



## Five Facts You Need to Know about Baggage

On 24 January, the United States Department of Transportation's new baggage disclosure requirements begin for all airlines that participate on a ticket traveling to, from, and within the United States. With this ruling in effect, baggage allowance and charges must be disclosed at time of passenger fare quotation and on e-ticket confirmations for online, interline, and codeshare travel.

While the DOT regulations increase transparency for the traveling public, these requirements, along with IATA Resolution 302, can be confusing for the airlines, travel agencies, and pricing and departure control systems that must comply with them. Recognizing this, ATPCO is providing five facts that will help you understand what these regulations mean for you.

### 1. What is the US DOT baggage disclosure rule?

On 25 April 2011, the US DOT issued a ruling regarding disclosure of a passenger's baggage allowance and charges information. As part of that ruling, the DOT presented the following requirements for travel to, from, and within the United States:

- Airlines must publish any changes to their baggage policy on their Web sites, and these notices must stay posted for three months after the revision
- Airlines and travel agents must specify all baggage and special item charges at the time of the passenger fare quote
- Airlines and travel agents must also specify at the time of ticketing the carry-on allowance and/or charges, as well as the charge for the first and second checked bag
- Airlines must apply the baggage rules of the first airline selected as the Most Significant Carrier (MSC) throughout a passenger's entire journey and the amount that passengers pay for checked bags and other items, such as a pet in hold, must not vary during their trip

This ruling becomes effective on 24 January 2012.

### 2. Who is affected by the new disclosure requirements?

- a) Any airline that flies to, from, or within the United States
- b) Any airline that has an interline agreement and could be included on a ticket that involves travel to, from, or within the United States
- c) Any travel agent (online or offline), travel reseller, and pricing and departure control system that processes baggage information for these airlines will also be affected by these requirements

It's important to note that these rules will have an effect on nearly every department in an airline from pricing, ticketing, and passenger check-in, to revenue management and revenue accounting.

### 3. What is IATA Resolution 302?

IATA Resolution 302, which became effective on 1 April 2011, defines which airline's baggage rules (both allowance and charges) apply on an interline or codeshare journey. It uses a geographic-based process to select the MSC on the checked portion of a flight (that is, from where a passenger checks a bag to the point he or she picks up that bag). Resolution 302 specifies that the MSC is the airline flying the passenger, also known as the operating carrier. The US DOT approved IATA's concept for baggage disclosure with the exception that the MSC must be the marketing, not operating, carrier.



#### **4. What should you do?**

Airlines should make sure their baggage policies are included in ATPCO's Baggage Allowance and Charges database. You should also confirm that any pricing systems with which you work are using data from this system in conjunction with IATA Resolution 302 and the US DOT disclosure requirements.

All pricing systems, travel agencies (online and offline), and other travel resellers should ensure they can disclose passengers' applicable baggage allowance and charges at the time of fare quote and on e-ticket confirmations, following all processes defined by IATA Resolution 302, the DOT tariff filing requirements, and the new DOT disclosure regulations. ATPCO's baggage data can help you comply with these regulations.

Taking into consideration the US DOT baggage and tariff regulations, as well as IATA Resolution 302, airlines and pricing and departure control systems should make sure

- The first marketing carrier on a flight provides the passenger with baggage allowance and charges information for the entire journey
- The MSC rules are applied to the journey, and in order to comply with tariff filing requirements, the MSC must be the marketing carrier to/from the United States
- Baggage allowance and charges for the outbound direction apply for the entire journey

#### **5. What happens if you do not comply with the regulations?**

Airlines need to be able to quote passengers the correct baggage information at all points of sale. Effective 24 January 2012, if a passenger is charged incorrect baggage fees or is not provided with the correct baggage information at the time of fare quote and ticketing and you are the only airline on the ticket, then your company could be subject to enforcement action, possibly including fines from the DOT.

If a passenger is charged the wrong amount or is not provided with the correct baggage information and there are other airlines on the ticket, then you are obligated to refund the difference between the correct baggage fee and the amount paid. Effective 24 July 2012, this type of error could also result in enforcement action. ATPCO's Baggage Calculator Online will help you process these refund requests accurately and efficiently, and you can learn more about this tool at our [Baggage Calculator page](#).

Airlines that believe another carrier misquoted the baggage information for a ticket on which they both appear should address this issue through their commercial or interline relationship.

Pricing and departure control systems that do not follow these guidelines expose their organization to potential customer service issues and regulatory enforcement.

If you would like more information on the DOT's baggage requirements, as well as IATA Resolution 302, visit ATPCO's [Baggage Allowance and Charges Web site](#) for presentations and other educational materials. You can also read more about baggage requirements at the [US DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection and Enforcement site](#) and [IATA's Baggage Services page](#).

ATPCO will also host a Q&A webinar at 1000 and 2000 US Eastern Time on 2 February to address your questions on the five items mentioned above; register at [www.atpco.net](http://www.atpco.net).