

HAVE PASSPORT WILL TRAVEL

Thousands of people every day fly or take cruises on vacations with little thought about many of the barriers that face those of us that are physically challenged. We hope the following will help you look at travel as something you can do even though you use a wheelchair or scooter. We have found that traveling with a post-polio group has made us feel part of a group that understands our limitations and can share our feelings.

The cruise industry has continued to build ships that are much more consumer friendly than the ships of 20 years ago. They have accessible cabins, swimming pool lifts, elevators, and other facilities to help the traveler who has a disability.

The following is a step-by-step outline of hints that will make your vacation more enjoyable.

Pre-trip:

- Before you go, speak with your doctor about your health concerns.
- Update your medical history, emergency contact information and make a list of medications to take with you.
- Review your health insurance policy and know the procedure to obtain medical coverage for treatment of an illness while away from home, including hospitalization and medical evacuation.
- We recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance, due to unforeseen emergencies.
- Make your travel agent aware of your mobility needs and what equipment you will need onboard
- Book early if you require an accessible cabin
- Look at renting equipment instead of taking your own. It can be delivered to your cabin.
- Check out the exclusive accessible excursions available through the cruise line.
- There are no specific crew members onboard to help with mobility equipment or lifting cruisers, so it is a good idea to travel with someone.
- Have a current passport. Get a passport holder to put around your neck.
- With or without a group, you should travel with an able bodied person.
- Reserve a handicapped room on the ship with a roll-in-shower. There are very few, so reserve early. The staff can raise your bed, move furniture, etc. The ship can also provide a shower seat and a raised toilet seat.

If you are flying to your port city:

- Make airplane reservations early and on-line, there is a fee to book by phone. Whenever possible only book nonstop flights
- Call to request handicapped seating after you have a reservation number.
- Forty-eight hours advance notice and one-hour advance check-in is required of a qualified individual with a disability who requests the following services or accommodations: Use of a wheelchair lift or ramp device for boarding and deplaning from ramp level when there are no boarding bridges.
- Download your boarding pass 24 hours before your flight and check your handicapped seating.
- If you are flying to a port to sail on a cruise, consider going a day early, the ship won't wait for you.

We have cruised many times with both the Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruise Lines and have found the ships to be very accessible and the crew very helpful.

Enjoy your cruise,

Dianne & Bruce Sachs

