

OR Tambo no longer accepts irregular shaped bags

New rules for checking in bags of irregular shape and size will be applied at OR Tambo International Airport. As per the International Air Transport Association (IATA) guidelines, the rules are aimed at preventing blockages and breakdowns in the baggage handling system caused by bags that do not have any flat surfaces or that have long straps or grips.



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Bags that are round or do not have a flat surface of any kind are the largest source of jams in the baggage handling system. These jams can shut down sections of the baggage handling system, delay baggage delivery to aircraft and inconvenience passengers and airlines.

Airport management has been contemplating these new rules since early 2018 and has now decided to adopt baggage conditions similar to those applied at other international airports. Terminal 1 at Dubai International Airport recently instituted the same kind of baggage rules that will now be applied at O. R. Tambo International Airport.

The new rules have been agreed to after extensive consultations with the Airline Operators Committee (AOC) and other bodies representing airlines.

The new baggage rules are:

1. Only regular-shaped bags will be allowed at check-in counters;

2. This means that the bags must have at least one flat surface to be accepted on the check-in system;
3. Round or irregular-shaped bags will not be allowed at check-in counters; and
4. Bags with long straps will not be allowed at check-in counters.

Passengers trying to check in bags that do not conform to these rules will be offered the option of having their baggage wrapped with one flat side at airport approved baggage wrapping stations.

"We very much appreciate that these new baggage rules will potentially create inconvenience or additional cost for some passengers, so this is not a step we have taken lightly," says Kris Reddy, Assistant General Manager: Operations Services.

"However, a small proportion of irregular bags that cause breakdowns in the baggage handling system creates far greater inconvenience for the majority of passengers. We have investigated this matter over about a year and considered a variety of alternatives. It is our view, and airlines and other stakeholders now agree, that changing rules for irregular bags will improve the overall level of service to all passengers."

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