



All too frequently there are stories of air rage in news reports. Man refuses to buckle his seat belt. Woman insists on smoking in the bathroom and locks herself in. A fight starts when one passenger stumbles over feet blocking the aisle. If you're a vulnerable senior in the middle of such angry flight incidents, what can you do?

Incidents of air rage seem to be rising every year, probably due to some extent because flying is now such a frustrating experience. Passengers must report to the crowded airport at least an hour early, deal with tight security and unending fears of terrorism. Before they even board their flight, many passengers are already nervous and resentful. Additionally, the sardine-can seating of five and more across on long flights is enough to try the patience of the most even-tempered passenger. So, how do you deal with it when the guy in the next seat goes ballistic or the guy in front of you suddenly bends the seat back into your kneecaps?

Some air rage incidents are caused by booze. The normal passenger frustrations are heightened when flights are delayed, so people ease their troubles in airport bars, sometimes for hours, growing more frustrated and drunk by the minute. On some flights, continuous drinks are served by flight attendants, adding fuel to the frustration.

What can you do when you're faced with situation of air rage? First, sense when trouble is brewing. A person who's been drinking excessively gives off a strong odor of alcohol on breath, hair, skin and clothing.

Troubles may start with mere mumbles of discontent. Then, cursing the airline, flight attendant, ticket prices and all the real and imagined problems of flying. If such a person is sitting nearby and you feel there's trouble ahead, get up and ask the flight attendant to change your seat.

Don't argue, curse or criticize the unruly passenger. Unless there's actual physical danger, don't try to restrain the person. If the rage is directed at you, get up and walk away. If followed by physical threats and curses, get to a bathroom, go in quickly and lock the door.

Air rage incidents often cause flights to be diverted, and disrupt everyone's schedules. Other passengers can't help but be furious with the disruptive person. However, in many cases the air rage passenger was not drunk, but had a medical history of mental illness or drug abuse.

When confronted by air rage, keep calm. If directed at you personally, get as far away from the disruption as you can in the aircraft cabin, and cooperate fully with the air crew.