

Friday, October 23, 2009

To: American Airlines Customer Relations

Re: Complaint regarding flight AA 4273 (locator: CPAQNH) Chicago-Montreal on 10/12/09

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter was originally emailed to Ms. Karen Smith (Karen.smith@aa.com) at the suggestion of your attendant, on 10/16. No reply was received since, and I hope to receive one to this letter.

On October 12th, 2009, I made my way from San Francisco, CA to Montreal, Canada. I had verified my flight on line and checked in on time. Upon arriving at the gate in Chicago, I heard the attendant announcing that due to overbooking, they are looking for 4 volunteers (later changed to 5) to stay in Chicago, if their plans are flexible. That went on for an hour. Probably due to it being an evening flight, no one volunteered. 10 minutes before boarding, my name was called and I was notified that I was denied boarding.

I was supposed to meet my customer at the airport that night and start working early Tuesday morning. But my explanations did not help and I was kept at Chicago. As compensation, I was offered a choice of a voucher for \$159 or a check for \$102. The other 4 people that were kept behind were offered \$550 and even \$800. Aside from that we were given a night at a hotel and a dinner vouched for \$10. Upon me commenting that \$10 is not enough for dinner, the attendant claimed that the maximum he's allowed to offer.

Needless to say, I missed my meeting that night and the one the morning after, arriving at Montreal that afternoon. Add to that the hassle of leaving the airport to a hotel, arriving the day after and clearing security again.

I would like to complain about the following points:

1. If I've checked in and verified my flight at SF, I shouldn't care about AA's overbooking policies. I paid for a trip to Montreal on a certain date and time, and barring unforeseen events like weather etc., nothing should have delayed me.
2. At the very least, AA should have tried booking me on a different flight on the same date - even with another airline.
3. I do not know the logic behind the compensation offer, but I consider a \$100 insulting as a compensation for the hassle and grief caused me by AA's policies.

I will not mention any business damage here. Suffice it to say calling your customer in the evening explaining you'll be delayed because your airline oversold your flight sounds like a bad excuse.

I'll end on this note: I travel quite a lot for my business. I've stopped flying with AA 5 years ago, due to a different incident, and transferred my business to Continental. I decided to give AA another chance this week - and this was the result. I hope there is a way my trust in your airline can be restored.

Awaiting your reply,
Guy Vider

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Traveling Tech Guy Blog: <http://www.guyvider.com>