

Airline Skycaps - Baggage Fee

Airline Skycaps - Baggage Fee: There is currently no City fee on using the 'skycap service' to curb check bags at the airport.

Background

Checking and processing of passenger luggage is the responsibility of the airlines operating out of the airports. Departing passengers at Midway and O'Hare airports have the option of checking luggage curbside on the departure level.

Curbside bag check-in is a service provided by the airlines often at no additional fee but it is customary for a passenger to tip the skycaps, the airline employee who checks the bag and prints a boarding pass. During a 12 month period, approximately 2 million bags were checked curbside at Midway and O'Hare airports, combined.

Revenue Impact

Assuming no significant change in traveler behavior or airline bag check options, imposing a \$1 per bag fee would generate an estimated \$2M in revenue.

Legal Authority

The City's ability to charge such a fee would likely be restricted by the Federal Anti-Head Tax Act, which prohibits a state or local government from levying or collecting a tax on expenses related to an individual's air travel (49 U.S.C. §40116(b)). Only the federal government can levy and collect taxes on individuals and their air travel related expenses.

In addition, any fee imposed exclusively on airport users must be used exclusively to support the airports. As a result, revenue generated from a skycap baggage fee could not be used by the City for general operating expenses.