# Ryanair’s standing seats plan stalls amid safety and regulatory concerns



The vision for airline travel seems to be heading in a direction that could evoke memories of past tortures rather than the comfort typically associated with modern air travel. With the notorious budget airline Ryanair and its CEO Michael O'Leary at the helm, the concept of standing-up airline seats has resurfaced, pushing the boundaries of what passengers might expect from an aerial experience. The proposal is nothing short of a revolution—one that has drawn comparisons to historical methods of human suffering.

The original idea proposed by O'Leary back in 2010 was framed as a way to cut costs and increase passenger capacity. The core of this concept involves vertical seats, reminiscent of bicycle seats, which could theoretically allow for more bodies in the cabin. However, experts have uniformly condemned the proposal, citing significant safety and regulatory hurdles, with bodies like the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) firmly ruling out such configurations. EASA maintains that its current regulations require each passenger to have their own seat, a stipulation that would inherently conflict with any arrangement that permits standing passengers.

Despite ongoing scepticism, the allure of standing seats lingers, particularly when considering the financial incentives for passengers. A poll conducted by Ryanair revealed that a surprising 66% of respondents were amenable to standing during short-haul flights if it meant they could fly for free. Such statistics, however, do little to alleviate the concerns from regulatory agencies. The process for any potential approval for standing seats is rigid, with EASA indicating that it would take at least two years to even begin reconsidering the regulations that would allow such seats to be certified for use.

Further complicating matters, Ryanair’s spokesperson recently noted that there were no immediate plans to trial these vertical seats, effectively putting the idea on the back burner. The vast chasm between customer interest and regulatory reality highlights a profound dichotomy in modern air travel; while consumers may seek cheaper fares, safety and comfort remain paramount considerations enforced by aviation authorities.

In an era where the aviation industry strives to strike a balance between affordability and passenger experience, Ryanair's ongoing flirtation with the notion of standing seats serves as a microcosm of broader trends. The continued advocacy for enhanced capacity and reduced costs is juxtaposed against a backdrop of skepticism about the feasibility of such proposals. As O'Leary himself has often championed unconventional cost-saving tactics, this latest endeavour may be seen as both a business strategy and a reflection of the shifting dynamics in air travel.

Nevertheless, as amusing as the notion of standing airline seats may seem, it raises serious questions. How comfortable would anyone truly be, awkwardly perched in a cabin space, with the fear of turbulence adding an extra twist to the experience? The safety of passengers, already a hot topic in the aviation industry, is at risk of being overshadowed by perceived economic benefits.

For now, the idea of standing-up seats may simply represent another chapter in Ryanair's history of audacious proposals. Until safety standards evolve or regulatory bodies reconsider their stance on such configurations, passengers can rest easy—at least still sitting—knowing that they won't be subjected to a flight experience reminiscent of medieval torture devices anytime soon.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2058801/ryanair-michael-o-leary), [[2]](https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8779388.stm)
* Paragraph 2: [[3]](https://www.breakingtravelnews.com/news/article/regulators-rule-out-ryanairs-standing-room-only-flights/), [[4]](https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/standing-cabin-plane-study/index.html), [[6]](https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/holidays/article-1697420/New-publicity-stunt-Ryanairs-4-standing-seats.html)
* Paragraph 3: [[5]](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/airline-proposes-free-fares-for-standing-passengers/SS7B7HDAKJ2AFLYKKQL4Z3SFYU/), [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertical_seat)
* Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2058801/ryanair-michael-o-leary), [[6]](https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/holidays/article-1697420/New-publicity-stunt-Ryanairs-4-standing-seats.html)
* Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8779388.stm), [[4]](https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/standing-cabin-plane-study/index.html)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2058801/ryanair-michael-o-leary), [[2]](https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8779388.stm)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2058801/ryanair-michael-o-leary> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8779388.stm> - In 2010, Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary proposed the introduction of standing seats on flights, aiming to reduce costs and increase capacity. However, aviation experts and manufacturers like Boeing expressed skepticism, citing safety and regulatory challenges. The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the UK's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) also raised concerns about the feasibility of such a concept, suggesting it was unlikely to be certified in the near future. Despite the proposal, the idea did not materialize, and standing seats were not implemented.
3. <https://www.breakingtravelnews.com/news/article/regulators-rule-out-ryanairs-standing-room-only-flights/> - European safety regulators, including the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), ruled out changing regulations to allow Ryanair's proposed standing-room-only flights. EASA's regulations require a seat for each occupant, and altering these rules would have taken at least two years. Ryanair's plan to introduce vertical seats was in the early stages, with safety testing expected to begin in about 12 months, but the concept faced significant regulatory hurdles that prevented its implementation.
4. <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/standing-cabin-plane-study/index.html> - In 2014, a university study suggested that standing-room-only cabins could lead to increased passenger capacity and lower ticket prices. Ryanair had previously considered such a concept, with CEO Michael O'Leary proposing vertical seats akin to bar stools with seatbelts. However, the idea faced significant regulatory and safety challenges, and Ryanair's spokesperson stated that the airline had no plans to trial or introduce standing flights, indicating the concept was not pursued further.
5. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/airline-proposes-free-fares-for-standing-passengers/SS7B7HDAKJ2AFLYKKQL4Z3SFYU/> - Ryanair conducted a poll where 66% of respondents indicated they would be willing to stand on short-haul flights if it meant their fare was free. The airline proposed vertical seats, where passengers could be supported and restrained by seatbelts during takeoff and landing. However, Ryanair acknowledged that gaining approval for such seats could take time, with a pilot program not expected for another three years, and the concept faced significant regulatory challenges.
6. <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/holidays/article-1697420/New-publicity-stunt-Ryanairs-4-standing-seats.html> - Ryanair's proposal for £4 standing seats was met with skepticism, with some viewing it as a publicity stunt. The airline's CEO, Michael O'Leary, known for suggesting unconventional cost-saving measures, floated the idea of standing seats to increase capacity and reduce costs. However, the concept faced significant regulatory and safety challenges, and there was doubt about its feasibility and implementation.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertical_seat> - The vertical seat, also known as a standing seat, is an airline seat configuration that involves standing passengers being braced in position. Created by Airbus in 2003 and promoted by Ryanair and Spirit Airlines in 2010, the configuration has not been approved by regulatory agencies. While there is no bar to such a configuration in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, Transport Canada stated that vertical seats do not conform to Canadian seating requirements, highlighting the regulatory challenges faced by the concept.