Flight cancelled, delayed or denied boarding? Here's the compensation you can claim





If an airline refuses to let you board your flight, you need to figure out whether you are eligible to claim compensation.

According to reports by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), between January and April 2017, close to 5.12 lakh domestic passengers in India faced issues due to airline companies denying boarding, as well as flight cancellations and delays. Airline companies have paid their passengers compensations of over Rs 22 crore for various

inconveniences during the first four months of

Akanksha Anshu, Co-Founder and Managing Director of passenger's right protection and compensation management company

refundme.in says, "Airlines allow passengers to book their seats beyond availability to avoid operating flights with unoccupied seats. However, when you are barred from boarding a flight without prior notice, it leaves you stranded and causes a great deal of inconvenience.

this year.

Passengers are increasingly affected by overbookings, delays and cancellations Airlines are shelling out large amounts of compensation for these issues that leave passengers stranded and inconvenienced.

		Denied		
Particulars		Boarding	Cancellations	Delays
Jan-17	Passengers affected	2598	20010	239454
	Compensation paid (Rs in lakhs)	170.26	76.68	146.36
Feb-17	Passengers affected	2988	8761	104591
	Compensation paid (Rs in lakhs)	1391.86	60.98	77.88
Mar-17	Passengers affected Compensation	1313	12167	56087
	paid (Rs in lakhs)	53.1	47.15	61.22
Apr-17	Passengers affected	2702	9980	51314
	Compensation paid (Rs in lakhs)	99.58	26.19	65.5

Source: Traffic report, DGCA

With the monsoon all set to begin by July-September, cancellations and delays are expected to rise. Here's what you need to know as a passenger, in order to make the best of these situations.

Check your eligibility

If an airline refuses to let you board your flight, you need to figure out whether you are eligible to claim compensation. Anshu explains, "You can claim compensation from airlines for being denied boarding, if you are holding a confirmed ticket at the time of boarding and you are present at the time specified by the airline."

Ajay Sahai Jasra, Director, Corporate Communication, Indigo Airlines adds, "Passenger can't claim compensation for being denied boarding if they are not carrying valid travel documents."

What to do if you're denied boarding

Rishabh Beria, Managing Director at Janus Aviation says, "The airline is not liable to pay any compensation if they arrange for an alternate flight scheduled to depart within one hour of the originally scheduled departure time."

However, if the airline fails to do so, you can claim compensation. "For denying boarding, airlines have to provide monetary compensation to passengers in cash or through bank transfer, or if the passenger agrees, in the form of travel vouchers," says Anshu.

What to do if the flight is delayed or cancelled

The airline is liable to provide compensation or facilities if it expects a delay beyond the actual scheduled departure time or revised departure time.

Captain Archit Gupta, CEO of Atom Aviation Services says, "If a flight is delayed by less than 24 hours, the airline has to provide meals and refreshments to passengers. If the delay is exceeds 24 hours, hotel accommodation and transfers must be provided."

If a flight is cancelled, passengers should be informed at least two weeks before the scheduled date of departure and the choice of a refund or alternate flight should be offered to them. But if the airline operator fails to inform them, they have to be compensated in addition to receiving the refund of the air ticket price, in accordance with DGCA guidelines.

However, Gupta says, "No financial compensation will be paid to those who have not provided adequate contact information while booking the ticket."

Compensation for being denied boarding

Here's what you can expect if you are not allowed to board the flight

Particulars	Compensation
Alternate flight scheduled to depart within 24 hours of the booked scheduled departure	200% of basic fare+fuel surcharge (up to ₹10,000)
Alternate flight scheduled to depart after 24 hours of the booked scheduled departure	400% of basic fare+fuel surcharge (up to ₹20,000)
Passenger does not opt for alternate flight	Refund of full value of ticket and 400% of basic fare+fuel surcharge (up to ₹20,000)

Compensation for delay or cancellation

Here's what you can demand if your flight is delayed or cancelled.

Particulars	Compensation
Flight up to 1 hour (block time)	Refund of ticket fare + ₹5,000
Flight more than 1 hour up to 2 hours (block time)	Refund of ticket fare + ₹7,500
Flight more than 2 hours (block time)	Refund of ticket fare + ₹10,000

Note: Block time means aircraft travel time from the departure gate to arrival gate.

Daniel D'souza, Head of Sales, India and NRI Markets, SOTC Travel, adds, "If they need to travel urgently, and their flight is delayed or cancelled, passengers can also ask to be accommodated on a different airline's flight. The airline would then bear the additional cost."

However, airlines are not obligated to pay compensations if the delay or cancellation is caused by bad weather, political unrest, a natural disaster or labour disputes.

Know your rights

It's important to stay informed about the refund policies of your airline for delays, cancellations, being denied boarding, loss or damage, or delayed arrival of baggage. Also, find out about their grievance redressal procedure.

Beria says, "Passengers should use AirSewa, a grievance redressal system that was launched recently by the government. It can be used to report any grievances related to

the Civil Aviation entities in the country." Refund process

The refund process is fairly straightforward. The airline is mandated to follow the civil aviation requirements issued by the DGCA. The compensation has to be paid in cash, bank transfer or travel vouchers, according to the preference of the customer.

ET Wealth

DGCA

Now double your savings account interest without much risk & instant withdrawal, try ETMONEY Smart Deposit.

Flight Rights

Read more on