

This list of resources is meant to guide you in your travel plans. Please email communitysupport@curesma.org with feedback on the resources provided here and to provide suggestions for resources to be added to this list.

Before You Go – Research & Planning



Planning a vacation can be a daunting task but with enough planning and flexibility, you can have successful, memorable travels. There are endless resources on the internet, available to you as you research and plan ahead. We have gathered together this information as a starting point as you begin your planning.

- Contact local tourism offices and local transit providers before you travel to gain valuable information about accessible sites, tours, and accommodations. You can check their websites, as well, as some will include information there about accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Read through posts related to travel in online disability groups or forums. That firsthand information can be invaluable, especially when coming from someone who has a disability and can vouch for what is actually accessible and what is not.
- Contact your insurance provider and verify that you will be covered under your insurance while traveling. If it does not, look into travel medical insurance to provide coverage in case of emergency.
- If you're planning a trip that you have invested considerable amounts of money into, you may want to consider travel insurance to ensure you can cancel at any time if you face an unexpected medical emergency without financial penalties.
- It's always helpful to learn some basic phrases in the language that is spoken where you will be traveling but this is especially helpful if you have a disability. It can help when you need to ask for assistance finding a bathroom, transportation, or accommodations and can also break down barriers and allow for you to connect easier with locals.

Before You Go – Packing



Check with your transportation provider, whether that be an airline company or train service, to ensure you know how many bags you can bring and what the protocol is for medical equipment and supplies. It is helpful to make a running list at home, starting a couple weeks before you leave, to list the day-to-day items you need to bring along to meet your needs while away from home. Below are some other helpful reminders as you pack.

- Keep medications and other important supplies in your carry-on luggage in case your checked luggage is lost in transit. Liquid medication and formula may be allowed on the flight but will need additional screening. Connect with your airline prior to your departure date to ensure you have time allotted to complete the screen and have all items stored properly. In regard to medication, it may also be helpful to share your travel plans with your doctor in case you need a prescription called in due to lost or damaged medication. A good rule of thumb is to have a few extra days' worth of all medical supplies (formula, feeding bags, syringes, etc.) in case of a delay in traveling or if something is lost or damaged.

- Some equipment to consider bringing or planning ahead to meet your needs include shower chairs, toilet seat or system, and a lift. Consider your daily routine for tasks like eating, bathing, toileting, and sleeping to help generate ideas on what equipment you will need to bring, what the hotel may have available, or what you may be able to adapt in the room to use when you arrive.

On the Way – Transportation



Air Travel - If you're traveling by air, there are simple steps you can take prior to booking your flight and departing that can help your experience going through security and boarding the airplane.

- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) offers an extensive number of resources on their website and one of the most helpful tools is their [TSA guidelines for special accommodations](#). On this site, a traveler can specify what type of accommodation they may need during security screening and learn about the process and what to expect.
- Prior to even heading to the airport, you should call the airline ahead of time, once you've booked your flight, and again 48 hours before your flight departure to confirm the arrangements.
- [TSA Cares & Passenger Support](#) - TSA Cares is a help line to assist travelers with disabilities and medical conditions. It is recommended that passengers call 72 hours ahead of travel for information about what to expect during screening. TSA Cares can be reached toll free at 855-787-2227 or via email at TSAContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov. TSA Cares will assist you with the check-in and security process by providing direct support at the airport, although how each airport carries out these services will vary.



Keep in mind that those using wheelchairs are often last off of airplanes so consider this if you have to transfer flights and allow for enough time to do so.

- Upon arriving to the airport, go to the check-in counter to have your wheelchair and any other equipment tagged. The airline staff may also direct you to specific staff to help you navigate through security and connect you with TSA Cares, if you have contacted them.
- After completing the security check and arriving at the gate, make sure to check-in with the gate agent to ensure preboarding for your party is in order, including an aisle chair for boarding, should you need it. It may feel like you're doing a lot of double checking and that's because you are. The thoroughness will go far in ensuring your trip goes as smoothly as possible and nothing is forgotten.
- You can gate-check your wheelchair, whether manual or power. This means that a wheelchair-user can stay in their wheelchair up until the point they board the airplane. At that point, they can be transferred from their wheelchair into a standard "aisle chair" which is a chair small enough to fit onto an airplane and down the aisles.
- If you're worried about your wheelchair being damaged when being handled or during the flight, you're not alone or without reason to worry. However, there are some precautions that you can take to help prevent damage. For example, you can remove all items that could easily break or get lost (headrest, footrest, cushions, etc). Some people recommend taping or plastic-wrapping any parts of wheelchair that cannot be removed but are fragile and often people will laminate custom wheelchair tags with instructions for how to lift or handle the wheelchair and secure it to the chair for airline employees to reference.
- If you're traveling with a service animal, be sure to review [this thorough instructional list of traveling with a service animal](#) so you and your companion are prepared for your trip.



If you have any trouble getting the accommodations from the airline, at any point in your trip, you can ask to speak to the company's Complaints Resolution Office (CRO). All airlines are required to have a CRO to resolve complaints and they can be a resource to help you get your needs met.

Cars/Trains/Buses

- If you're traveling by train or bus, be sure to check for discounts offered to passengers with physical disabilities. Amtrak, Greyhound, and train services in the US and abroad often offer discounts.
- There are some accommodations available if you're looking for a Lyft or Uber to get around or to get to or from the airport. In some select cities you can request an UberAssist or Wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) in the Uber app and you can look for "accessible vehicle dispatch" in the Lyft app. These aren't available in all cities so make sure to do your research prior to traveling. Local taxi services may have accessible vehicles, as do public transportation like buses, so remember to check those options, too.



If you're using a manual wheelchair and able to safely transfer into a vehicle, look for the "XL" option in the Lyft or Uber app to request a larger vehicle that you can ride in while you stow your chair.



When You Arrive – Accommodations

As the saying goes, being prepared isn't half the battle; it IS the battle! As you've probably noticed, planning ahead is the "name of the game" when traveling and this especially includes where you'll stay during your travels. Below is a list to get you started as you do your research.

- Hotel Considerations:
 - Room – request an accessible room and ensure that there is enough room to maneuver a wheelchair, including turning space inside the room.
 - Bathroom – verify that doorway width is adequate, that the toilet is a workable height and placed in a way that works for you, and that there's a roll-in shower available. If you need grab bars, check that they are present and the right height for you.
 - Location – are there hills nearby, cobblestone streets, or sidewalks that may be difficult to navigate?
 - Accessibility – is the hotel step-free inside and outside of building?
 - Parking – is the location near to the hotel, is there space for ramp deployment, and is there access to the sidewalks?
 - Surrounding Area – are there restaurants, medical facilities, grocery, and access to local transit systems nearby?



Google Earth is a great way to see the terrain of an area you will be visiting.



When You Arrive - Daily Plans & Touring

- As much as possible, try to keep some semblance of your home routine while on vacation. Factor in time to rest, to do respiratory protocols, to take medications, or do other treatments. Getting out of routine, forgoing medical treatments, or even missing naps can make or break your trip so remember to take care of yourself so you can enjoy your travels fully.

- If you're considering using a tour guide, you can use the list of questions below to ensure the tour is accessible for you. You can also seek out travel agencies that specialize in accessible touring.
 - Is the tour guide a licensed professional? How much training has the guide received and what tests have they passed?
 - What route will the guide use? Does it involve curbs, steps, steep hills, or cobblestones? Where are the accessible bathrooms located? If you're traveling alone, will the guide physically assist you if needed?
 - Is this a private tour, or will you be with other travelers? Will there be accommodations available if you are unable to tour at the same pace as others?
 - How many people with disabilities have they guided in the past year? If the company has not guided anyone with disabilities recently, they may be unaware of updates regarding accessibility in their area.



In Case of Emergency

- The [U.S Department of State Travel Site](#) will help you research insurance coverage needed in case of emergency. This site also provides information on how to prepare for any potential emergencies such as natural disasters.
- The U.S. Department of State [STEP program](#) allows travelers to register with the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate when traveling abroad. This allows people to contact you in case of an emergency and also allows you to get updates about any travel concerns.



Helpful Travel Resources & Links

General Travel Sites

- [Curb Free with Cory Lee](#)
- [Wheel the World](#)
- [National Park Service Access Pass](#)

Facebook Groups

- [Traveling with SMA](#)
- [Wheel the World – Accessible Travel Community](#)
- [Wandering SMA Travelers](#)
- [Accessible Travel Club](#)

Helpful Air Travel Sites

U.S. Department of Transportation Links:

- [Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights](#)
- [General Travel Tips for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Traveling with a Disability](#)
- [What Airline Employees, Airline Contractors, and Air Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [Air Travel Service Complaint Form](#)
- [A Consumer Guide to Air Travel](#)
- [Air Travel Complaint Process Background](#)
- [Air Travel Consumer Reports](#)

• Travel Guides

- [Wheelchair Users' Guide to Air Travel](#)
- [Summary of the Air Carrier Access Act](#)
- [Navigating the Skies An Accessible Air Travel Guide](#)



"The world is full of wonderful things you haven't seen yet. Don't ever give up on the chance of seeing them."

— J.K. Rowling