

GERIATRIC AIR LINES



Geriatric Airlines Flight Attendant Training Manual

Introduction

Congratulations! You have joined Geriatric Airlines, the finest airline in the industry catering to the elderly. You have a special challenge ahead of you, ministering to the needs of our “special” travelers. You will be faced with many problems, but the rewards you reap will be all the more satisfying.

We have prepared this CD to augment the training you received at Airline Attendant Training School. This manual describes the practices and procedures expected of you as you begin service on our “Great Gray Birds in the Sky”.

Getting the Passengers Seated

Getting the passengers boarded and settled is the most important step toward an on-time departure. Here is a list of do’s and don’ts for boarding:

You should:

1. Aid passengers who need special assistance.
2. Help stow carry-on luggage in the overhead compartments.
3. Show passengers to their assigned seats.

You should not:

1. Yell into a passenger’s hearing aid when they don’t seem to be paying attention.
2. Mockingly clean their eyeglasses when they sit in seat 4C even though their tickets clearly say seat 18F.
3. Kick old men in the ass when they’re moving too slowly.
4. Call a passenger a blind old bat, even if she is one.
5. Remind passengers to take their Alzheimer’s medicine. That is not your concern.
6. Use the emergency defibrillator as a disciplinary tool.

The Mid-Taxi Safety Briefing

The Mid-Taxi Safety Briefing is your first in-flight opportunity to establish a rapport with your guests. You should speak in a clear voice. You should speak slowly so that those passengers with special needs can follow along. Let’s listen to this recording of a typical Safety Briefing performed by our veteran attendant, Bonnie:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome aboard Geriatric Airlines Flight 2070 non-stop service New York to Miami. If you are not going to Miami, then it’s too late now to do anything about

it. This plane ain't stopping for anything. You might as well sit back, enjoy the flight, and save your complaining for the poor agent in Miami.

Please pay attention while we go over the safety features of our Boeing 767 jumbo-jet. (No sir, we are not serving drinks just yet).

In the seat pockets in front of you, you will find a placard describing our safety features. (Sorry, ma'am, I can't do anything about the small print. Just follow along).

Please buckle your seatbelts. Pull the two straps toward each other and clip the end into the metal buckle. (Sir, no, tying them in a knot is not what I mean). Pam? Would you mind showing the gentleman, please? Thanks).

We have two exits fore, and two exits aft just above the wings. We ask those sitting next to the exits to read the directions for opening the exit hatch in the event of an emergency. (Sir! No! You can't practice opening the hatch now! Please sit down. Thank you. Pam, would you ask that man to change seats with someone a little more, uh, with it? Thanks).

Uh, okay. In the event of sudden cabin decompression, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling. Stretch the band over your head and tighten it. Breathe deeply. (Ma'am, not now. You're going to pass out. That's it. Relax. Breathe slowly. Pam? CPR? Now?).

Where was I? Oh, the hell with it. In the event of an emergency, just scream your asses off. The chances are very poor that you're going to survive, anyway.

As you just heard, Bonnie gave the briefing in a clear, authoritative voice. Your passengers will be very reassured that the flight crew is totally in charge and that their safety is your utmost concern.

The Post-Takeoff Dialog

Subsequent to takeoff, the flight crew must spring into action. You must take charge and lay the ground-rules for an enjoyable flight by all. Let's listen to Bonnie once again:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Captain has turned off the seatbelt sign and you are free to move about the cabin. Please do not block the aisles with your wheelchairs. The overhead oxygen masks are not for personal use when you feel short of breath. They are for emergency use only. Tonight's in-flight movie is "Cocoon". We will be handing out earphones shortly, and please remember they are not to be used as catheters. The vomit bags are not to be used for "relief because the line to the john was too long". Please remember to stow your crutches and walkers in the

overhead compartments; we cannot serve drinks when they are blocking the aisles.

Our meal service on this flight will include your choice of boneless chicken product with peas, or strained spaghetti squash with mashed potatoes for those of you with special dental needs. Please do not send your meal back because it is too well done, or not done enough. There is only one setting on our micro-wave. Please do not put your dentures in the seat-back pouch; we have had far too many incidents of people leaving them behind.

There is no smoking in the cabin during this flight. If you feel an urgent need, we suggest you step outside where you will not bother the other passengers.

*Ladies, my name is "Bonnie". It is not "Miss" and it is not "Ma'am". If you use either of those two honorifics, I will ignore you. I will also ignore you when you press the Call button more than once a minute. I am **not** your personal servant.*

*Gentlemen, the aisles are narrow, I admit it, but they were not designed for you to cop a feel every time I pass by. Please use restraint. Likewise, when I bend over to serve drinks to the person next to you, I am **not** extending a free pass to you to play touchy/feely. I get very clumsy when my personal space is invaded, and you just might find yourself with a lapful of hot coffee.*

Please feel free to sleep for most of the flight so I can get a break sometime during the next 6 hours. We have complimentary Valium available on request. Thank you and have a pleasant flight.

See how Bonnie handles the dialog? To the point. Authoritative, but non-condescending. You should practice the dialog until you have it memorized and are able to deliver it without any “uh’s” and “ah’s”.

The In-Flight Meal Service

The meal service will probably be the busiest time for you during the flight. This time is what separates the great attendants from the wash-outs.

Many first-time attendants at Geriatric have a tendency to become frustrated. This is a natural reaction. You need to exercise great patience. You must resist the urge to slip tranquilizers into the little bottles of vodka. You must abstain from pulling that little old lady’s bleached hair out by its gray roots. You must forgo the temptation to beat that little old man silly with his own cane. Under no circumstances should you join into a food fight in progress.

Many veteran attendants find that the best way to cope with the special demands of their guests is by imbibing copious amounts of Prozac pre-flight. If no drugs are available, then you might consider borrowing some from the Captain. As our erstwhile Bonnie

says, “the harried attendant can always count on the cockpit crew for a little something to get them through the flight.”

It is considered bad form to turn your iPod on full volume during meal service, no matter how tempting it might be to just “make it all stop”.

The In-Flight Movie

Lest you think that the In-Flight Movie is a time for you to relax, we must remind you that you will be quite busy, passing out headsets, collecting empty drink cups and meal containers, re-filling drinks, replacing broken headsets, providing pillows and blankets to restless passengers, listening to complaints, and generally trying to satisfy a thousand demands all at once.

Your basic Airline Attendant training should have included lessons on soldering. This skill will prove invaluable when there are not enough working headsets to go around and you must perform emergency repairs in the galley. If you did not receive such training, we urge you to consult the remedial training in the appendices of this manual. You might just be the one to stop a riot in its tracks.

You must reconcile yourself to the fact that nobody will like the In-Flight Movie. The bitching from passengers can become overwhelming. The Geriatric Airlines Entertainment Department goes to great pains to choose the most bland and inoffensive movies. They like to say that their choices offer something for everyone to dislike.

Be prepared. Geriatric Airlines clientele are particularly vocal in their whining about this phase of the flight. Handle the grumbling with aplomb. If they get too rowdy and you find yourself unable to overcome the urge to violence, just remember the mantra of all Geriatric Flight Attendants: “I can take them, I can take them all, with one hand behind my back”. This will almost always bring your temper back into the safety zone. And if it doesn't, do what Bonnie does and ask the Captain for another dose of whatever he passed out before.

Dealing with Emergencies

If an emergency situation should arise, you should also rise to the occasion and deal with it in a calm manner. Here's Bonnie showing the perfect way to deal with a crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for your diligence in reporting the potential terrorist attack on board this airplane. I wanted to let you know that the situation is under control. Several of you reported a man trying to light a bomb in his shoe. Please be aware that the man is not a terrorist. He is just an aging hippie trying to light a hash pipe hidden in his shoe. I reiterate that there is no smoking of any kind on board this flight. Thank you for your attention.

See how Bonnie deals with this dilemma? She remains unruffled. She investigates, discovers the true nature of the “emergency”, and then informs the passengers to calm down and shut up.

The Approach and Touch-Down

Finally, the long flight is almost over and you can relax a little bit. Sit back in your fold-down seat and take a deep breath. They can’t get you when you’re in this phase of the flight. No matter how much they yell and complain, no matter how many times they push the Call Light, they can’t touch you here. You are in your own little corner of the world and all alone.

Once the shaking has stopped and you have control over your own voice again, you can pick up the intercom and begin. Let’s listen in again to Bonnie as she expertly delivers the Final Briefing.

Well, I hope you all are satisfied with yourselves. We made it to Miami without anybody killing anyone. We’ll be landing in a few minutes. The Captain has turned on the seatbelt signs, so for God’s Sake, people, fasten the damn things! (Ma’am, I don’t want to hear it! I am sorely pissed and my Prozac has worn off).

*Welcome to Florida, the land of newlyweds and nearly dead. Yes, that one is **very old**, pardon the pun. We hope you had a pleasant flight and look forward to traveling with you again. (Yes ma’am, it will be a cold day in hell for me too).*

Debarkation and Cleanup

A seasoned pro like Bonnie knows when to delegate, and she will probably assign the final chore of debarkation and cleanup to one of the “rookies” on the staff. This provides them an excellent learning opportunity. And it gives Bonnie the opportunity to lock herself in the head and have a good cry.

That’s right, no matter how desperate those weak-bladder old fools become, Bonnie will not unlock that door until their pitiful cries are a distant memory. After all, it’s just a very short time until she must get back into the “game” again for the return flight to New York City. She must prepare herself.

Summary

So you see, young trainee, your good times are just beginning. We sincerely hope this training manual will get you started right as you begin your career at Geriatric Airlines. Here’s to a great start on your journeys, and as always, have a great flight.

Geriatric Airlines, “The Great Gray Bird in the Sky”