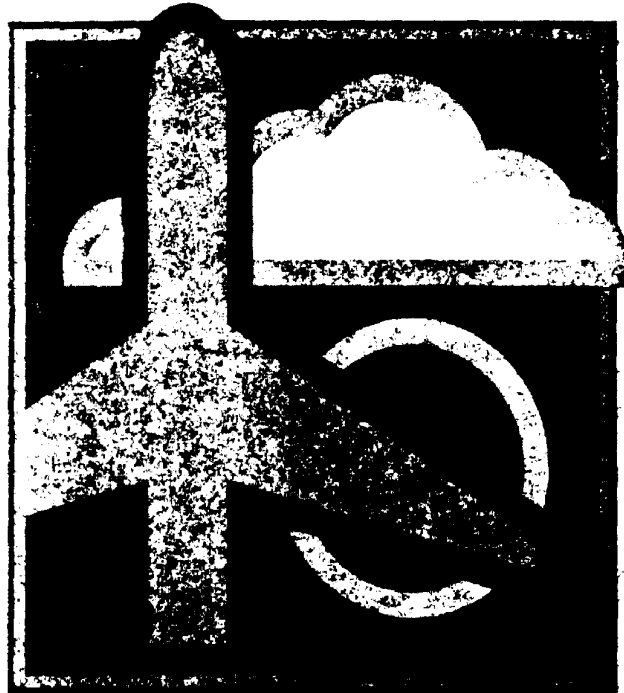


TIFL 010295

Passport to Smokers' Rights



Airline Writing Campaign
(A Smoker's
Guide)

TIFL 010296

A well written letter to the Department of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration, or the consumer complaints departments of airlines can be an effective way to persuade aviation officials that smokers expect to be accommodated on airlines.

Similarly, sincere and well-thought-out letters to your Representative and Senators can help influence their votes, especially as they begin to consider the sunset of the current two-hour airline smoking ban. Letters provide an essential indication of what's important to constituents back home.

Letters to the editor of local newspapers can be a positive force in creating public awareness of airline legislation and its ramifications, and in persuading state and local legislators to oppose unnecessary restrictions.

This brochure includes information and guidelines on drafting letters to aviation officials and to legislators... from the introductory paragraph to the conclusion.

Drafting Your Letter

Introduction In your first paragraph, identify yourself and explain why you are writing. State your opposition to the airline smoking ban on domestic commercial flights scheduled for two hours or less.

Example 1: "As a smoker, I am very much opposed to the new law that bans smoking on all domestic flights of two hours or less."

Example 2: "I am very concerned about the new smoking provision on airlines. This measure, which went into effect April 23, 1988, banned smoking on all domestic commercial flights scheduled for two hours or less. As a frequent flyer who also happens to smoke, I am opposed to this new law."

Body of Letter In the next few paragraphs, discuss your reasons for opposing the ban. Following are four arguments you may want to use as the basis of your discussion.

When composing your letter, draw from one, two or all of these points, incorporating your own opinions and comments.

Argument 1: Cigarette smoke may be annoying to some people, but the system of separating smokers and nonsmokers on commercial aircraft successfully dealt with virtually all potential for annoyance.

Airline passengers were satisfied with the prior rules that separated smokers and nonsmokers.

The Department of Transportation's own monthly consumer complaint report data for U.S. carriers consistently shows no more than a single smoking complaint for every one million passengers. Smoking complaints remain near the bottom of the list, representing less than 3 percent of the total number of consumer complaints lodged with DOT.

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A 1987 poll commissioned by the Air Line Pilots Association showed that 87 percent of respondents agreed that the system of separating smoking and nonsmoking passengers was a reasonable policy that respected the wishes of each.

Smoking on U.S. commercial aircraft already was subject to extensive regulation. Federal aviation agencies had implemented rules for smoking aboard aircraft on several separate occasions for over a decade.

The previous segregation rules already were tilted heavily in favor of nonsmokers, with all nonsmokers guaranteed a seat in the non-smoking section as long as they met airline check-in deadlines.

The Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) conducted extensive review of the smoking rules in 1983-84, considering hundreds of written submissions and conducting three days of hearings and oral argument. At that time, the board rejected a proposal to ban smoking on small commercial aircraft, but guaranteed a no-smoking seat to every passenger who requested one and met the airline's check-in deadline - even if the smoking section had to be reduced or eliminated.

Argument 2:

Smoking on airlines already was sharply restricted before the two-hour ban took effect.

Argument 3: In-air tests indicate that tobacco smoke is not a problem. No detailed governmental or private in-flight test research supports proposals to ban smoking on aircraft on the basis of potential health hazard to nonsmoking passengers or crew.

All major in-flight tests of tobacco smoke conducted since 1971 have concluded that the amount of cigarette smoke in the aircraft cabin on actual commercial flights is extremely small, posing no demonstrated risk to passengers or flight personnel. The assertion that ETS is a health hazard to nonsmokers is just that - an assertion, without any substantiation.

Even the National Academy of Sciences committee that in August 1986 called for a smoking ban on domestic commercial aircraft admitted that it had found no published data on tobacco smoke concentrations in airline cabins on which to base its recommendation. Time and again the NAS committee pointed to the lack of evidence on which to draw conclusions or make recommendations.

The Department of Transportation, in its 1987 response to the National Academy of Sciences recommendation to ban smoking, recognized that tobacco smoke can be an annoyance to some passengers and crew but said it needed additional research before it could respond to the recommendation for a ban. DOT suggested that additional research consider technological solutions and ventilation system modifications.

The smoking ban may create compliance problems, diverting the attention of flight crews and imposing additional burdens on already busy airline employees.

Argument 4:

Smoking bans pose administrative, practical and safety problems.

If a total ban is enacted, foreign carriers that permit smoking will have a competitive edge over domestic carriers on international routes, particularly on long-haul flights to destinations where smoking is especially popular.

Given the airlines' dismal on-time performance records, a smoking ban on scheduled flights of two hours or less is particularly unfair to smokers whose 60 to 90 minute flights more often than not stretch to two-and-one-half to three hours. Smokers who might be inclined to light up once the two-hour deadline has been met will pose additional enforcement problems for flight attendants.

A smoking ban may create an on-board fire hazard, by encouraging concealed smoking, especially in lavatories.

More About the Body of the Letter

Following are examples of how you can combine one, two or all of the arguments into the body of your letter. Remember, these arguments are only guidelines to help you draft your letter. Use the points with which you feel most comfortable.

Example 1: (Using arguments 1 and 4) "Granted, cigarette smoke can be annoying to some people, but the old system of separating smokers and non-smokers dealt with most of the potential for annoyance. In a 1987 poll commissioned by the Air Line Pilots Association, 87 percent of respondents agreed that the system of separating smoking and nonsmoking passengers was a reasonable one that respected the wishes of each.

"Now, with smoking banned on two-hour flights, the burden shifts from the passenger to the flight crew, who already have enough to do. For these reasons...."

Example 2: (Using arguments 2 and 3) "Smoking on commercial aircraft already was subject to extensive regulation. For more than 10 years federal aviation agencies have been considering the issue, but never found reason to impose a ban.

"In fact, to date there have been no detailed in-flight government or private tests that support proposals to ban smoking on aircraft. All major in-flight tests of tobacco smoke since 1971 have concluded that the amount of cigarette smoke on actual commercial flights is very small, posing no demonstrated risk to nonsmoking passengers or flight crew. Furthermore...."

Briefly summarize the points you have made and reaffirm your opposition to airline smoking bans.

"Despite (list the points you've already made), legislators and airlines continue to attempt to restrict further smoking on airlines. As a smoker - and as a frequent flyer - I resent being told that airlines are unwilling or unable to accommodate me simply because my smoking in a segregated area annoys some people."

If you are writing as a consumer, your signature is sufficient. If you are writing on behalf of your business organization, you may want to include your title and affiliation.

- 1** Use personal stationery or plain bond paper with your home address included. Use your business stationery only if you are writing on behalf of an organization.
- 2** Type your comments in a basic business letter format.
- 3** Address the letter to the Department of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Consumer Complaint department of a specific airline or your Representative or Senators. (See list of addresses that follows.)
- 4** Your letter should be no longer than one typed, single-spaced page. It will have a better chance of getting read.
- 5** Include your phone number with your address, in case there are any questions.
- 6** If you wish to continue to receive information on this issue, please send a copy of your letter to us at the address on the back of this book.

Conclusion

Example 1:

Salutation

Signature and, if Appropriate, Affiliation

Guidelines

Following is a list of federal agencies and airline companies to which you may direct your letter.

Department of Transportation

Office of Consumer Affairs
400 7th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Federal Aviation Administration

Consumer Affairs Department
800 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

American Airlines, Inc.

M.D. 5E12
P.O. Box 619616
Dallas/Fort Worth Airport,
Texas 75261-9616
Attn: Consumer Relations
Department

Continental Airlines

3663 North Belt East
5th Floor
Houston, Texas 77032
Attn: Consumer Relations
Department

Delta Airlines, Inc.

Hartsfield International Airport
Atlanta, Georgia 30320
Attn: Consumer Complaints

Northwest Airlines, Inc.

Customer Relations Department
M.S. A5100
Minneapolis/St. Paul
International Airport
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55111

PAN AM

Customer Relations Department
200 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10166

Piedmont Airlines

Customer Relations Department
1 Piedmont Plaza
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27156

TWA

Customer Relations Department
605 3rd Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Eastern Airlines

Customer Relations Department
Miami International Airport
Miami, Florida 33148

USAir

Customer Relations Department
National Airport
Washington, DC 20001

United Airlines

Customer Relations Department
P.O. Box 66100
Chicago, Illinois 60666

Pacific Southwest Airlines

Mr. R. L. Ray, Jr.
3225 N. Harbor Drive
San Diego, California 92101

Southwest Airlines

Customer Relations Department
P.O. Box 37611
Dallas, Texas 75235

If you need assistance contacting your Representative or Senators, please contact us at the address or phone number on the back of this booklet.