engages that all equipment for PRM assistance will be compliant with the recommendations of ECAC Doc. 30, Part I, Section 5, Annex D.

List of specialized equipment in 2016:

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|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Ambulift | – 2 vehicles |
| 2. Specialized minivan | – 1 vehicle |
| 3. Wheelchairs | – 28 units |
| 4. Aisle chairs | – 4 units |

To come up to these standards Sofia Airport plans to purchase one additional specialized minivan and to replace some of the wheelchairs in 2017.

According to EC Regulation 1107/2006, Annex 1, Sofia Airport will provide temporary replacement of damaged or lost personal wheelchair of a PRM.

11. Complaints handling.

All complaints or suggestions concerning PRM assistance should be sent in writing via the satisfaction form, by post or via public e-mail on Sofia Airport website (public@sofia-airport.bg).

They are processed in accordance with “Sofia Airport Internal rules for passenger complaints and comments”. A thorough investigation will follow within the next 5 (five) working days. The complaint should be fully responded in one month.

12. Monitoring of performance.

12.1. Quality control of assistance to PRMs.

Sofia Airport will use the following tools for quality performance control:

- Internal monitoring;
- Passenger enquiry on their satisfaction (questionnaires and interviews);
- External audits;

12.2. Quality control of handling of mobility equipment.

According to EC Regulation 1107/2006 and Interpretative Guidelines SWD 171, Q17 (b) the airport operator has an obligation to ensure that ground handling of PRM's mobility equipment is correctly managed and should be active in its organisation and supervision.

OPERATIONAL CONTACTS

- SITA: SOFODXH - for PAL/CAL/PSM messages
- E-mail: penevav@sofia-airport.bg, prm.assist@sofia-airport.bg
- Tel: (+359 2) 937 2175, +359 885 840 150

These quality standards were agreed in cooperation with the Sofia Airport Users Committee and Bulgarian Disability Forum.