



DGCA ALLOWS DOMESTIC CARRIERS TO ROLL OUT ZERO BAG CHARGES

News / Airlines



Aviation regulator DGCA has now allowed domestic carriers to roll out "zero bag" fares and charge penalty against check-in baggage for tickets booked under such an offer.

At present all domestic private airlines except national carrier Air India allow a flyer to carry up to 15 kgs of check-in baggage without any cost.

Air India allows its passengers to carry up to 23 kgs of check-in baggage free of cost.

"Airlines are allowed to offer no check-in baggage/hand baggage only fare scheme subject to the condition that the penalty to be imposed on a passenger, who avails such schemes but turns up with baggage for check-in at airline counter, cannot exceed the amount of incentive offered compared to lowest fare," Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in its updated Air Transport Circular for unbundling of services.

The circular was issued early this week.

Reacting to the development, budget carrier SpiceJet, which had first rolled out such a scheme in June this year, said regulator's move is in line with the changing trends in the industry.

"We welcome this customer and environment friendly move, which is in line with the changing trends in the industry," SpiceJet's head of administration and Accountable Manager G P Gupta said.

In June this year, SpiceJet had rolled out a scheme, offering a discount of 200 rupees to every passenger who books a flight with only one handbag and no check-in baggage.

The offer, however, came with a rider that those who book tickets at discounted fares but later decide to carry check-in baggage would have to pay a fee of 500 rupees for up to 10 kg and 750 rupees for up to 15 kg baggage.

As part of the unbundling of services, domestic airlines were allowed to charge from the customers for various facilities such as preferred seats, check-in baggage charges and use of lounges, by the regulator in April, 2015.

In an air transport circular in July, which has now been superseded by the latest circular, the DGCA had said check-in baggage charges (above 15 kgs of free check-in baggage allowance) can be charged separately on opt-in basis as part of the unbundling of services.

Three domestic carriers -- IndiGo, SpiceJet and AirAsia India -- had earlier approached the regulator with the "zero bag fare", offering discount on no check-in luggage.

The DGCA, however, at that time rejected the plea after the civil aviation ministry asked it not to allow such a proposal.

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