



Flight Disruption – Your Rights

If your flight is delayed or cancelled or if you are denied boarding because your airline has overbooked the flight, the airline is required by European law¹ to inform you of your rights. The Consumer Council has set out what your rights² and responsibilities are when your flight is disrupted:

Cancelled flights

If your flight is cancelled your airline must offer you a choice between:

- A full refund;
- An alternative flight at the earliest opportunity plus free meals, accommodation and free telephone calls or emails while you wait; or
- An alternative flight at a later date of your choice (subject to availability).

If your flight is disrupted by a factor beyond the control of the airline you are not entitled to compensation.

Delayed flights

If your flight is delayed by:

- Two hours or more - you are entitled to free meals and free telephone calls and/or emails.
- Five hours or more - you are entitled to a full refund if you decide not to travel.
- Overnight - you are entitled to free accommodation.

If your flight is cancelled or delayed and you choose a refund you are not entitled to any further assistance from your airline in terms of meals, accommodation or telephone calls.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 261/2004

² The rights outlined in this fact sheet will apply if you are travelling on a flight departing from any airport in the European Union (EU) or if you are departing from a non-EU airport but travelling with an airline licensed in the EU.





The Consumer Council

Disruption to connecting flights

1. If your flights are booked on the same ticket, the airline is responsible for rearranging your connections to ensure you reach your final destination once flights resume as normal.
2. If your flights are booked on separate tickets, the airline operating the second leg of your journey is not obliged to refund or reschedule your flight if you miss your connection. However, you should contact your airline for more information.
3. When booking separate tickets with different airlines, always buy travel insurance that will cover any costs that occur because of missing your flight connection.

Package Holidays and Charter Flights

If your flight is disrupted and it is part of a package holiday or you have booked with a charter airline, you should contact your travel agent or tour operator for more information.

Know your rights and responsibilities when you fly

It is important you buy travel insurance that covers your flight and/or holiday against disruption caused by severe weather. This will protect you from losing your money, as your airline has no obligation to refund passengers for losses brought about by severe weather disruption, for example, if your flight is cancelled or delayed because of severe weather, you may still have to pay for other services you have booked as part of your holiday e.g. hotel accommodation or car rental.

For more information on what a good insurance policy should cover, use the Consumer Council's Travel Insurance Checklist.

Don't leave home without Plane Facts

The Consumer Council has produced Plane Facts, a guide that explains your rights and responsibilities as an air passenger. We have also produced 'Access to Air Travel', a guide for passengers with reduced mobility which explains the assistance passengers are entitled to throughout the various stages of their journey. For your FREE copy of Plane Facts contact 0800 121 6022 or click [here](#).

If you have an unresolved air travel complaint contact the Consumer Council on 0800 121 6022 or e-mail complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk. We have the power to handle complaints on your behalf.

