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B.C. court certifies wheelchair users' class-action lawsuit against Air Canada



A disabled British Columbia man who dragged himself off an Air Canada flight in Las Vegas after the airline's ground assistance personnel were not available to help him says he doesn't want others to go through the same experience. Rodney Hodgins is seen in Las Vegas in an August 2023 handout photo. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO-Deanna Hodgins, *MANDATORY CREDIT*



By The Canadian Press

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The B.C. Supreme Court has certified a class-action lawsuit filed against Air Canada by passengers who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids.

Lead plaintiff Rodney Hodgins, who has spastic cerebral palsy, claims he had to “physically drag himself” down an aisle after Air Canada staff didn’t help him off a flight in 2023.

The court certified Hodgins' lawsuit on Tuesday, and the class includes passengers who travelled with Air Canada between January 2021 and June 2023 who require a wheelchair getting to and from an aircraft and assistance with steps and seating.

The lawsuit alleges the airline breached contractual obligations to help passengers who rely on mobility aids and to "assist with physically moving passengers safely and with dignity."

The ruling says Hodgins alleges Air Canada has a "systemic" issue and a "culture of apathy and indifference" toward passengers who need mobility-related assistance.

The ruling says Air Canada tried to argue Hodgins' claims would be better adjudicated by the Canadian Transportation Agency, but the judge found the agency's process would deprive Hodgins and class members "of the specific remedy they seek," and deny "substantive access to justice."

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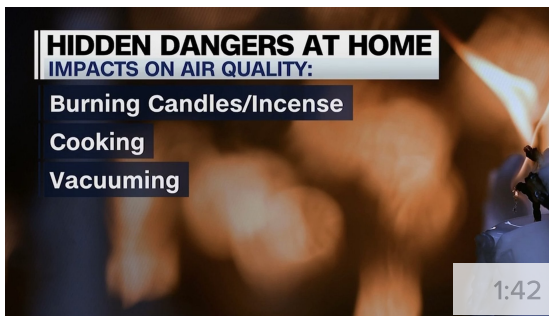


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