

Gate Agent Hospitalized After Attack By Passenger Refusing to Wear Face Mask

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A California man was arrested for allegedly assaulting an Alaska Airlines gate agent after being told to wear a face mask at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Monday.

According to KIRO, 47-year-old Mark Allen Hicks was preparing to board his flight to Sitka, Alaska when he approached three agents at the N14 gate without a face covering. After being reminded that masks are required, Hicks returned wearing a mask but agents deemed him too intoxicated to fly.

“And then quite suddenly, the gentleman just decided to go through one of the people, a woman, and essentially walked right through her and over the top of her as she fell down onto the ground and tried to continue on through to the jetway,” airline spokesman Perry Cooper told the news outlet, referring to the surveillance video.

The longtime gate agent, Jill Simpson Lopotosky suffered a partially dislocated shoulder and hurt her back and was taken to a local hospital as a precaution. Meanwhile, Hicks was taken into custody and charged with fourth-degree assault. As of Wednesday, Lopotosky was recovering at home.

Alaska Airlines is one of several carriers that announced stricter face mask policies earlier this month. As of August 7, Alaska passengers age 2 and older are required to wear a cloth mask or an approved face covering. Travelers unwilling or unable to cover their mouth and nose will not be allowed to board.

The new requirements have led to several disturbing incidents involving passengers refusing to comply. A woman recently struck an American Airlines employee after being denied boarding for not wearing a mask while a brawl over wearing a face mask broke out on another American flight this summer.

