



ETHICS CASE STUDY:

UNITED AIRLINES AND OVERBOOKING

Mackenzie Cour, Katya Farinsky, Vishal Nair, JordynMae Wishard

WSU VANCOUVER SPRING 2019



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Stakeholder Analysis & Proposal.....	2
Policy Analysis & Plain Language Translation.....	8
White Paper.....	15
Visual Argument.....	22

Stakeholder Analysis & Proposal

UNITED AIRLINES AND OVERBOOKING

Mackenzie Cour, Katya Farinsky, Vishal Nair, JordynMae Wishard
WSU VANCOUVER | Spring 2019

To: Brogan Sullivan
From: Vishal Nair (Project Manager)
Date: April 10, 2019
Subject: Stakeholder Analysis & Proposal

ETHICS CASE: UNITED AIRLINES AND OVERBOOKING

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memo is to discuss our team's approach including which ethical dilemma we are going to pursue and which stakeholder we will represent. Our group has chosen the United Airlines & Overbooking case from 2017 in which a video of security guards mistreating a passenger during his controversial removing went viral causing widespread anger toward United Airlines and the airline industry in general.

CASE CONTEXT

In April of 2017, United Airlines overbooked Flight 3411 that was flying from O'Hare International in Chicago to Louisville, Kentucky. Airlines overbook their flights in order to maximize profits by preventing empty seats. United Airlines uses overbooking by making educated guesses about how many passengers will not show up for their flight and sells that number of additional tickets. There are times where issues with overbooking are solved by compensating passengers and moving them to alternate flights. In this scenario, the flight was delayed by two hours due to an altercation when a passenger refused to give up his seat when the airline involuntarily bumped 4 passengers to board United Airlines employees instead.

Generally, airlines resolve overbooking problems by offering travelers vouchers or travel credits towards future purchases with the airline if they voluntarily agree to change to a later flight. In this case there were no initial volunteers despite United Airlines increasing their travel voucher amount twice. Ultimately the airline randomly chose four people to involuntarily bump to allow other United Airlines Employees to board the plane instead. Three of the four customers left without any problems. The final customer that was asked to leave said that he was a doctor and need to get back home to see his patients. The situation escalated when the customer said that the airline was targeting him because he was Chinese. Finally, the man was pulled out of his seat by a plain-clothes security officer and dragged down the aisle by his arms. His glasses were falling off his face, his mouth was bloody, and his stomach was exposed to everyone on the plane as his shirt rode up. After

being removed, the customer got back on the flight and ran down the aisle towards the back of the plane. In the end, the man moved to the front of the plane and collapsed. He was removed from the plane on a stretcher.

There are several ethical concerns within this situation:

- United Airlines chose to prioritize employees over passengers by involuntarily removing 4 passengers after boarding was completed.
- Though United offered compensation for passengers to willingly give up their seats, after no volunteers, United Airlines chose to involuntarily bump and eventually forcibly remove a man so an employee could board the flight.
- The amount of force used to remove the final passenger was later denounced as outside of policy guidelines and caused significant harm to the passenger.
- The final passenger stated that he was a doctor who needed to see patients as a reason not to bump him from the flight and raised concerns that he was being racially profiled because of his Chinese heritage.

A major stakeholder in this case is United Airlines. They were responsible for overbooking their flights and choosing to remove passengers in order to fix their own mistake. When this occurs, most airlines, including United Airlines, will offer some sort of compensation such as a voucher for future airline purchases to anyone that volunteers to give up their seat. In many cases volunteers are found and alternate arrangements are quickly made in compliance with airline and government policies. Voluntary bumping is much more routine than involuntary bumping passengers, especially after boarding was completed as in this case. This contributed to the confusion, and lack of communication between United Airlines employees, the passengers, and airport security officers. The Chicago Department of Aviation policies were used by United to make decisions, and the Chicago Aviation Security Officers were the ones who used unnecessary force to remove the passenger. The department said that the officers did not follow correct procedures, so this reflects poorly on them as well. In fact, one was placed on leave due to the incident. Stakeholders that are indirectly involved are O'Hare International Airport, the FAA, and the Department of Transportation, who are responsible for overseeing air travel and regulating the industry. Other major airlines such as Alaska Airlines, American, Delta, Southwest, and Jet Blue are affected since negative industry sentiment from travelers has a direct impact on their businesses. Finally, all passengers, past, present and future will be a stakeholder in this case since these policies directly impact consumer safety and perception.

CASE DISCUSSION

Our team has chosen to represent United Airlines since they are the ones who are directly responsible for overbooking the flight and making decisions that resulted in forcibly removing a passenger. United Airlines should have policies in place to prevent unfortunate

incidents like this, however, several mistakes happened which allowed events to unfold the way they did. Investigating both the policies of the airline and other stakeholders will expose these mistakes and allow our group to suggest improvements to handle future incidents better.

Additionally, we are intrigued by the many curious pieces to this case that directly involve United Airlines employees or representatives. The whole incident occurred because United Airlines removed boarded passengers in order to accommodate employees. Plus, the series of apologies the CEO made after the incident were ineffective. We chose to represent them in order to better their procedures when it comes to overbooking flights, as well as make suggestions on how to professionally resolve these situations when they arise. Our plan is to first look at the conflict holistically, including the responses and policies of all parties involved. Then we will dissect them further and provide the best, most cost-efficient solution(s) based on what we find.

Our ethical framework will be based on the utilitarian approach and the virtue approach. The utilitarian approach guides decision making based on choosing the option that “produces the greatest good and the least harm” while the virtue approach advocates for actions that are “consistent with virtuous values such as honesty, compassion, tolerance, integrity, and prudence” (Graves and Graves 60). United Airlines should make decisions that benefits their passengers, employees, and brand. By choosing to involuntarily bump passengers after boarding to accommodate employees United Airlines harmed one customer physically which caused significant damage to their image and customer perception. We will guide United Airlines to make better decisions, and alternate arrangements, to prevent future violence against passengers and address concerns about the removal process.

We are choosing to intervene after the incident occurred, but before United Airlines CEO Oscar Munoz issued a public apology on Tuesday, April 11th, 2017. He issued the apology two days after the incident, amid rising media fury over the incident. However, many to this day, feel that the apology was inadequate and insincere. Munoz promised changes in his apology:

““The truly horrific event that occurred on this flight has elicited many responses from all of us: outrage, anger, disappointment. I share all of those sentiments, and one above all: my deepest apologies for what happened. Like you, I continue to be disturbed by what happened on this flight and I deeply apologize to the customer forcibly removed and to all the customers aboard. No one should ever be mistreated this way,” Munoz said in a statement.”

We feel that this apology was not backed by actions, thus rendered ineffective. Our goal is to write a better apology that customers can trust as well as create actual change in policy to protect our customers.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

To guide our research, we want to analyze the current United Airlines' policy on overbooking. We will examine if they have a plan in place when there are customers who are unwilling to give up their seats aside from forcibly removing them.

Some other questions we will examine are:

- What are the federal, state, and local government policies on the issue?
- Does the airport itself have a policy about removing passengers, or is it up to the airlines?
- What are the regulations regarding tickets and passengers' rights?
- When customers buy tickets, are they agreeing to forfeit their seat if need be?
- When customers are asked to forfeit their seats, when are they presented the written statement explaining why they have to give up their seat? Were individuals in this case given the necessary information
- Should United Airlines prioritize transporting travelers or employees if a similar situation arises in the future?
- How did this incident immediately affect United Airlines (sales, backlash)?

By researching these questions, our team will be able to produce a set of documents for United Airlines that will advise them of changes they can make to their procedures and policies to protect their consumers.

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Policy Analysis & Plain Language Translation

UNITED AIRLINES AND OVERBOOKING

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WSU VANCOUVER | Spring 2019

To: Brogan Sullivan
From: Vishal Nair (Project Manager)
Date: April 10, 2019
Subject: Stakeholder Analysis & Proposal

UNITED AIRLINES POLICY FOR INVOLUNTARY PASSENGER REMOVAL

TEXT OF ORIGINAL POLICY

Rule 25 Denied Boarding Compensation

A. Denied Boarding (U.S.A./Canadian Flight Origin) - When there is an Oversold UA flight that originates in the U.S.A. or Canada, the following provisions apply:

4. Compensation for Passengers Denied Boarding Involuntarily

- a. For passengers traveling in interstate transportation between points within the United States, subject to the EXCEPTIONS in section d) below, UA shall pay compensation to Passengers denied boarding involuntarily from an Oversold Flight at the rate of 200% of the fare to the Passenger's first Stopover or, if none, Destination, with a maximum of 675 USD if UA offers Alternate Transportation that, at the time the arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the Passenger's Destination or first Stopover more than one hour but less than two hours after the planned arrival time of the Passenger's original flight. If UA offers Alternate Transportation that, at the time the arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the Passenger's Destination or first Stopover more than two hours after the planned arrival time of the Passenger's original flight, UA shall pay compensation to Passengers denied boarding involuntarily from an Oversold Flight at the rate of 400% of the fare to the Passenger's first Stopover or, if none, Destination with a maximum of 1350 USD.
- b. For passengers traveling from the United States to a foreign point, subject to the EXCEPTIONS in section d) below, UA shall pay compensation to Passengers denied boarding involuntarily from an Oversold Flight originating at a U.S. airport at the rate of 200% of the fare to the Passenger's first Stopover or, if none, Destination, with a maximum of 675 USD if UA offers Alternate Transportation that, at the time the arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the Passenger's Destination or first Stopover more than one hour but less than four hours after the planned arrival time of the Passenger's original flight. If UA offers Alternate Transportation that, at the time the arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the Passenger's

Destination or first Stopover more than four hours after the planned arrival time of the Passenger's original flight, UA shall pay compensation to Passengers denied boarding involuntarily from an Oversold Flight at the rate of 400% of the fare to the Passenger's first Stopover or, if none, Destination with a maximum of 1350 USD.

- c. For passengers traveling from Canada to a foreign point, subject to the EXCEPTIONS in section d) below, UA shall pay compensation to Passengers denied boarding involuntarily from an Oversold Flight originating at a Canadian airport with a maximum of 200 CAD if UA offers Alternate Transportation that, at the time the arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the Passenger's Destination or first Stopover more than one hour but less than four hours after the planned arrival time of the Passenger's original flight. If UA offers Alternate Transportation that, at the time the arrangement is made, is planned to arrive at the Passenger's Destination or first Stopover more than four hours after the planned arrival time of the Passenger's original flight, UA shall pay compensation to Passengers denied boarding involuntarily from an Oversold Flight with a maximum of 300 CAD. At the passenger's request, compensation in the form of check, wire transfer, visa card, or a travel voucher will be made by UA, and if accepted by the Passenger, the Passenger will provide a signed receipt to UA.
- d. EXCEPTIONS: A Passenger denied boarding involuntarily from an Oversold Flight shall not be eligible for denied boarding compensation if:
 - i. The flight is cancelled;
 - ii. The Passenger holding a Ticket for confirmed reserved space does not comply fully with the requirements in this Contract of Carriage Requirements regarding ticketing, check-in, reconfirmation procedures, and acceptance for transportation;
 - iii. The flight for which the Passenger holds confirmed reserved space is unable to accommodate the Passenger because of substitution of equipment of lesser capacity when required by operational or safety reasons or, on an aircraft with a designed passenger capacity of 60 or fewer seats, the flight for which the passenger holds confirmed reserved space is unable to accommodate that passenger due to weight/balance restrictions when required by operational or safety reasons;
 - iv. The Passenger is offered accommodations or is seated in a section of the aircraft other than that specified on his/her ticket at no extra charge. Provided, if a Passenger is seated in a section for which a lower fare applies, the Passenger will be entitled to a refund applicable to the difference in fares;
 - v. The Passenger is accommodated on Alternate Transportation at no extra cost, which at the time such arrangements are made, is planned to arrive at the airport of the Passenger's next Stopover, (if any), or at the

- Destination, not later than 60 minutes after the planned arrival time of the flight on which the Passenger held confirmed reserved space;
- vi. The Passenger is an employee of UA or of another Carrier or other person traveling without a confirmed reserved space; or
 - vii. The Passenger does not present him/herself at the loading gate for boarding at least 15 minutes prior to scheduled domestic departures, and 30 minutes prior to scheduled international departures. See Rule 5 D) for additional information regarding boarding cut-off times.

SYNTHESIS

The text of the policy in question, “Contract of Carriage,” is a document written up by United Airlines that details all guidelines that passengers and their luggage are subject to. This contract supersedes in the eyes of United Airlines over any terms and conditions on the tickets. When a customer purchases a ticket, they are thereby agreeing to and are bound to any and all regulations. The rules enclosed cover a variety of topics, but for our analysis we narrowed it down to one rule, rule 25, that is especially pertinent to the incident on flight 3411. Rule 25 outlines the procedure for United States flights that are overbooked, including compensation and exclusions to the compensations listed. This is supposed to lay out the enticements for passengers who are involuntarily denied boarding.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Our first concern with the “Contract of Carriage” is the length of the actual document; there is approximately 51 pages of material for the entire policy. This can be daunting for a customer to read because there is an overabundance of information. The syntax is not targeted at the average user: travelers. The word choice and sentence structure are designed to reduce liability issues for the airline. However, this alienates travelers rather than informing them by highlighting relevant information. Many of the sentences are several lines long which reduces readability and can easily cause the reader to forget where the sentence begins or ends if they become distracted while reading.

PLAIN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

- A. Passengers traveling in the United States and have been involuntarily bumped from their flight will be paid in compensation of 200% (max \$675) their flight fare to the first layover, or destination if there are no layovers. This applies to passengers that have been offered a new flight that will arrive at their first layover (or destination) less than two hours, but more than one hour, after the original flight was supposed to land. If the new flight will arrive more than two hours later than the original flight, the passenger will be offered compensation of 400% (max \$1350) their flight fare

- B. Passengers traveling from the United States to a foreign country and have been involuntarily bumped from their flight will be paid in compensation of 200% (max \$675) their flight fare to the first layover, or destination if there are no layovers. This applies to passengers that have been offered a new flight that will arrive at their first layover (or destination) less than four hours, but more than one hour, after the original flight was supposed to land. If the new flight will arrive more than four hours later than the original flight, the passenger will be offered compensation of 400% (max \$1350) their flight fare.
- C. Passengers traveling from Canada to a destination outside of Canada are subject to other exceptions labeled in part d) below. United Airlines will compensate passengers denied boarding involuntarily from overbooked flights originating in Canada up to 200 Canadian dollars. This applies when United Airlines offers service on an alternate route that gets the passenger to their final destination, or first layover flight, over one hour later than their original arrival time but less than 4 hours after the original arrival time. If alternate arrangements result in the passenger arriving over 4 hours after the original arrival time, United Airlines will provide compensation up to 300 Canadian dollars. Passengers can request compensation in the form of a check, wire-transfer, visa card, or travel voucher created by United Airlines. To accept compensation passengers must sign a receipt stating for record keeping purposes.
- D. A person who is involuntarily denied boarding from an overbooked flight is excluded from compensation in the following circumstances:
- i. The flight is cancelled (for all passengers)
 - ii. The person does not follow all the rules for check in and confirmation.
 - iii. There is equipment that need to be on the plane for safety reasons, or if in a small flight of 60 or fewer spaces, the flight is overweight and cannot safely hold more weight.
 - iv. The passenger is offered seating in another section of the plane at no extra charge or is offered seating in a section with a lower fare. If the section offered is a lower fare section the passenger is entitled to a refund equal to the difference between fares.
 - v. The passenger is given alternative transportation, at no extra cost, and arrives to the destination, or layover, no later than 60 minutes after the planned arrival time of the flight on which the passenger had a ticket.
 - vi. The passenger is a United Airlines employee, or another airline employee, or a person flying without a confirmed space.

- vii. The passenger is not present at the boarding gate at least 15 minute prior to departure, domestically, or 30 minutes prior, internationally. (See Rule 5d for additional information about boarding cut off times.

RATIONALE

Our goal for the policy plain language analysis was to condense the rule in a way that still held the key elements, but also make it more understandable for customers who wish to know the rules. We changed certain words like “stopover” to “layover” for understandability. Another diction change we made involved using fewer formal words and legalese. Most customers would struggle reading this document as it was, and since it includes important rules regarding involuntary denial of boarding, we felt that making it less formal was invaluable. We also corrected the sentence structure of the document, sections of the rule contained varying sentence structure and length that led to confusion and unnecessary complication of the guidelines.

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“Contract of Carriage Document.” *United Airlines – Airline Tickets, Travel Deals and Flights*, United Airlines, 2018, www.united.com/ual/en/us/fly/contract-of-carriage.html#tcm:76-6644. Rule 25, Section A, Number 4.

Whitepaper

UNITED AIRLINES AND OVERBOOKING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Overview and Argument	4
Work Cited	6

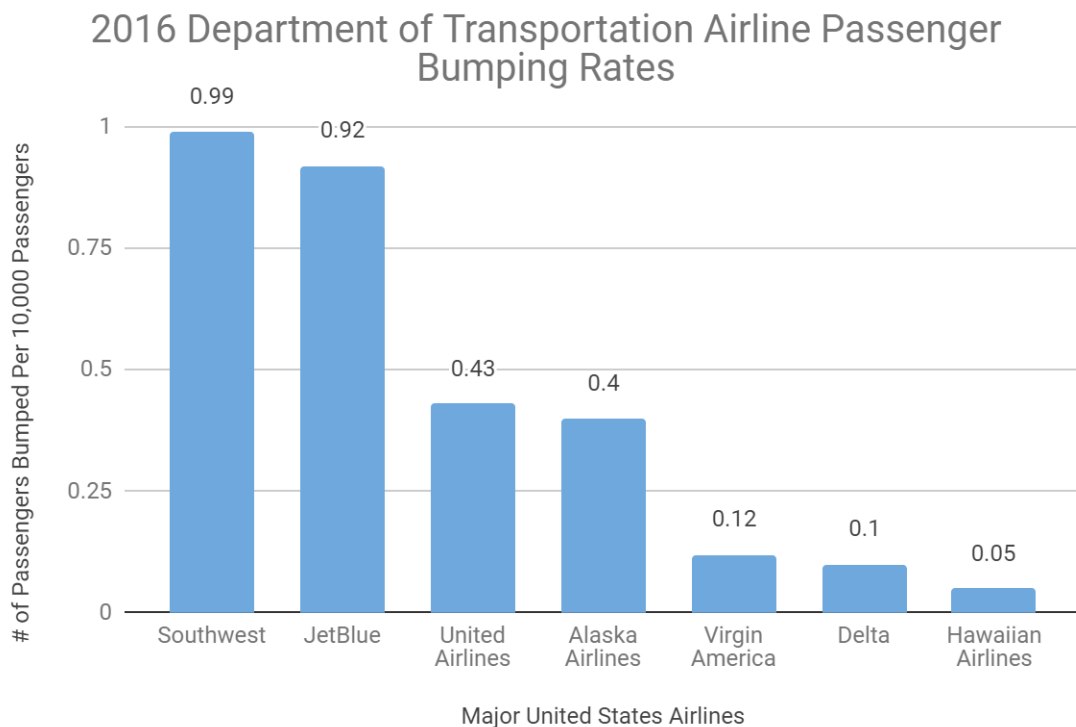
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April of 2017, United Airlines (UA) overbooked a flight at the O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, in which they involuntarily removed four passengers. The flight was delayed two hours due to an altercation when a selected passenger refused to give up his seat. The passenger suffered a major concussion, which resulted in severe motor function impairment, forcing him to have to re-learn to walk. Immediately after, UA faced a PR crisis for the treatment of the passengers, and an increased scrutiny of the policies regarding involuntary removal of passengers.

It is our recommendation to UA that they revise their policy regarding overbooking by only requesting volunteers and bumping passengers before anyone has boarded the plane. Specifically, with this situation, the airline should have prioritized their paying passengers over their staff. We also recommend that they improve their media response to issues that may arise, such as the one on Flight 3411. We recommend this because UA's stock took a significant hit after the incident and the CEO's response. A correction or amended version of the policy, along with a media statement stating the change and the intent behind it (to appease customers and protect their rights) could greatly increase not only UA's media standing but help them cultivate a work culture prioritizing customers.

INTRODUCTION

The incident in April 2017 aboard United Airlines (UA) flight 3411 was a serious violation of customers rights that caught media attention and damaged UA's reputation greatly. Paying passengers should never be treated in such a way in order to transport employees. The purpose of this report is to examine the necessary details of the policies regarding overbooking, analyze the ethical framework UA should follow, and provide them with a way to change their current policies in order to better prioritize customers. We wish to address not only the confusing rules regarding overbooking, such as UA Rule 25 Denied Boarding Compensation, but also the media statements given by United CEO Oscar Munoz, who incorrectly labelled the passenger as "belligerent" and "disruptive," and commended the crew aboard the flight for their actions in a situation that was clearly avoidable. This report is relevant because overbooking is still a common practice, and as long as this is the case, situations like the one on Flight 3411 can and will continue to occur, and UA needs to handle them in a more professional



This graph depicts the number of passengers that are bumped off each airline per 10,000 passengers. The bigger airlines, such as Southwest, had a larger bumping rate.

OVERVIEW AND ARGUMENT

Airlines have a history of overbooking flights in order to maximize their profits. When this occurs, airlines will ask for volunteers to give up their seats, this practice is referred to as “bumping.” If there are no volunteers, airlines can opt to involuntary bump, where some passengers will not be boarded, or seated passengers will be asked to leave the flight (Bumping & Oversales). In April of 2017, United Airlines took part in involuntary bumping on Flight 3411. The reason United Airlines did this was to provide seats for four employees who arrived at the gate after boarding was completed. According to UA, the employees needed to be on that flight in order to staff another understaffed flight. They originally offered \$400 in vouchers for flights. When that did not work UA double the offer. With no takers they selected to involuntarily remove four passengers. Three of the four left the aircraft without much issue. However, one of the passengers, David Dao, did not give up his seat, stating he was a doctor who needed to get to his patients, the airline had him removed forcefully. The situation started to escalate when he refused to leave and was turned radioactive when the Airline called in Airline security, who attempted to remove the doctor from the plane. In the struggle that ensued, Dr. David Dao hit his head on the armrest. He was dragged off the plane, unconscious, and ended up with a several injuries including a major concussion. Passengers aboard the flight filmed the altercation and began posting about it on various social media pages. Within the next week UA CEO Oscar Munoz released a statement, praising his UA staff, and calling the doctor “belligerent” and “disruptive,” which proceeded to take the media by storm. Media users took UA’s motto, “fly the friendly skies,” and proceeded to take those and turn them into barbs against the Airline giant. This resulted in a negative media presence and a dramatic drop in approval by consumers, as well as a drop in stock prices.



This graph shows how quickly United Airlines' stocks dropped after they were exposed about dragging the customer off the plane.

Our basis for ethical framework is two distinct ideas, the first being utilitarianism. This framework focuses on the greatest good for the largest group of people. When it comes to utilitarianism, UA should prioritize their paying passengers over their employees. Their involuntary deboarding takes time and resources that could be used elsewhere and prove to be disastrous for their public profile. The incident on Flight 3411 delayed passengers for multiple hours and forced the company to spend money rebuilding their public image, as well as paying a large amount of money in an undisclosed settlement. If they had left Dr. Dao, Flight 3411 would have left on time, and the passengers (the largest group of people) would have been taken care of. The second ethical framework is virticism. This approach is focused on values of honesty, compassion, tolerance, integrity, and prudence. In respect to the virticism framework, UA acted in an extremely immoral way. Not only did UA involuntarily deboard paying customers, in essence stealing, they attacked a passenger, lied about it after the fact, and called him "belligerent" and "disruptive." With these actions and words, UA did not follow the virticistic method of being honest and compassionate. This behavior does not follow moral guidelines and is not the best course of action for the greatest amount of people, as not only did it harm the passengers, it destroyed UA's stock prices.

A policy we suggest UA to put into effect, as mentioned above, is to prioritize their customers over their employees. They should have allowed Dr. Dao to keep his seat on the flight, as three passengers had already voluntarily given up their seats, giving them seats for three out of four of their staff members. Dragging the passenger off of the plane by his hands caused a situation that easily could have been avoided. The employees are getting paid to be wherever the airline needs them to be, while the customers paid to be on the flight and deserve to receive the service. By instilling this policy, situations like this could have been prevented, and will prevent those in the future. This policy will not allow UA to involuntarily remove passengers from the flight to accommodate for their employees, which means that a situation such as dragging a customer out will not arise.

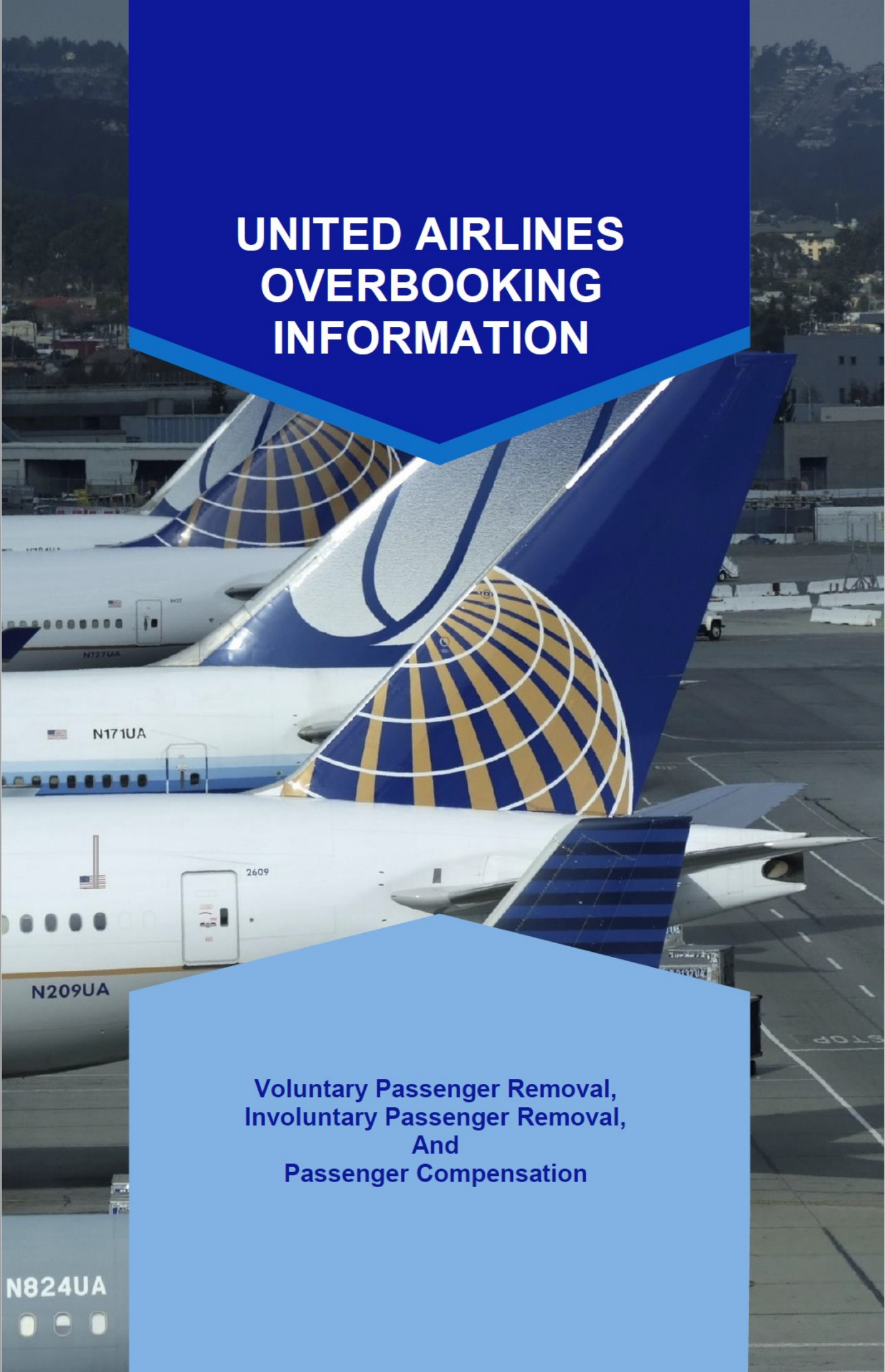
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Visual Argument

UNITED AIRLINES AND OVERBOOKING

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A photograph of several United Airlines aircraft parked at an airport gate. The focus is on the tail fins, which feature the United Airlines logo: a blue globe with white and gold stripes. The aircraft are white with blue and gold accents. The background shows an airport tarmac and some buildings.

UNITED AIRLINES OVERBOOKING INFORMATION

**Voluntary Passenger Removal,
Involuntary Passenger Removal,
And
Passenger Compensation**

N824UA

Table of Contents

What is Overbooking?	1
Voluntary Bumping	2
Arranging Alternate Transportation	3
Involuntary Passenger Removal	4
Passenger Rights	5

What is Overbooking?

What does “overbooking” a flight mean?



Overbooking happens when airlines sell more tickets than seats available for the flight.

Airlines can choose to overbook some, many, or none of the flights they offer depending on several unique factors.

Why does United Airlines overbook flights?



United Airlines overbooks some flights to keep transportation costs down and pass the savings along to our customers.

Overbooking is an effective method to minimize empty seats in an aircraft and help passengers reach their destination.

What happens if my flight is overbooked?



If your flight is overbooked, you will be informed when you check in at the gate by a United Airlines Employee. Some passengers may be asked to make alternate travel arrangements in these situations.

Voluntary Bumping

How does voluntary bumping work?

If the flight you have a reservation for becomes overbooked, a United Airlines employee will make an announcement to the gate area asking for volunteers who are willing to make alternate arrangements.

Passengers who volunteer to make alternate travel arrangements are entitled to compensation.

How does this affect me?

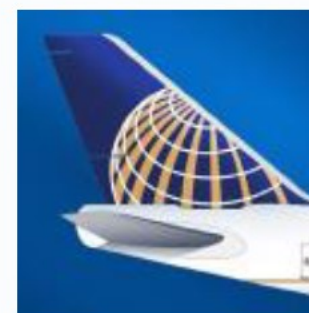
Depending on how flexible your travel schedule is you may consider volunteering to take a later flight. There is no obligation to volunteer, however individuals that do can receive compensation in the form of:

- A travel voucher that can be used toward future purchases at United Airlines
- Extra expense reimbursement for items such as hotel fees or meal fees incurred due to the alternate transportation arrangement

Arranging Alternate Transportation

What happens after I volunteer?

If you volunteer to make alternate travel arrangements and except compensation a United Airlines employee will assist you at your gate to change your reservation. An employee will take care of moving you to a later flight in addition to changing any connecting flights as needed.



United is committed to providing clear information.



If you have any questions, please ask us.

Sometimes the next available flight may not be until the next business day. In these instances, United Airlines will compensate travelers for hotel and transportation costs incurred before the new flight.

Compensation amounts and arrangements may vary based on the original reservation, mileage plan status, and first-class status.

For more information ask an employee or read the full Contract of Carriage on our website.

Involuntary Passenger Removal

Occasionally when a flight is overbooked and an employee asks for volunteers either not enough people volunteer for a later flight, or no one volunteers for alternate travel arrangements.

In April of 2017 United Airlines updated our policy regarding involuntary passenger removal.

How does United Airlines select passengers to be involuntarily removed?

If a flight is overbooked and not enough passengers volunteer for alternate arrangements United Airlines will begin involuntary removal procedures until the flight is at capacity. United selects passengers using the following criteria:

- Check-in time
- Gate arrival time
- First Class status
- Mileage Plan status
- Unaccompanied Minor or Disability status

Passenger Rights

Compensation



All passengers who are involuntarily removed will be compensated in the form of a credit voucher, or check. Passengers will be directed to an employee to make alternate travel arrangements.

Removing Undue Burden



Some passengers such as unaccompanied minors and disabled individuals are exempt from involuntary passenger removal procedures. Caretakers accompanying disabled individuals may protest being selected for involuntary removal if such action would cause undue burden to a disabled individual.

Our Commitment to You



United Airlines is committed to not bumping passengers involuntarily to accommodate United Airlines employees. After boarding is completed, employees may ask for volunteers but may not initiate involuntary boarding procedures.



Committed to Care

United Airlines works hard every day to create a positive experience for each of our customers. We appreciate your decision to fly the friendly skies.

Our goal is to provide information in a clear and consistent fashion. For more information about our Contract of Carriage or other policies please visit our website or ask any of our friendly employees who will be happy to assist you.

Contact Us

United Airlines, Inc.
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