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Uber drivers complain of intimidation

by Kaunda Selisho, April 21 2015, 14:32



Picture: AFP PHOTO/NICOLAS TUCAT

UBER drivers say they are experiencing intimidation by meter taxi drivers who see Uber drivers as competitors muscling in on their turf, especially at the lucrative ranks at OR Tambo International Airport.

Uber is recognised as a taxi operator but not registered in the same way, as the service is effectively just a mobile app that connects users in a transportation network.

A lack of knowledge about what the app is and how it operates is allegedly causing conflict between Uber drivers and meter cab drivers. The Uber drivers have also clashed with Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD) officers.

One driver who did not want to be named for fear of repercussions said he was attacked about a month ago outside the arrivals terminal at the airport.

He said he was beaten by meter cab drivers while a client, who had just landed in the country, was in the car. The client fled, fearing for his safety.

He said the drivers of meter cabs who waited outside the arrivals terminal did not know what Uber transport was so "when they see us arrive and pick up a client, they just attack us, they assault us".

The meter drivers also tried to take and damage the smartphone on which he received Uber requests.

After the attack, he went straight to a police station to report the incident. But the police also did not understand how Uber worked, he said.

He claimed he took police back to the place where he was attacked, where he was threatened again in front of the officers.

The Uber driver said the police then accused him of being an illegal operator and lying about the fact that Uber was registered with the Department of Transport, especially as it did not belong to any taxi association and did not have any set routes. But the matter was later dropped.

He said he reported the incident to his supervisor at Uber, whom he knew only as Dave. His supervisor had promised the matter would be taken up with the relevant taxi associations, he said.

Meanwhile, the driver said he was keeping away from OR Tambo International Airport, Lanseria and some Gautrain stations, which he said were also dangerous for Uber drivers.

Another Uber driver, who did not want to be identified, recalled an incident last weekend in which he was stopped by a JMPD officer while on his way back to a nightclub after taking his first set of drunk customers home.

He claimed the officer complained that Uber drivers kept drunk drivers off the road, preventing officers from being able to get the bribes and fines that they needed.

JMPD spokesman Chief Supt Wayne Minnaar, who at the time of the conversation did not know what Uber was, said the officers were just doing their jobs.

"They stop the drivers to make sure that the drivers themselves are not drunk."

Uber Johannesburg general manager Alon Lits said he could not investigate the matters reported to him because he did not have the drivers' identities and therefore could not comment on these particular incidents.

Mr Lits did, however, confirm that such incidents had been reported to Uber before but said they were "very few, very isolated incidents".

Mr Lits said Uber Johannesburg was prompt in dealing with complaints from both drivers and clients.

"We have two customers, the people that use the service for transport and our drivers," said Mr Lits.

Any complaints sent to the Uber Johannesburg's e-mail address were attended to within 24 hours, he said.

RDM News Wire

Moody staff, incomprehensible signs and a hub that's like a 'Third World country': Are these the most hated airports in the world?

- Los Angeles is one of world's busiest, yet receives negative comments
- Hurghada Airport in the heat of Egypt, yet no air-conditioning on departure
- LaGuardia in New York described as the 'most frustrating' airport
- Customers complain everything at Luton Airport is chargeable

By [John Hutchinson for MailOnline](#)

Published: 06:37 EST, 22 April 2015 | Updated: 11:10 EST, 22 April 2015

When it comes to modern-day travel, the long waits at airports and cramped flights are considered a necessary evil.

But some airports, it seems, are very much worse than others.

While Islamabad Benazir Bhutto International Airport, in Pakistan, is often cited as the worst in the world, there are a surprising number of complaints from travellers about well-known hubs ranging from LAX in Los Angeles to London Luton.



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Queues are never a holidaymaker's best idea of fun, but it appears some airports don't help themselves when faced with these kind of situations (pictured is Los Angeles Airport)

From the long queues for security, to paying for internet connectivity that doesn't work and fighting for a seat in the terminal, the allegations against these well-known airports are varied, infuriating travellers while they await their connection.

So, which airports top the list when it comes to passengers complaining about their experience? These are the hubs that appear to disappoint holidaymakers the most...



The layout at Los Angeles Airport has been criticised by many visitors

Los Angeles International Airport, U.S.

The San Francisco Chronicle once described LAX as 'eight terminals connected by a traffic jam'.

Complaints generally revolve around the convoluted and unsigned layout, the lack of restaurants, activities and services for the layover traveller, and the general uncleanliness of the airport in Los Angeles (LAX).

Writing on Google +, passenger Tim Dascomb described the airport, that handled almost 80 million visitors last year, as looking like it 'hasn't been maintained since 1973.'

He continued: 'TSA was horrible, no surprise there. Wifi is spotty when it isn't non-existent. When returning internationally, customs was the slowest I've ever encountered in my life.'

Nick Ross was similarly scathing in his one-star review when he wrote: 'This is the absolute worst airport I've ever been to. It's like the Walmart of airports.'

'My flight was delayed. Then you have to wait in line for almost two hours for them to give you a re-booking for the next day.'

LAX is America's second busiest airport in terms of passengers handled each year, beaten only by Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta international airport.

So perhaps it is no wonder passengers become frustrated with long queues for security, immigration and customs.

There is good news though. In the latest Skytrax World Airport Awards, LAX crept into the top 100, making 98th place from a previous position of 102.

Hurghada International Airport, Egypt

It is a favourite hotspot with European travellers, especially those looking for some winter sun.

However, travellers complain that there is reportedly no air conditioning in the departure lounge and an expensive duty free shop.

Holidaymaker Ash Tulett told MailOnline Travel: 'Lack of places to buy food, surprise card charges when buying duty free make all in all a miserable and depressing looking airport.'



Airport is an important check-in to explore Egypt's holiday resorts, with queues like this experienced by many

Enormous queues gather at Hurghada Airport in Egypt



The opinion was similarly shared by Hannah Davis who left a Google review saying: 'Just flew in and out of this airport. The worst I have ever had the displeasure to use.'

'Herded into the security area like cattle by extremely rude and abusive staff. There was one belt working although there were about 10 areas that could have been opened.'



Barney Ashworth wasn't too happy with Hurghada Airport, and shared his views on Twitter

'After finally getting through there and checking in yet more queues and abusive staff at passport control. My passport was literally thrown in my face after being stamped.'

The airport has undergone massive renovations to accommodate dramatically rising leisure traffic, with officials stating they can now cater for around 13 million passengers annually.

Seemingly many of these passengers wouldn't agree.

LaGuardia Airport, New York, U.S.

New York LaGuardia has been named as the most frustrating airport in North America.

Taking into account the time it takes to get there, the security processes, the quality of the terminals and facilities, and how many flights get delayed, LaGuardia takes the crown that nobody wants.



Visitors to LaGuardia New York describe the airport as being underwhelming with less than helpful staff



To be delayed at LaGuardia is 'mind numbing' according to research attained by sleepingatairports.net

The research, conducted by businessweek.com, used data from a user survey, airports' on-time performance, and information on the ease of getting to and from the airports.

Its location, beyond Subway lines, means long taxi queues for arriving passengers and the airport scored an abysmal 91 out of 100 in BusinessWeek's survey.

Sleepinginairports.net says that the airport has 'drab décor, poor restaurant selection, lacklustre cleanliness, counter-intuitive layout and the notoriously unhelpful staff.'

They add: 'While a departure from here is manageable, a delay here becomes the definition of mind numbing.'

The airport was once likened to a 'third world country' by U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden.

People take to social networks on a regular basis to complain about LaGuardia Airport

Islamabad Benazir Bhutto International Airport, Pakistan

The 2014 Guide to Sleeping at Airports named the Pakistan airport as the very worst after tourists were asked to rate their airport experiences based on comfort, facilities, cleanliness and customer service.

One customer likened Pakistan's Islamabad Benazir Bhutto International Airport to 'a central prison' adding: 'Many of the touts and taxi drivers loot people at the airport and outside'.

Tourists also criticised the absence of crowd control, 'pervasive corruption', inconsistent security checks and the overall lack of cleanliness and technology.



Some visitors to Islamabad Benazir Bhutto International Airport have described it as more like 'a prison'

The customer service aspect of the airport in Islamabad has been highlighted as a growing concern

London Luton Airport, Luton, UK

The biggest gripe for tourists when travelling here is that they are not actually in London but Bedfordshire.

However, while that should be looked into pre-flight, a host of elements at the airport leave customers angry.

A favourite with the budget airlines, crowds can become problematic both arriving at the airport and in the terminal.



Luton is a favourite with budget airlines, and this can lead to long queues for customers

Some of customers' biggest complaints are that everything from Wi-Fi to the bags used to put your liquids in are chargeable.

Writing on the review section of [Skytrax](#), Bob Daniel described Luton airport as an 'absolutely ghastly place.'

He added: 'As others have noticed they charge you for anything they can think of.'

'The 'short term' car park is so far away heaven help you if it is raining.'

'Security is a farce at the best of times, at times of minor demand it is appalling.'

Omar Chaudhuri didn't go into detail about his Luton Airport Experience, but was confident in his opinion

And in her zero-star rating on the site, Julia Gilson wrote: 'Luton airport security is a shambles. Be warned long queues causing passengers to miss their flights.'

'The whole Luton experience is extremely poor.'

Which? Travel has also waded in to the fray, branding Luton the UK's worst airport for the second year running in 2014 in its annual survey of 'holiday hassles'.

Of the 8,000 people surveyed, it received a satisfaction rating of just 37 per cent, six per cent lower than the previous year. And one Which? member went as far as describing the airport as a 'hell hole'.

Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris, France

Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport is the world's seventh-busiest airport, and one where it's best to give yourself plenty of time to navigate the terminal.

Passengers claim sandwiches and snacks are overpriced, complaining that a simple baguette can cost as much as €6, while terminal corrections can mean over an hour spent navigating by shuttle.



Be prepared for a terminal transfer once checked-in at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris

An89Go writes in their Google review: 'In general it feels much better when you know you finally leave the airport - check in rush, security rush and everything else that's in rush at the CDG (basically everything) makes you stressed out.'

Tom Jeffs was similarly depressed with his experience at the airport in the French capital by writing: 'The toilets are small and cramped, cubicles have no hooks. The only clothing shops here sell jeans that cost over 150 euros.'

The top ten 10 worst airports for comfort, convenience, cleanliness and customer service

Worldwide

1. Islamabad Benazir Bhutto International Airport, Pakistan (ISB)
2. Jeddah King Abdulaziz International Airport, Saudi Arabia (JED)
3. Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport, Nepal (KTM)
4. Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Philippines (MNL)
5. Tashkent International Airport, Uzbekistan (TAS)
6. Paris Beauvais-Tille International Airport, France (BVA)
7. Frankfurt Hahn International Airport, Germany (HHN)
8. Bergamo Orio al Serio International Airport, Italy (BGY)
9. Berlin Tegel International Airport, Germany (TXL)
10. New York City LaGuardia International Airport, USA (LGA)

Europe

1. Paris Beauvais-Tille International Airport, France (BVA)
2. Frankfurt Hahn International Airport, Germany (HHN)
3. Bergamo Orio al Serio International Airport, Italy (BGY)
4. Berlin Tegel International Airport, Germany (TXL)
5. Rome Ciampino International Airport, Italy (CIA)
6. Barcelona Girona-Costa Brava International Airport, Spain (GRO)
7. Paris Orly International Airport, France (ORY)
8. London Luton International Airport, England (LTN)
9. Warsaw-Modlin Mazovia International Airport, Poland (WMI)
10. Rome Fiumicino International Airport, Italy (FCO)

Research conducted by sleepinginairports.net from 2014 data

Witness Europe's 3rd worst airport's awful baggage handlers



Reviewer Timo Rantanen, writing for airlinequality.com, did spot some improvements though.

Last month he wrote: 'Improved signage, still difficult. I have regarded CDG as one of the most confusing airports to change planes. Since my last experience there has been significant improvement in signage. It is still not an easy or fast airport for changing flights but added signage makes it a bit better.'

Although not everybody is a fan.

B Cohen, from the US, described Charles de Gaulle as an 'abysmal excuse for an airport'.

He wrote: 'Be prepared to miss your flight, because that is the likely outcome of the complete and utter inefficiency and disorganization. Be prepared to have no one care whatsoever about your plight.'

The airport also squeezed into the top 50 in the latest Skytrax World Airport Awards - not bad for a hub that used to be ranked as one of the worst in the world.

Read more: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-3048868/Moody-staff-incomprehensible-signs-hub-s-like-World-country-world-s-hated-airports.html#ixzz3Yhp9xPT6

The Detroit News

Blind protest airport bus stop move

Mike Martindale, The Detroit News 5:50 p.m. EDT April 26, 2015



(Photo: Brandy Baker / The Detroit News)

46 CONNECT 6 TWEETLINKEDIN 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE

Romulus — The National Federal of the Blind of Michigan picketed outside the McNamara Terminal Sunday afternoon to bring attention to the relocation of a public transportation bus stop — a move they say proves a particular hardship to visually impaired travelers.

About a dozen members of the group, some with canes and service dogs, gathered outside the terminal for about two hours displaying hand-lettered signs like “We are not second-class citizens,” “Safety for Seniors” and “Equal Rights for Disabled Travelers.” Navigating around Detroit Metro Airport, even under the best conditions, can prove a daunting task with traffic snarls, parking, homeland security checks and last-minute flight changes. Add being blind to that mix increases that frustration, said Larry Posont, president of the NFBMI, who led Sunday’s protest.

“The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that passenger waiting areas be placed to minimize the distance which wheelchair users and other persons with disabilities may have to travel compared to the general public,” Posont said. “Instead the airport maximized the distance.”

Posont referred to the relocation of the public transportation bus stop from curbside at mid-terminal to the far south end of the Ground Transportation Center in the parking ramp across the road. The area is 200 yards from the nearest indoor waiting area, restrooms and a water fountain.

“They took what was an independent activity for many of us and made it dependent,” said another protester, Terry Wilcox of Ann Arbor. “I used to be able to be let off at the curb and head directly inside and to the ticket counter. Now it’s out one level, take an elevator to another, make several turns through crowds and maybe you will get to your destination.


“Worse, we cannot see the signs that point the direction we are supposed to be going in — we often rely on sound keys, voices, and public address messages,” she said . “Letting us off in a garage area where the noise of plane engines drowns all that all out makes it impossible to hear them.”

Mike Conway of the Wayne County Airport Authority said the bus relocation, moved last September, was made for everyone’s safety and stressed the airport is compliant with all state and federal laws.

“Our international passenger traffic has really grown and with it, so has vehicle and bus transportation to the airport,” said Conway. “Some of the buses were exiting and boarding passengers — not at the curb — but right in the middle of two and three lanes of traffic. It just became too congested, too dangerous.”

Posont said the airport relocated the bus stop without any public hearing despite concerns from his organization and others. He noted 2 percent of Michigan’s population, or about 200,000 people, are legally blind or have vision challenges.
mmartindale@detroitnews.com

Cop Who Allegedly Said ‘We Don’t Have Time For This’ Before Shooting Schizophrenic Teen Dead Has Been Indicted

by [Annie-Rose Strasser](#)  Posted on February 4, 2014 at 9:42 am



Keith Vidal’s family

CREDIT: YOUTUBE

A police officer who allegedly yelled “we don’t have time for this” before shooting and killing a schizophrenic teen has been [indicted on manslaughter charges](#).

Officer Bryon Vassey was one of three officers from different North Carolina precincts to respond to a call by the family of 18-year-old Keith Vidal [last month](#). The teen, who suffered from schizophrenia and weighed just 90 pounds, had apparently picked up a small screwdriver and wasn’t putting it down. But his parents say the two other officers already had the scene under

control when Vassey walked in. They say the third officer simply tased Vidal, then took out a firearm and shot him dead, saying “we don’t have time for this.”

Records show Vassey was at the Vidal residence for just [70 seconds](#) before calling in that shots had been fired, reports the North Carolina Star News.

In the wake of the incident, Vassey was put on [paid administrative leave](#), while the two other officers at the scene were cleared by internal investigation. Outrage spread in Vidal’s North Carolina community, where a “[Mental Health Awareness March](#)” was held in his name. Vidal’s parents and sister also showed up outside a press conference about the shooting holding signs demanding justice.

“My word that I want to get out to every family who has a mentally ill patient: Do not call the police department for help,” Vidal’s mother [told reporters](#). “Because your son will probably get shot and killed, just like mine did. Think twice about who you call for help.”

A grand jury has ruled that Vassey be held on a \$50,000 bond. He has until Wednesday to surrender.

Phoenix Business Journal

<http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/>

Uber faces lawsuits over service dogs, blind, disabled riders in Arizona, California

Apr 24, 2015, 11:22am MST



A service dog



[Mike Sunnucks](#)

Senior Reporter- *Phoenix Business Journal*

The Uber Technologies Inc. high-tech ride sharing businesses is being sued by blind riders in California and a retired judge in Phoenix for alleged violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Arizona and California lawsuits contend Uber and its network of freelance drivers don't abide by the [ADA](#) and whether they are able to pick up disabled riders who are blind or in wheelchairs.

Title 3 of the federal law requires transportation companies to make reasonable accommodations for the disabled. One of the cases involves some Uber drivers allegedly refusing to transport service dogs.

Uber drivers pick up riders in their personal vehicles, and many of those cars are not equipped to accommodate some disabled customers.

The California case centers around Uber drivers refusing to transport customers with service dogs.

“The National Federation of the Blind of California and three individuals allege that Uber and its California subsidiaries discriminate against blind persons by refusing to transport guide dogs,” according to documents in the U.S. District Court in San Francisco.

A federal judge there denied an Uber bid to dismiss the case.

John Balitis, a workplace and disability law expert with the Fennemore Craig PC law firm, said the Arizona case was brought by retired judge [Lawrence Anderson](#) and prominent plaintiff attorney [Tod Schleier](#) regarding whether Uber can accommodate riders with wheelchairs.

Neither Schleier or Uber representatives responded to requests for comment.

Balitis said taxi companies, who often fight Uber and other ride-sharing businesses' entry into new markets, must have some ADA-compliant vehicles to serve disabled customers.

Uber may have to create a small fleet of vehicles that will comply with the ADA, Balitis said. Ride-sharing companies' business models are built around drivers using their own vehicles to ferry customers. That system is called UberX.

Arizona Gov. [Doug Ducey](#) signed a bill into law this week allowing Uber, Lyft and other ride sharing businesses to operate in the state.