

RM/GDS/H9

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## **GDS/CRS Booking Policy for Air India Ltd**

### **1. Introduction**

As part of our continued efforts to reduce distribution costs Air India is updating GDS/CRS booking policy in line with industry participants. As you are aware GDS/CRS bill the airlines every time a GDS/CRS enabled Travel Service Provider (Any travel agency, Accredited or Non Accredited Subscriber, CRS/GDS user, and any other person or entity accessing Air India's reservation system content via the Internet or any other electronic means) books, modifies or cancels any airline segment. The booking policy is focused on encouraging our Travel Service Providers to clean up inactive segments and discourage any other practices that have negative implication on airline inventory.

Air India audits all Travel Service Provider's transactions obtained from GDS/CRS BIDT (Billing Information Data Tapes) to identify non-compliant practices. Air India reserves the right to issue a monthly invoice or ADM (Agency Debit Memo) to recover GDS/CRS booking costs per segment plus an administrative service fee for any and all non-compliant practices.

Compliance with the policy will reduce unnecessary costs while creating greater value for our shared customers through better seat availability and improved service.

The purpose of this policy is not to generate supplemental revenue for Air India. Our endeavor is to reduce the cost associated with inactive segments and discourage any practice that adversely impact the operations and finances of the airline due abuse of inventory and misuse of GDS/CRS enabled facilities.

The best way to avoid fee and violations associated with this GDS/CRS policy is to make every effort to comply with the airline policy. As always, we are always available to support your efforts in case you have specific questions or concerns.

This policy applies to all Travel agents (Accredited and Non-Accredited; Domestic and International) and any person or entity accessing Air India's Reservation System content directly or via the Internet or any other electronic means.

It is the responsibility of the Travel Service Providers to ensure that all of its employees, across all locations are made familiar with this policy and all future updates from Air India either directly or through electronic media and GDS communications.

## **2. BOOKING / TICKETING PRACTICES**

### **2.1. Canceling reservations**

Segments must be canceled and inventory released immediately when a ticket has not been purchased in accordance with the fare rule, or when notified by a customer that travel is no longer needed, whichever comes first. Canceled space for one passenger shall not be used for another customer even if that customer desires an identical itinerary by adopting any internal substitution. A fresh request is obligated for the new customer, based on the then current availability and fares.

Booking cancelled by the airline system due expiry of time-limit must also be cancelled in the GDS/CRS.

### **2.2. Churning**

Churning refers to repeated canceling and rebooking of same itinerary in the same or different classes of service across one or more PNRs or GDS/CRSs. Churning is often done to circumvent ticketing time limits. This practice is totally unacceptable as it blocks seats from other Service Providers dis servicing all of our customers. Your compliance with all booking and ticketing requirements is requested. Any passenger booking seen 3(three) or more times will be liable for cancellation of all existing bookings, with appropriate cost recovery and penal action.

"Churning" is not permitted for any reason including, without limitation, to circumvent or extend ticketing time limits, to hold inventory, or to find a fare, or carry forward special remarks from one itinerary to another.

### **2.3. Dual CRS/GDS**

A Travel Service Provider that uses more than one CRS/GDS in its business must book and ticket a specific passenger itinerary within the same CRS/GDS. Creation of ticketed passives in another PNR and in another GDS results in high costs to the airline for the same set of passengers, and therefore unacceptable.

### **2.4. Duplicate Bookings/Segments**

Booking passengers on multiple flights or in multiple classes increases GDS booking fees for the airline and leads to spoilt inventory. All duplicate bookings generated by a single Travel Service Provider are prohibited, including:

- Multiple itineraries for any number of passengers with the same passenger names, whether identical itineraries or not
- Reserving one or more seats on the same flight or different flights for the same time frame, regardless of the class of service or format used to make the reservations

- Additionally, creating a reservation where it is logically impossible to be used on each segment created across one or more PNRs or CRS/GDSs is not permitted e.g. violating traffic restrictions, minimum connect time, or impractical itineraries

## **2.5. Fictitious or Speculative Bookings**

Fictitious/speculative bookings and ticket numbers holding onto airline inventory until a passenger or ticketing opportunity arises increases GDS booking fees for the airline, and reduces the availability of our product. Your cooperation is requested to use the GDS/CRS only when it relates directly to a passenger's request or intention to purchase a ticket.

Creating segments /passive or active/ or a combination of both causes financial losses to the airline.

Input of fictitious ticket numbers to hold a booking leads to a reduction of availability of our product in the market.

Examples of such bookings include reservations that list the following in the PNR:

- Schedule a/b/c
- Mouse/mickey and other common names
- Smith/a/b/c
- Test/Mr

Additionally, creating such PNRs to hold or block reservations due to anticipated demand, customer indecision, or for any reason including, without limitation, to circumvent any airline policy, reservation procedure or fare rules is not permitted.

Eliminating fictitious or speculative bookings will free up seats in your customers preferred class of service and better availability of seats for newer customers, while reducing unnecessary CRS/GDS costs to the airline. A desirable win-win for the travel Service Provider community, the traveler community as well as the airline is requested.

## **2.6. Group Bookings**

An acceptable group booking may include segments entered passively into a CRS/GDS. These passive segments must match segments already existing in Air India's Reservation System. Passive segments may only be entered at the time, and for the purpose, of ticket issuance.

Group bookings entered into a CRS/GDS that are not directly related to a customers' request and are subsequently canceled prior to ticketing are considered speculative. Groups booked in a manner designed to circumvent these procedures are subject to penalties and/or cancellation by the airline. Air India prohibits creating speculative group bookings.

### **2.7. Blocking Seats**

Blocking seats by means of many separate individual bookings instead of the airlines group procedure is prohibited. Such bookings are subject to immediate cancellation without prior notification.

### **2.8. Inactive Segments**

Inactive segments are segments in a PNR affected by a schedule change or flight cancellation or response to a non-direct sell. Inactive segments are sent to the Travel Service Providers queue in the GDS/CRS and can be identified with a status code of UC/UN/US/NO/HX/HN/HL/PN

All inactive segments must be cancelled or removed from the GDS/CRS PNR at least 24 hours prior departure. Inactive segments that are not cancelled or removed 24 hours prior to departure are subject to Cost Recovery Fee charges from Air India. Repeat and continued violations may incur additional penal action by the airlines.

### **2.9. Passive Segments**

An acceptable passive segment is entered into a GDS/CRS for the purpose of ticketing. It must match an existing booking in Air India's Reservations system. In the event of a mismatch, a reject message is sent to the booking Service Provider and the segment requires action at least 24 hours prior to flight departure.

Travel Service Providers must use claim PNR functionality when it is available and use it for ticketing instead of creating passive segments. The creation of passive segments when it is possible to claim an AI created PNR instead, is not permitted.

In order to better control costs and eliminate abuse associated with the use of passive segments AI participates in passive segment notification in GDS/CRSs which offer this enhancement. This means that whenever a travel Service Provider passively books an AI segment, AI receives a passive segment notification (PK, PL, PU, PX) message at end transaction.

1. AI will automatically validate each passive segment notification message to determine that a matching segment exists in the internal reservations system
2. If an identical segment does not exist within AI's internal system a message will be sent back to the CRS/GDS PNR, changing the status code of the passive segment to "NO" (No Action Taken)
3. An SSR will also accompany the rejected segment stating that the segment containing the passive is not valid. Passive segment(s) may be rejected by AI for one or more of the following reasons:
  - a. Matching itinerary not found
  - b. Matching name not found
  - c. Matching number of passengers not found

d. Matching class of service not found

4. Industry standards require that passive segments be used "for the purpose of ticketing" only after a booking has been made in an airline's inventory system. Air India does not allow passive segments to be used for other reasons, including the following:

- a. To circumvent fare rules
- b. To fulfill administrative functions

All violations therefore attract suitable action from the airline, not limited to raising ADMs or other financial recovery action.

### **2.10. Special Service Requests**

We request you to wait for airline system response when first creating a PNR, or while closing an existing PNR with an end of transaction, before adding the SSR element. Thereafter you may retrieve the PNR and add your SSR requests and close the PNR by End of Transaction input. Separating the SSR input from normal PNR creation/update prevents creation of duplicate PNRs in Air India system and potential violation.

When changing itineraries in a passenger name record (PNR), it is necessary to re-request any special service requests from the original booking. This includes unaccompanied minors and special meal requests. When an SSR message is needed for only part of the itinerary, the special service request must be flight specific and not requested for all flights in the itinerary. Any wastages or financial costs and burden incurred by Air India shall be duly passed upon to the ticketing agent or travel service provider.

### **2.11. Test or Training PNRs**

The training mode or non-billable segment status codes provided by the CRS/GDS must be used when testing situations, or training personnel. Creating PNRs for training purposes using active sell segment status codes is prohibited.

### **2.12. Name Changes**

All AI reservations require a valid first and last name as provided by the passenger. Travel Service Provider must provide customer's first and last names which are identical to those in the customer's passport.

Do not perform Name change or cancel the Names in the PNRs. Name changes are not permitted on reservations unless entered for the purpose of correcting a mis-spelling of the passenger's name. Contact the Air India Reservation offices for assistance with mis-spellings to avoid cancellation of space.

### **2.13. Waitlist Segment**

Travel Service Providers must not repeatedly create waitlist segments, which in any case do not increase the chance of waitlist confirmation. Agency must also avoid forced waitlist on closed flights.

All waitlist segments must be cancelled from the GDS/CRS PNR at least 24 hours prior departure. Waitlist segments that are not cancelled 24 hours prior to departure are subject to Cost Recovery Fee charges from Air India.

### **2.14. Invalid Ticketing**

Travel Service Providers must not retain bookings with invalid ticket numbers. Invalid ticket numbers include restricted, used, refunded, voided, or non-existent ticket numbers. Air India does not allow any manual ticketing inputs. Travel Service Providers must not issue confirmed tickets against bookings that are on request or non-confirmed status in Air India's reservation system.

Travel service provider must ensure that the class code used for issuing ticket is identical to the code that exists on the PNR.

### **2.15. Ticketing Policy**

Travel service provider must always use the latest and updated fares rather than pre-stored fares, and collect and report accurately all taxes, fees and surcharges imposed by all local and foreign governments.

Travel service provider must ensure collection of penalties for no-show, cancellation, reissue etc. as applicable.

Additionally, Travel Service Provider must adhere to the following:

- Air India's time limits
- Do not reinstate/update dead PNRs (status HX, NO, UN, UC, US/HL)
- Do not cancel & add in the same transaction
- Applicable government regulations and requirements, and provide customer security information (SSR DOCS/DOCA/DOCO) on PNR in the prescribed format as required by TSA (Transportation Security Administration of USA)
- Provide passenger mobile contact number on the relevant GDS phone field or OSI element to facilitate disruption handling
- Not create booking which violates the minimum connecting time requirement as defined by individual airlines
- Not create booking on non-existent flights and segments, invalid segments, or violate traffic restrictions, as defined or published by individual airlines

- Travel Service Provider must not separate Journey Control, Booking O & D, Married Segments for origin-destination single segment sale for any purpose, nor manipulate airline system logic

### **3. Policy violations**

Air India reserves the right to hold the Travel Service Providers responsible for any violations, and charge for any loss or damage caused. Authority for all interpretations of any and all violations will be entirely with Air India.

Air India reserves the right to cancel any booking, whether ticketed, or un-ticketed by Travel Service Providers in cases of non-compliance, or those who have been identified as non-compliant to any part of this policy.

Air India further reserves the right to block any Travel Service Provider's access to view, book or ticket Air India inventory at any time, and more specifically in case of violation of its policies.

In addition to legal remedies available to Air India for Travel Service Provider's violation of this Policy, Air India reserves the right to charge Travel Service Provider, and Travel Service Providers agrees to pay a fee per violation as laid down in Air India's ADM (Agency Debit Memo) policy

### **Questions?**

For questions concerning the Air India's Booking Policy or debit memos issued by Air India please submit questions by email to [resauto@airindia.in](mailto:resauto@airindia.in)

For questions concerning GDS/CRS booking entries please contact your GDS/CRS provider.

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