

Bay Area Airports Alert

Improving Safety, Security and Service Standards at Airports Across the Bay Area

Passenger Service Workers at SFO International Terminal to Take Strike Vote



“Passengers deserve better than they’re getting from Prospect and the Airlines.”

***-Emmanuel Foronda
Prospect Employee***

Employees of **Prospect International Airport Services** who assist the elderly and passengers with disabilities in SFO’s International Terminal announced that they would hold a vote to authorize a strike during the week of the Thanksgiving holiday. Workers have been in bargaining with the company since fall of 2006, but have made little progress towards a contract that guarantees the same standards already provided by other airline contractors like G2 Secure Staff and PrimeFlight Aviation Services. If a strike is authorized, the strike could begin at any time.

The Prospect workers are part of SEIU’s Airport Workers United Campaign – a statewide campaign to raise standards for passengers and workers, through increased training and reduced turnover.

“No one likes a strike, but passengers deserve better than they’re getting from Prospect and the Airlines,” said Emmanuel Foronda, a Prospect employee. “It shouldn’t have to come to this, but after over one year of good faith bargaining, I’m not sure what else to do.”

Prospect workers and their Union have received formal strike approvals from the San Francisco and San Mateo Labor Councils.

Prospect Workers, Disability Rights Groups Warn Travelers of Safety Concerns at SFO Charges Filed Against SFO Int’l Terminal’s Contractor *Prospect* for Alleged Violation of Air Carrier Access Act, Facing Federal Investigation

SAN FRANCISCO – Airline service workers and disability rights groups are warning travelers of safety concerns at San Francisco International Airport (SFO), as charges are filed against the International Terminal’s contractor Prospect International Airport Services (Prospect) for alleged violation of the Air Carrier Access Act among other violations including non-compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

“I love helping people and I love my job, but Prospect forces us to do things that are really unsafe for the passengers that rely on us,” said Maria Luisa Sarte, a passenger service worker and member of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Airport Workers United. “I want Prospect to stop breaking the law and stop putting passengers at risk, that’s why my colleagues and I are filing this complaint today.”

The complaint filed on November 5th with the U.S. Department of Transportation alleges Prospect is putting passenger safety at risk by **failing to provide adequate training; failure to maintain safe equipment; and failure to provide adequate assistance to travelers with disabilities**. Many Prospect wheelchair pushers have been working since 2002 with no training on how to operate a wheelchair or how to assist passengers with paralysis, quadriplegia, or paraplegia. Workers have also complained about broken wheelchairs – such as broken brakes, seatbelts, or footrests. In addition, for many years Prospect, as its company-wide policy, required its workers to push two passengers in wheelchair simultaneously and continued to do so after SFO implemented a new rule on October 1st against such practice. Together, these practices by Prospect are a dangerous combination that could put passengers and workers in direct harm.

After being notified of the complaint, Prospect management began to fix broken wheelchairs and conducted one training for its workers – the first time in 5 years for many of its employees. But is it too little, too late?