

RESPITE TIP



PLANES, TRAINS, AND FERRIES

Traveling with a child or adult with special needs can sometimes be a challenging experience. Did you know that different companies such as Air Canada, Bay Ferries, and VIA Rail have tried to make travelling easier, safer, and more accessible for your family and you?

Air Canada, Via Rail and Bay Ferries, along with other agencies recognize that not all their customers have the same needs. In order to provide their customers with comfortable, easygoing and economical travel they offer different supports and services for clients who need accommodations such as an escort, a service animal, or an extra seat. They also provide storage for mobility aids while travelling.

Air Travel

Most major airlines provide supports and services for passengers with disabilities or special needs. Whether it's assistance with registration at the check-in counter, help with getting around airports or with mobility devices, free or reduced travel costs for an attendant, or accommodations for a service animal, airlines offer a wide variety of specialized services and supports for disabled passengers. For more information on the specific services airlines provide to passengers with special needs, check out the following:

Air Canada: <http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/before/specialneeds.html>.

Porter: <https://www.flyporter.com/Travel/Special-Service-Requests?culture=en-CA>

West Jet: <http://www.westjet.com/guest/en/travel/special-arrangements/special-needs/index.shtml>

VIA Rail

VIA Rail Canada provides services to help you board and get off the train and allows escorts to travel free in the same class. All VIA trains are accessible to travelers in wheelchairs and are

equipped with wheelchair tie-downs, narrow wheelchairs, tools to reduce the width of certain manual wheelchairs, and grab bars in washrooms. VIA Rail also has a \$15 kids fare (economy class only) in the summer for children under the age of 11, when accompanied by an individual over the age of 18. For more information on VIA Rail's special needs services and eligibility, please see: <http://www.viarail.ca/en/travel-info/special-needs>.

Ferry Travel

Bay Ferries (Princess of Acadia), Northumberland Ferry and Nova Star Cruises, all provide services to help meet the special needs of their customers. The Bay Ferries allows attendants to travel at no charge if a person is unable to travel alone (excluding Port and security fees). All of Bay Ferries' facilities are wheel chair accessible, and if you are traveling in a vehicle and are unable to climb stairs, special arrangements are available. Northumberland Ferry and Nova Star Cruises facilities are also wheel chair accessible with elevators from the parking deck.

Northumberland Ferry (Caribou, Nova Scotia to Wood Islands, PEI) Wheel chair access from the vehicle decks to the passenger deck is available through an elevator from the car deck. All passenger amenities are on one level.

Bay Ferries (Princess of Acadia) (Digby, Nova Scotia to Saint John, New Brunswick) There is an elevator between passenger decks, however there is no wheelchair accessibility from the vehicle deck. Physically challenged passengers must board through the terminal.

For more information on Bay Ferries and Northumberland Ferry services, go to:
<http://www.ferries.ca/>.

Nova Star Cruises (Yarmouth, Nova Scotia to Portland, Maine) All public areas, including the vehicle decks, are accessible by elevators. All public areas on the ship are wheelchair accessible. They also have two wheelchair accessible cabins available, but these can only be booked by calling the reservations center at 866-864-6295. They comply with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, which allows trained service animals to accompany owners with various disabilities.

For more information on Nova Star Cruises, go to:
http://novastarcruises.com/?gclid=CNDIneH_1cUCFQeRaQodjSsAcg

Disability Travel Card Program

Disability Travel Card[™] provides free travel for support persons accompanying a person with a disability when traveling with Via Rail*, Greyhound Bus, Coach Canada or Motor Coach Companies of Canada. The person with the disability pays regular fare. For more information, go to: <http://easterseals.ca/english/disability-travel-card>

Access 2 Card - The Access 2 card allows persons with a disability to receive either free admission or a significant discount for their support person at member movie theatres and attractions across Canada. This program seeks to offer more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in recreational activities with an attendant, without added financial burden. It is also designed to raise awareness and help businesses provide quality customer service to customers with disabilities. For more information, go to: <http://easterseals.ca/english/access-2-entertainment-card>

These are national programs sponsored by Easter Seals Canada. For more information, please go to: <http://easterseals.ca/english/> or call toll free at 1-877-376-6362 x 224.

Websites that may be of interest:

The following websites are about accessible travel for persons with disabilities:

www.accesstotravel.gc.ca. Access to Travel is a special needs information resource developed by the Government of Canada. It provides information on accessible transportation and travel across Canada with the aim of making traveling an easier and more enjoyable experience for Canadians with disabilities.

www.disabledtravelers.com DisabledTravelers.com, a resource dedicated to accessible travel information. This new site will provide you with information on businesses from around the world that specialize in disability travel.

<http://www.keroul.gc.ca/en/home.html> a site from Québec dedicated to tourism and culture for people with restricted physical ability. English is available on this site.

<http://www.guidedtours.com/?gclid> A professionally supervised travel and vacation program in the United States for persons with developmental and physical challenges. Travel options for destinations all over the world.

www.iser.com/disabled-travel.html Mostly U.S.-based information on trips, travel and accommodations for physically and developmentally disabled children, teens, and their families.

This Respite Tip has been brought to you by the Nova Scotia Partnership on Respite, Family Health, and Well-Being. Information on the Respite Partnership and this and other Respite Tips can be found at: <http://disability.novascotia.ca/content/nova-scotia-respite-partnership>

Respite, WE deserve it!



The information contained in this Respite Tip article is not intended to be formal legal or financial advice. It has been gathered from a variety of sources and is provided as an introduction to the topic. It is not complete and should not be used in the place of professional advice or consultation.

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