



Jane's Airport Review

IATA encourages standard size for carry-on bags

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The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has launched guidelines to encourage a standard carry-on bag size of 55 x 35 x 20 cm.

IATA worked with Airbus and Boeing on the Cabin OK initiative to define the dimensions of a bag that can fit either in the overhead locker or under the seat in front of the passenger. "We started with 120-seaters, such as the B-737 and A319/320s," said Tom Windmuller, the departing IATA senior vice-president for airport, passenger, cargo and security services. "Commuter aircraft, such as the Embraer 90/95 and ATRs are out of scope for this initiative."

To date, nine carriers are backing Cabin OK: Azul, Lufthansa, Emirates, Avianca, Qatar Airways, Cathay Pacific, China Eastern, China Southern, and Caribbean Airlines. Baggage manufacturer Okoban is partner and logistics provider.

"Every [non-IATA] airline is welcome to commit itself to this outstanding initiative," Windmuller concluded on 9 June during the IATA 2015 Annual General Meeting in Miami.

Cabin OK is not a binding mandate and nor does it set a maximum size limit for carry-on bags. "The maximum size of cabin baggage is set individually by each airline," IATA explained on 12 June. This does not affect the Cabin OK initiative, because the dimensions in the new guidelines are smaller than the maximum acceptable size set by most airlines for carry-on baggage.

For passengers, Cabin OK "means certainty that when they buy this bag they will be able to take it on board a large number of airlines", Windmuller said, while for airlines, "Cabin OK means faster turnarounds, [as] there are no fights at the gate between passengers [and staff] on whether their bag is going to fit or not".

Today, policies for cabin baggage can differ from one airline to another, depending on the class of ticket, the frequent flyer programme status of the passenger "and even the boarding sequence of the aircraft", Windmuller said.

Airlines that operate single-aisle aircraft already recommend that passengers stow this size of bag in overhead compartments. "The problem is that cabin bag sizes are similar but not standardised," Windmuller commented. As a result, passengers often have to check their bag is small enough at the gate just before their flight departs - the resulting inconvenience can cause costly delays.

Ineligible carry-on bags are often shifted to the belly hold. This adds to passenger dissatisfaction, as these bags often contain in-flight travel essentials and valuables that travellers might not trust



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to a baggage system.

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