



Travel Disruption

For many part of the thrill of a holiday is getting to the airport and boarding a flight to their chosen holiday destination. Sadly, for some this has turned into a nightmare as flights are delayed or cancelled.

This factsheet is intended to help when things go wrong and provide information on what to do next.

What are my rights if my flight is delayed?

If the flight was due to leave or arrive in the UK or EU and was with a UK airline you may be entitled to the following:

Flight Distance	Length Of Delay		
	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours
Less Than 1,500km	Right To Care £220		
Between 1,500km and 3,500km	Right To Care £350		
More Than 3,500km	Right To Care £520		

You can check the distance of your flight journey [here](#).

The 'Right to Care' means that the airline must provide you with a meal, refreshments, access to phonecalls and emails. Typically, the airline will provide food vouchers. If you are required to buy your own refreshments keep any receipts for a future claim. The airline must only cover 'reasonable' expenses which is unlikely to include alcoholic drinks or the most expensive food options.

If you are required to stay overnight at the airport due to the delay, the airline must provide you with accommodation and transport to and from the accommodation. If that does not happen, you can arrange this yourself making sure you retain all necessary receipts. Be mindful that the airline is only obliged to provide or cover the expense of what is reasonable. Luxury hotels or premium rooms are unlikely to be reimbursed.

Please note, to qualify for the financial compensation, it is the delay in arriving at your destination which is relevant, not the delay in departing.

What if the delay is more than five hours?

Where a flight is delayed for more than five hours you have the option not to board and obtain a full refund. If you do decide to take the flight, you may be entitled to claim compensation as above.

What can I do if my flight is cancelled?

If your flight is cancelled you have the right to a replacement flight to get you to your destination or a full refund (including a full refund for other flights in the same booking from the airline that you won't use for example, an onward or return flight). If you are part way through a journey and you don't want a replacement flight, the airline must provide you with a replacement flight back to the airport you originally departed from. These rights apply any time an airline cancels a flight irrespective of how close to departure that is.

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How much compensation can I claim for a cancelled flight?

The amount of compensation payable for cancelled flights will depend on the timing of the cancellation, your destination, and the arrival times of any rescheduled flights. To qualify your flight must have been cancelled 14 days or less before departure and be with a UK/EU airline flying into or out of a UK/EU airport.

To work out your compensation you can check your flight distance [here](#).

For any delays of a rescheduled flight you can use the above information to claim for meals and refreshments and the same criteria will apply.

Compensation for a cancellation and no replacement options, the level of compensation will be as follows:

Cancelled Less Than 7 Days Before Departure

Flight Distance	Departure And Arrival Times Of Rescheduled Flight	Compensation
Less Than 1,500km	Depart at least 1 hour earlier than booked flight and arrive up to 2 hours later than booked flight	£110
	Arrival at least 2 hours later than booked flight	£220
1,500km to 3,500km	Departure at least 1 hour earlier than booked flight and arrive up to 3 hours later than booked flight	£175
	Arrival at least 3 hours later than booked flight	£350
More than 3,500km	Depart at least 1 hour earlier than booked flight and arrive up to 4 hours later than booked flight	£260
	Arrival at least 4 hours later than booked flight	£520

Cancelled Between 7 And 14 Days Before Departure

Flight Distance	Departure And Arrival Times Of Rescheduled Flight	Compensation
Less Than 1,500km		£110
	Departure - From 2+ hours earlier than booked flight Arrival - 2+ hours later than booked flight	£220
	Arrival - 4+ hours later than booked flight	£220
1,500km to 3,500km	Departure - Up to 2 hours earlier than booked flight Arrival - Up to 3 hours later than booked flight	£175
	Departure - From 2+ hours earlier than booked flight Arrival - 3 to 4 hours later than booked flight	£350
	Arrival - 4+ hours later than booked flight	£350
More than 3,500km	Departure - up to 2 hours earlier than booked flight Arrival - up to 4 hours later than booked flight	£260
	Arrival - 4+ hours later than booked flight	£520

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How do I claim compensation?

To claim compensation, you must do so with the airline you were due to fly with, not the airline you booked with. Contact them directly rather than use a third- party claims company. Check with the airline or visit their website to find out the best way to submit a claim.

I have tried to make a claim, but I am told there are extraordinary circumstances, what does this mean?

The airline may be able to reject your claim for compensation where 'extraordinary circumstances' apply. This may cover situations of extreme weather conditions or security issues. It is unlikely to cover the recurring incidence of delay and cancellation caused by staffing levels.

If the airline does delay your claim for compensation, you should check whether they are a member of an alternative dispute resolution body (ADR) and escalate the complaint with the ADR body. Click here to find out which airlines are ADR scheme members and which ADR scheme they are a member of.

If the airline is not a member of an ADR scheme, you should contact the Civil Aviation Authority for assistance.

I have a package holiday and my flight has been cancelled; what can I do?

If your flight is cancelled and it is part of a package holiday, you are entitled to a suitable alternative flight and if that's not possible, your holiday company should provide a complete refund. To qualify your holiday must include at least two of the following:

- transport (such as a flight, coach or train but not transfers from an airport)
- accommodation (such as a hotel, villa or apartment)
- car rental
- a tourist service (such as a tour guide or a trip to a historical attraction) where this is a significant part of the holiday, either because of its value or because it is an essential part of the trip.

All claims must be made through the tour operator and if the matter is not resolved contact ABTA or AITO.

This can be a complex area as issues develop. The above does not include any rights you may have under any travel insurance policy or via section 75 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015. Please call the helpline for further assistance and guidance.

NOTE: Please be aware there are links contained within this factsheet that may take you to external sites, we are not responsible for their content. This is a general advice and information factsheet only and should not be treated as a definitive guide and does not constitute legal or professional advice. We are not a law firm and information is not intended to create a solicitor client relationship. Law Express does not accept any responsibility for any loss which may arise from relying on information contained in this factsheet. This is not a substitute for legal advice and specific and personal legal advice should be taken on any individual matter. If you need more details or information about the matters referred to in this factsheet please seek formal legal advice. This factsheet is correct at time of going to print. The law set out in this factsheet applies to England and Wales unless otherwise stated.