

Deaths at airport, on board worry airlines

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Thursday, December 28, 2006 (Mumbai):

Six deaths at Mumbai's airport in the past two months is a shocking statistic that now has both state-run Air India and private airlines like Kingfisher and Indigo worried. They said that passengers should volunteer information on their health conditions to ensure an airline can care for them in case of an emergency.

However, ask them if it can be mandatory, the one constant answer is no. "No, they often bring their own medication and things that they need. But we cannot make it mandatory because they may not want to reveal that information and may not reveal the correct information. So it doesn't really help," said V Tulsidas, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India.

"We certainly, airlines cannot be held responsible. We are not in the business of running restaurants, hospitals. We run an airline," said Bruce Ashby, CEO, IndiGo Air.

Though the airlines are not ready to take responsibility of deaths on board the plane or at any airport. They are certainly designing strategies to make sure passengers do not face such situation in future. Emergency training Air India for one is planning on training its staff to deal with mid-air emergencies and is even installing dedicated ground to air communication equipment to ensure proper treatment.

"Our staff will be trained to take the blood pressure, ECG of a patient and then transmit that information to a doctor on the ground and then treat the person based on the feedback," added Tulsidas. Other airlines are also considering similar moves to ensure they can deal with medical emergencies on board their aircraft. Measures that could well make air travel in India safer.