

Delta CEO Says “Ask First” When It Comes To Reclining Airplane Seat

Posted on February 15, 2020 by News Editor



Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian apparently errs on the side of caution.

Or, at the very least, he believes in etiquette and common sense when it comes to reclining seats on airplanes.

The great debate reared its ugly head again this week when a video went viral of an American Airlines passenger who claimed she was assaulted by a man sitting behind her when she reclined her seat. The man repeatedly punched the back of her seat in retaliation, and the Twitterverse seemed split over who was at fault.

Enter Bastian.

Appearing on CNBC’s “Squawk Box” Friday morning to tout Delta’s plans to invest \$1 billion to go carbon neutral, Bastian instead drew more response for his take on the reclining seat dilemma.

Give him credit – he initially, and smartly, tried to avoid the topic.

But when pressed, he said: “I think customers have the right to recline. We’ve been testing reduced recline ... But I think that the proper thing to do is if you’re going to recline into somebody, that you ask if it’s OK first.”

But he added, “I never say anything myself, though.”

Bastian said he tries to read the situation.

“If someone knows there’s a tall person behind them, and they want to recline their seat, I think the polite thing is to do is make certain it was OK,” he said. “I never recline, because I don’t think since I’m the CEO of the airline, I should be reclining my seat. And I never say anything if someone reclines into me.”

Last year, Delta retrofitted its Airbus A320 jets to reduce the recline of the coach seats from 4 inches to 2 inches and the recline of first-class seats from 5.5 inches to 3.5 inches. The move was made in an effort to protect customers’ personal space and to minimize “disruptions to multitasking in-flight,” an airline spokeswoman said at the time.

