Office of the Secretary, DOT § 382.81

For which passengers must carriers make seating accommodations?

As a carrier, you must provide the following seating accommodations to the following passengers on request, if the passenger self-identifies to you as having a disability specified in this section and the type of seating accommodation in question exists on the particular aircraft. Once the passenger self-identifies to you, you must ensure that the information is recorded and properly transmitted to personnel responsible for providing the accommodation.
§ 382.83 Through what mechanisms do carriers make seating accommodations?

(a) If you are a carrier that provides advance seat assignments to passengers (i.e., offer seat assignments to passengers before the day of the flight), you must comply with the requirements of §382.81 of this part by any of the following methods:

1. You may “block” an adequate number of the seats used to provide the seating accommodations required by §382.81.

   (i) You must not assign these seats to passengers who do not meet the criteria of §382.81 until 24 hours before the scheduled departure of the flight.

   (ii) At any time up until 24 hours before the scheduled departure of the flight, you must assign a seat meeting the requirements of this section to a passenger with a disability meeting one or more of the requirements of §382.81 who requests it, at the time the passenger initially makes the request.

   (iii) If a passenger with a disability specified in §382.81 does not make a request at least 24 hours before the scheduled departure of the flight, you must meet the passenger’s request to the extent practicable, but you are not required to reassign a seat assigned to another passenger in order to do so.

2. You may designate an adequate number of the seats used to provide seating accommodations required by §382.81 as “priority seats” for passengers with a disability.

   (i) You must provide notice that all passengers assigned these seats (other than passengers with a disability listed in §382.81 of this part) are subject to being reassigned to another seat if necessary to provide a seating accommodation required by this section.

   (ii) You may provide this notice through your computer reservation system, verbal information provided by reservation personnel, ticket notices, gate announcements, counter signs, seat cards or notices, frequent-flier literature, or other appropriate means.

   (iii) You must assign a seat meeting the requirements of this section to a passenger with a disability listed in §382.81 of this part who requests the accommodation at the time the passenger makes the request. You must require such a passenger to check in and request the seating accommodation at least one hour before the standard check-in time for the flight. If all designated priority seats that would accommodate the passenger have been assigned to other passengers, you must reassign the seats of the other passengers as needed to provide the requested accommodation.