REPORTS OF 'UNRULY PASSENGERS' ON PLANES DROP; SOCIAL MEDIA MIGHT BE THE REASON

News / Airlines

The number of airline passengers who are reported for disrupting commercial flights has been dropping for several years. But the decline may have more to do with social media than any improvement in fliers' manners.

In 2015, the incidents of "unruly passengers" reported to the Federal Aviation Administration fell to 82, from 145 in 2014, a 43% drop.

Federal law says passengers cannot "assault, threaten, intimidate or interfere with a crew member in the performance of the crew member's duties aboard an aircraft being operated." Airlines have the discretion to report the unruly passenger to the FAA.

Industry experts say the decline doesn't mean that passengers are behaving better. Instead, they say, flight attendants are trying harder to avoid confrontations with fliers who are now quick to post their airline complaints on social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

"It's all about better customer service," said James Allen, a spokesman for the Assn. of Flight

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Attendants, which represents nearly 60,000 flight attendants at 19 airlines. “Just like any other business, we are trying to keep our customers happy.”

01 FEBRUARY 2016

SOURCE: LOS ANGELES TIMES
ARTICLE LINK:
https://ids.50skyshades.com/news/airlines/reports-of-unruly-passengers-on-planes-drop-social-media-might-be-the-reason

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