



# HOTEL SHUTTLES

ACCESSIBILITY & YOUR RIGHTS

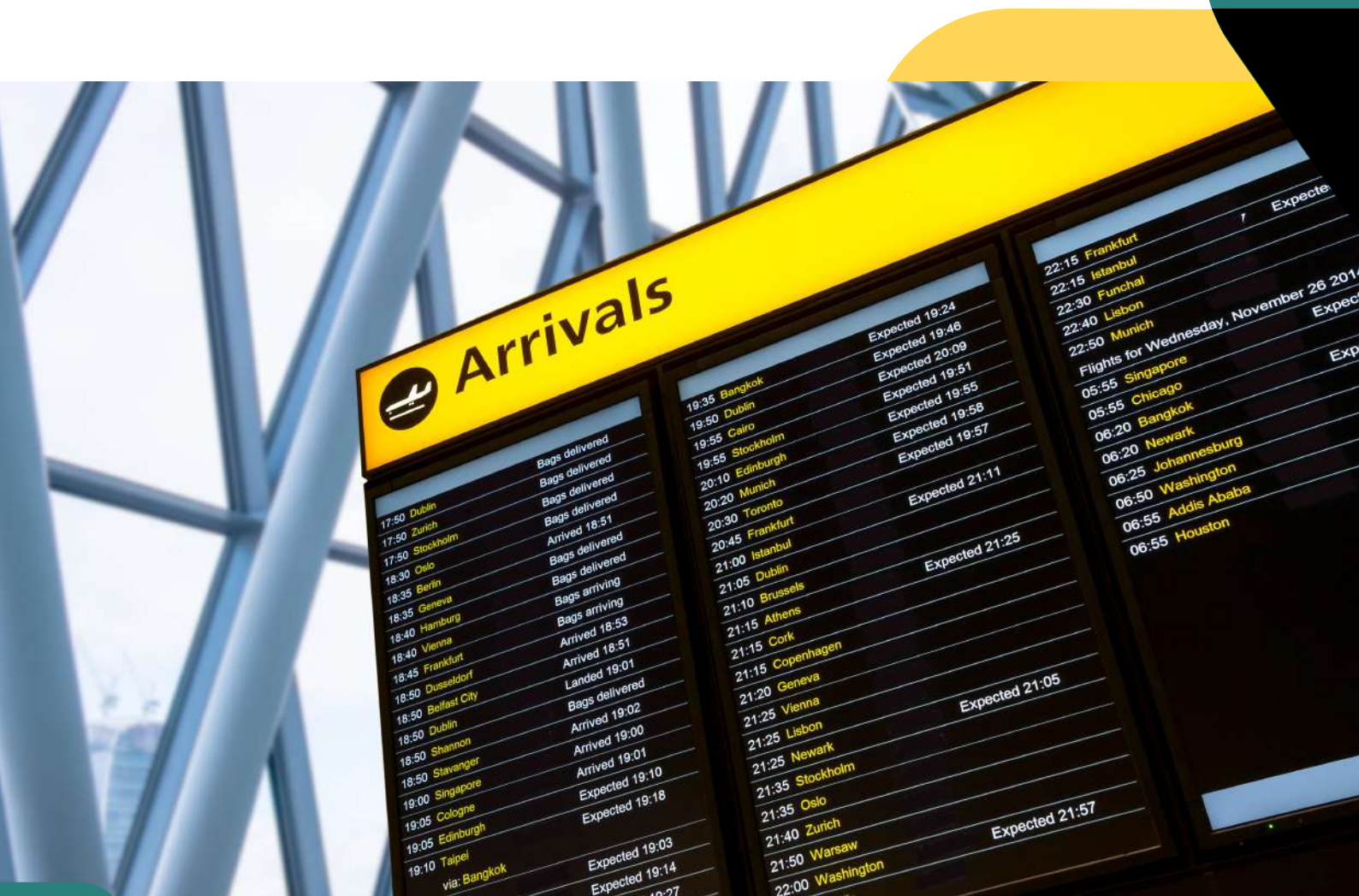
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# HOTEL SHUTTLES: ACCESSIBILITY & YOUR RIGHTS

Hotels often offer a free shuttle service for airport pickups and drop-offs. Hotels in busy cities or located near special attractions may also provide a free transportation service to places of interest. If no complimentary service is provided, the hotel concierge desk can often arrange a paid taxi or car service. The availability of hotel shuttles can be a significant factor for people with disabilities when choosing a hotel as it can make your trip much smoother.

accessibleGO set out to provide you with the guide below to know your rights when it comes to hotel shuttles, since not all shuttle services are accessible.







# DISABILITY LAW FOR HOTEL TRANSPORTATION

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*The service provided to guests with disabilities must be equivalent to the service provided for all guests.*

## Is there a law requiring hotels to provide accessible transportation to guests with disabilities?

According to the [ADA](#) (Americans with Disabilities Act), hotels that provide courtesy shuttles to transport guests to and from the airport or other local destinations must also ensure that the transportation is accessible to people with disabilities. Some hotels do not have a courtesy shuttle but will provide transportation on request. In this instance, they are obliged to provide accessible transportation if a customer requests it. Hotels that do not offer any form of transportation to their guests have no obligations to people with disabilities.

## What is “equivalent service”?

The ADA regulations require “equivalent service” be provided to guests with and without disabilities. For example, if the hotel will organize transportation at no extra charge, they are not allowed to charge if you need specifically accessible transportation. If they run a free shuttle to and from the airport every 30 minutes, they cannot run the accessible shuttle only once an hour. The service provided to guests with disabilities must be equivalent to the service provided for all guests.

# WHAT TO EXPECT

## Do all hotels provide accessible transportation?

Many hotels (especially those close to an airport) provide a complimentary shuttle. However, anecdotal evidence based on user feedback shows that not all hotels are compliant with the ADA. In a random sampling of hotels in three major US cities, accessibleGO learned that most hotels do not offer equivalent service, although they are legally required to do so. Some hotels have but one ADA compliant vehicle, which runs infrequently. Some hotels have no accessible shuttle at all.

John Morris, founder of the blog [wheelchairtravel.org](https://wheelchairtravel.org), wrote a full [article](#) on this subject, which explains the frustration for hotel guests with disabilities.

*“Of the three experiences I had last week, only one hotel provided an accessible shuttle. Even then, I was made to wait for long periods of time, and the service offered to me was not equivalent with that offered to other travelers.”*

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*Most hotels do not  
offer equivalent  
service*



# WHAT TO EXPECT



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*It is best to check by telephone with the hotel to see if they actually have an accessible shuttle*

## Practical Advice

The official website of each hotel should inform visitors if the hotel has a shuttle or can organize transportation. If shuttle service is offered by the hotel, they are obligated by law to offer equivalent accessible services.

However, not all hotels are compliant and therefore it is best to check by telephone with the hotel to see if they actually have an accessible shuttle or can organize an accessible taxi. In some hotels, transportation service is complimentary. In other hotels, it comes at the guest's expense.

Tracy Trisko, ADA Technical Leader for EMG Corporation headquartered in Maryland, explains,

*“Hotels have to ensure that if they do provide shuttles, an accessible shuttle is available for anyone with a disability, or a similar accessible service is immediately available to a disabled guest. Obviously this has not been enforced, since so many hotels do not provide shuttles with a lift for wheelchair users who cannot transfer to a seat.”*

However, if the hotel can obtain the accessible shuttle service from a subcontractor for the guest with a disability, that is considered ‘equivalent service’ if there is immediate access to the subcontractor equivalent to what other guests are provided.”



# COMPARING HOTELS IN THREE MAJOR U.S. CITIES

## New York Hotels

Most hotels that are near one of New York's big airports offer a complimentary shuttle service from the airport to the hotel. Hotels in Manhattan do not offer any shuttle service, but some have arrangements with a taxi or limousine service that can organize transfers for their guests (some are complimentary, others are at the guest's expense). Many hotels confirmed that their shuttles are not wheelchair accessible. This information is not available on the website, but was confirmed by verification phone calls. One hotel website went so far as to state they can arrange for accessible transportation, but the guest has to pay, unlike the hotel's own shuttle which is free of charge. This is a clear violation of the ADA.

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*Hotels in Manhattan  
do not offer any free  
shuttle service*







## Chicago Hotels

Hotels in Chicago seem to be better at sticking to the ADA rules regarding equivalent services for people with disabilities. The websites of certain hotels in the Hilton chain promise “accessible transportation with advance notice.” Unfortunately, other hotel chains are not as forthcoming.

Although many hotels in Chicago and in the surrounding areas close to O’Hare airport do offer an airport shuttle, many are not accessible. However, by example, the Courtyard Chicago Midway Airport has a complimentary accessible airport shuttle that can pick you up from the airport with just ten minutes notice, and the Warwick Allerton Chicago will organize a car service or accessible airport transfer (all guests pay for this service).

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*Hotels in Chicago  
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## San Francisco Hotels

The official website of the San Francisco International Airport has a [list of over 50 hotels](#) that have a complimentary shuttle to and from the airport, with contact details for each shuttle service. accessibleGO contacted the airport to find out which of these shuttles are accessible for a wheelchair user.

*“Our permits with all ground transportation providers require that they provide equivalent service to disabled customers, either with their own vehicles or vehicles they call in real time. You should be able to contact any hotel with SFO courtesy shuttle service for assistance,” replied an airport spokesperson.*

Travellers who encounter difficulties are encouraged to contact San Francisco International Airport directly.



# HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

## What to do if the hotel you are in does not offer the accessible transportation that they promise?

Unfortunately, there is no governing body set up to monitor or enforce ADA requirements. Tim Fox, Lawyer and Co-Founder of **CREEC** (Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center) recommends that if you are a guest at a non-compliant hotel, you complain to the hotel and keep a copy of your complaint in writing, as well as filing your complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice by email at [ADA.Complaint@usdoj.gov](mailto:ADA.Complaint@usdoj.gov) using the guidelines published [here](#).

AN ACCESSIBLE SHUTTLE FROM THE HOLIDAY INN'S ORLANDO WATERPARK. PHOTO: HOLIDAY INN RESORT – ORLANDO WATERPARK



Find extensive options for accessible transportation for major U.S. cities on [accessibleGO.com](https://accessibleGO.com).