

# MYTH VS FACT

**Government Travelers Get More Middle Seats Than Commercial Travelers.**



**Government Travelers are Treated No Differently Than Commercial Travelers When It Comes to Seating**

**Did You Know: Getting window and aisle seats are a function of:**

➤ Status of the traveler with the airline

➤ How far in advance the reservation is booked

**FIRST: Front part of plane and exit seats usually reserved:**

When a flight is made available to book, **20%-40%** (depending on airline and plane) of **coach seats** are withheld for travelers:

- A. With preferred status.
- B. Who book a full Y (highest cost) coach fare.
- C. Who pay for a preferred seat.

**SECOND: Remaining seats are first-come, first served**

The **remaining seats** (usually from the middle to back half of the plane) **are available to be reserved at time of booking.**

Therefore, if a traveler books in advance, they'll have a better opportunity for window and aisle seats.

**THIRD: Unsold premium seats are released or discounted the day of flight**

If the **premium seats** are not all filled with status travelers or travelers who pay for prime seats, they are released on the day of departure.

**TIP:** Therefore, if you only have a choice of middle seats, you are usually better off waiting until you are at the airport as a premium seat may be released to travelers without seat assignments.

The **City Pair Program** confirmed with airlines that the only fare class receiving additional seating benefits is the Y class, the highest coach fare class. Any discounted class of service below Y is subject to the same seating rules. Commercial travelers are subject to the same rules as government.

	American	Alaska	Delta	JetBlue	Southwest	United
Would negotiating a different fare class than Y open up any more seats?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Does traveler's individual status open up more seats?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Is seating for at least 50% of the plane based on when you make your reservation?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are there premium seats available for purchase?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Priority Boarding	Yes

*American Airlines has recently announced that some preferred seating will be given to certain corporate customers (excluding Main Cabin Extra)*

**Tips for Better Seating:**

1. **Book Further In Advance And Reserve Your Seat.** Availability is on a first-come first-served basis.
2. **Sign up for status with the airlines because priority matters.**
3. With a **one-time status match** from one airline to another, you are granted preferred status immediately. Duration of the status may vary as the airline is expecting you to earn points on your own thereafter. Most often used when awards change after traveler has gained status with the award carrier on their commonly-traveled routes. Please contact the City Pair Program office for assistance with this.
4. **Waiting until check-in or boarding if only middle seats are available upon booking.** They may open up at the last minute.
5. **Be persistent and keep checking.** Open seats come available multiple times per week.
6. **Government travelers may purchase premium coach seating,** at their expense, non-reimbursable by the government.



For more information, go to [www.gsa.gov/portal/category/27075](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/27075)  
 For questions or assistance booking travel, call **Travel Programs** at **1 (888) 472-5585**