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This Business of Etiquette

It's called...

J-e-t-i-q-u-e-t-t-e

by Diana Horner

Adjusting to the limitations of time is likely responsible for the "I've gotta be here; I've gotta be there; I've gotta be in New York tomorrow first thing in the morning!" syndrome. The result? More executives and people on-the-go turn to corporate jet services to get everything done on schedule. For this group, it is literally the way to go. They, together with their leisure-traveling counterparts, are known as "Corporate Jet-Setters" - a relatively new designation with its own rules of the road...or skies.

"I call it 'jet-i-quette', says Chad Verdaglio, CEO/Owner of Sawyer Aviation, a preeminent corporate jet service headquartered at Scottsdale Airport. "Most of our clients are successful achievers in their field of endeavor - be it business, entertainment, sports...whatever. Their behavior and treatment of the crew assigned them is totally one of respect and, in many cases, admiration ...that always makes for a pleasant trip for all."

But there are and have been exceptions, Verdaglio adds. For instance, eating and drinking in a private aircraft can be one area

where experienced flyers exhibit proper manners. "Yes, travel aboard private aircraft is more expensive than a 'Super Saver' fare on a discount airline. But that does not entitle one to damage or act inappropriately onboard a private aircraft. If one has barbecued ribs...then gets sauce all over the white leather...as happened on one of my flights...then they will certainly be breaking all rules of good manners and decency."

Verdaglio underscores the fact that people have never been so dissatisfied with travel on commercial airlines. "This has thrust many to discover the new world of private aircraft and private jets. But, as more and more people begin using this powerful and right-sized 'tool' called private-aircraft travel, people also have to learn how to properly use private aircraft. And travelers are learning the new set of customs, rules, and etiquette - jet-i-quette, if you will - that accompany travel on private jets."

You're going on a family vacation and you want to bring your beagle along? In most cases, you may bring your pets on board. "Careful though," warns Verdaglio. "Cleaning fees may apply for...ah...mishaps."

How much luggage am I allowed to bring?...is repeatedly asked by emerging jet-setters. When you fly privately, Verdaglio points out, coordination between you, your guests, and the flight department is important. 30 to 50 pounds of total luggage per passenger - packed in semi-soft suitcases is usually the maximum for anything but heavy-jet and some mid-size cabin aircraft. This includes purses, briefcases, backpacks and boxes.

What about tipping? With aviation professionals, tipping is not expected, according to Verdaglio. "Tipping does occur, however, when clients feel that they have been well taken care of and they sense a certain token of appreciation is in order. For ramp personnel, gratuities can range from five to 50 dollars per person...for pilots, from twenty to five hundred dollars...when the client feels that the trip has been managed with exacting precision."

Another important item: Verdaglio definitely seconds the admonition of etiquette-doyenne Letitia Baldrige (as stated in her book, *Complete Guide to Executive Manners*) that "...If you are someone's guest on a corporate jet, the most important thing to remember is not just to be on time, but to be even a bit early. If you are responsible for holding up the departure of a jet by as much as ten minutes, you can cause the plane to wait in line for another hour or two before a new clearance."

And as a guest, Baldrige highlights that you should wait on board until your host has done so, to take the assigned seat without attempting to change seats, to avoid making special requests regarding in-flight refreshment service, and to treat the crew with respect and offer to carry your own bags (rather than treat crewmembers as porters).

For me, a recurring corporate-jet client, *jet-i-quette* is basically just good common sense and sincere courtesy. ■

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