

What to do if your airline won't help



Airlines know what they must provide when a flight is delayed or cancelled and generally do their best to help. Be patient as staff may be very busy, and give your airline a fair chance before making alternative arrangements.

If your airline is refusing to arrange an alternative flight or is refusing to look after you, you can make arrangements and claim the costs back later.

- Keep costs down as much as possible when buying food and drink, accommodation or alternative transport.
- Don't expect your airline to pay for five-star hotels, alcohol or expensive meals.
- Keep full receipts for everything. Ask your airline if it has guidance on reasonable spending.
- It will be easier to get your money back if you rebook travel with the same airline and travel in the same class.
- You will probably have to submit a formal claim to your airline. This may take some time.

AFTER THE DISRUPTION

Claiming your expenses



Find out about the claims procedure of your airline. Contact them directly or look at their website.

Claiming compensation



You may be entitled to a fixed sum in compensation for cancellations or long delays. This depends on how long you were delayed and what caused the delay or cancellation. Contact your airline to claim compensation.

To see if you can claim compensation, visit www.caa.co.uk/passengers/resolving-travel-problems/delays-and-cancellations/

What to do if you have a complaint



If you have a complaint about how your airline or tour operator handled the situation or are having trouble claiming expenses or compensation, it is important you pursue the issue with your airline first. If you cannot resolve the issue directly, our website explains what to do next. See below for details.

HOW WE CAN HELP

About the CAA



We oversee and regulate civil aviation in the UK. Part of our role is to help you resolve problems with your airline. If you are struggling to resolve a complaint with your airline, find out how to escalate the issue at www.caa.co.uk/passengers/resolving-travel-problems/delays-and-cancellations/making-a-claim/

Follow us on Twitter @UK_CAA for general advice and information about your consumer rights.

YOUR RIGHTS

WHEN THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH YOUR FLIGHT

This leaflet applies to:

- Any flight departing from an airport in the UK on any airline, or
- arriving at an airport in the UK on an EU or UK airline; or
- arriving at an airport in the EU on a UK airline.



KEY INFORMATION

The best place to find out when your flight is likely to depart is your airline or tour operator's website. You can also call your airline, although during severe disruption it may take time to get through.

Once your flight has been delayed for over five hours, and if you no longer want to travel, you can get a full refund of your ticket but your airline will no longer have to look after you. If you do still want to travel, your airline must get you to your destination on your original booking.

If your flight is cancelled, your airline must find you a new flight. Sometimes this might be with another airline. Be patient while staff work through bookings. Alternatively, you can get a full refund.

If the airport is near your home and you can't get a flight today, try and go home.

If you are stuck at an EU airport, or if you are stuck at an airport outside the EU but you are flying on an EU or UK airline, your airline must look after you - no matter what has caused the delay or cancellation.

If your airline tells you to book alternative flights or accommodation yourself, keep a note of who told you this and when.

You might be able to claim a refund of reasonable expenses or need to claim on your travel insurance - so keep receipts for anything you buy. You may be entitled to a fixed sum in compensation if the cause of the delay or cancellation was within the airline's control.

Do you still want to fly?



If you have been delayed for over five hours and no longer wish to travel then you can get a refund.

If you opt for a refund, your airline no longer has to provide you with food, drink or accommodation, and you won't be able to claim back the difference if you book a more expensive ticket home.

If you are a transfer passenger, your airline must also fly you back to your original departure point.

Continuing your journey



If you still want to fly and your flight is cancelled, your airline must get you to your destination and will do its best to book you on to an alternative flight in the same class of travel. This is called being re-routed. You will probably be re-routed on a flight operated by the same airline, but it could be a flight with another carrier or on a train or ferry.

You may need to contact your airline to arrange re-routing. You may have to be patient, but letting your airline arrange your new flight is usually the fastest way to get moving.

An airline may tell you to make new travel arrangements and claim costs back. If so, keep costs low and keep all receipts. Record the name of the person who gives you this advice and ask them to make a note on your booking.

If you are tempted to organise an alternative flight yourself, make every effort to speak to your airline first as this is usually the fastest way to get moving. Your airline is unlikely to refund the cost of an alternative flight if it arrives at a similar time to the new flight offered by the airline.

Package holidays



If your flight is part of a package holiday, your tour operator must rearrange your flight. If your holiday cannot be rearranged or is significantly changed, you can cancel and get a refund instead. If you cancel a flight that is part of a package holiday, you may lose the holiday too.

Your airline must look after you



If you have been delayed for several hours then your airline must look after you. It must provide:

- A reasonable amount of food and drink, often provided as vouchers.
- A means for you to communicate, often by refunding the cost of two phone calls.
- Accommodation, if delayed overnight, usually in a nearby hotel.
- Transport to/from that accommodation or to your home if you can return there.

The airline must provide you with this help until it is able to fly you to your destination. Discuss options with your airline if you can to reassure you that your expenses will be refunded.

If possible, it's best to go home and return to the airport when your flight has been rearranged.

When you should receive help



The length of your flight determines when your airline must start looking after you:

- Short-haul flights under 1,500km. You are entitled to assistance once the delay is over two hours.
- Medium-haul flights of 1,500 - 3,500km, and flights of longer than 1,500 km within the EU. You are entitled to assistance once the delay is over three hours.
- Long-haul flights over 3,500km. You are entitled to assistance once the delay is over four hours.

Vulnerable passengers



When providing help and assistance, airlines must prioritise helping passengers with a disability and those accompanying them, and unaccompanied children.

Being denied boarding



Passengers may be denied boarding or 'bumped' (asked or forced to give up their place) if a flight is overbooked. Your airline must offer an alternative flight as soon as possible, or at a later date that suits you.

If you want to fly as soon as possible, the airline must look after you while you wait. If you don't want a new flight, you are entitled to a refund of all parts of the ticket you haven't used. If you volunteer to be denied boarding, you must agree compensation with your airline. If you did not volunteer, you are entitled to compensation, as long as you checked in on time and the airline did not have another legitimate reason to not allow you on the flight.

View compensation levels at:

www.caa.co.uk/passengers/resolving-travel-problems/delays-and-cancellations/