



## European Consumer Centre France

**Young consumers: what you should know if you travel by plane in and to France.**

### Travelling by plane

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- **New regulations from the European commission, and the Montreal Convention, have strengthened air passengers' rights.** Here you will find the main information that you need if you decide to travel by plane to France.

*Before departure*

*You realise you have to change or cancel your flight:*

- **Is there any reason why you will not be able to embark on the scheduled flight which you reserved, and for which you have already paid?** Inform the airline company or the travel agency as soon as possible. If you make your request sufficiently early, you may even be able to avoid cancellation costs.
- **If you only wish to postpone your journey and use your ticket later,** you may be able to do so as long as it is still valid; but you may have to pay an administration fee to change your booking.
- **If you definitely have to cancel your flight,** in order to be reimbursed you usually have to return the unused ticket at the latest 30 days after its expiry date. For special priced tickets, or flights subject to special conditions, the rules may be different. Ask your travel agency or the airline about this point.
- **If you travel with Air France you may return your ticket for a refund at the latest 14 months after the date of issue.** You will have to pay an administrative fee though. Please note that promotional tickets etc. may not be refundable if you didn't pay for specific insurance. Refer to the general terms and conditions, or contact Air France.
- **Important! If you had planned to travel on board a non regular flight (a "charter") and if you need to cancel your journey,** your ticket is not refundable and you will not be able to obtain any reimbursement - unless you signed a cancellation insurance, which covers you in certain cases (illness, notably).
- Nevertheless, **if you cancel your flight within a certain time in advance of your travel date** (this varies, depending on the travel agencies' conditions), it will sometimes be possible for you to obtain a partial refund. You should refer to, and compare, the general terms and conditions of different airlines.

*You wish to give your ticket to another person:*

- **The transfer of plane tickets is impossible** unless the airline company allows for it in its general terms and conditions.
- Furthermore, **you can be asked to pay additional costs for this change.**
- **If the ticket was reserved via a travel agency, a transfer may also be possible** - except if the agency excluded this possibility in its general terms and conditions, or if the date of departure is too close.

#### *At the time of departure*

- The airline company has an **obligation to comply with the published schedules**, unless they can prove a case of "force majeure". In certain circumstances their liability can be limited; e.g. if the customer or a third party is at fault.
- **The tickets must be reimbursed within 7 days.** The reimbursement can be made in cash, by credit transfer or cheque. A voucher refund can be made only with your written agreement.

#### *Damages*

- **In case of delay, if you suffer additional damages**, articles 19 and 22 of the Montreal Convention of June 28th 2004 allow **a right to compensation**. The compensation for damages suffered by passengers is though, limited to 4150 special drawing rights (SDR), about 4900 € (1SDR = 1,18 €).
- **In case of the loss or delay of luggage, you have to report it first to the baggage service at the airport and fill in a complaint form.** If the luggage is found, the company has an obligation to deliver it to the address mentioned on the complaint form and should do this without charging any fee. If because of the delay in delivery, you have extra expenses (you were obliged to buy clothes, basic necessities, etc. ...); the carrier would have to pay you compensation of up to a maximum of 1000 SDR. However, you have to be able to prove the damage. Therefore remember to keep receipts and invoices.
- **Your request for compensation** must be sent to the airline at the latest 21 days following the recovery of the luggage.
- **In the case of a strike**, responsibility is not always attributable to the airline company if the strike is caused by staff who are not directly paid by the airline; and, if the strike was unpredictable; and, if the company demonstrates that it took all the necessary steps to avoid the damage.
- **When the staff of an airline goes on strike**, the airline is directly responsible, and so you should be compensated.

#### *In the case of a delay:*

- if the departure is from within the European Union (EU) or
- if the departure is from a third country outside the EU to an airport within the EU, and the flight is made by a European company

◆ You have the **right to immediate assistance** on the part of the airline company, provided that delay is of:

- 2 hours or more for flights up to 1500 km
- 3 hours or more for the flights of more than 1500 km inside the EU, and those between 1500 km and 3500 km outside the EU
- 4 hours or more for all the flights of more than 3500 km outside the EU

◆ This assistance consists of **supplying food and drinks in a sufficient quantity**, taking into account the delay; as well as paying for the **means of communication so that you can inform your relatives or any other person of the delay** (telephone, e-mail, and fax). **If the delay is of one or several nights**, you must be offered the nights in a hotel and the transfer from the airport to the hotel.

◆ In any case, **when the delay is announced to be more than 5 hours**, the company has to offer you a refund of your plane ticket for the one or any parts of the journey which you can no longer use, and for the one or any parts of the journeys already made but which you could no longer use, based on the initial flight plan. If need be, the company has to offer you for free a return flight to your point of departure.

*In the case of a cancellation:*

**The airline company has to supply you with the same level of assistance that they have to supply in the case of a delay of more than 5 hours**, but they also have to give you the choice between a refund of your plane ticket within 7 days for the one part or several parts, of the journey that were not made; or, for the tickets which you could not use based on the initial plan of the journey. Alternatively; they should re-route you to your departure airport as soon as possible or re-route you towards your final destination in comparable conditions of transport, and as soon as possible, or at a later date - according to your convenience.

◆ Besides this, you have the **right to claim compensation** of:

- 250 € for all the flights of less than 1500 km,
- 400 € for flights between 1500 and 3500 km within the EU,
- 600 € for all other flights

◆ **If another flight is offered to you, and if the time of your arrival is not later than the time of arrival of the original reserved flight**, this compensation can be decreased to the level of 50 %.

◆ Please note! **You can not ask for this compensation if you were warned of the cancellation of the flight:**

- At least 2 weeks before date of the flight you booked; or,
- between 2 weeks, and less than 7 days before, if an offer of rerouting was made to you for the same date: but, with a departure schedule allowing you to leave as soon as possible, and in any case, between 2 hours before the original departure time; to arrive at your final destination at the latest 4 hours after the original arrival time; or,

- Within less than 7 days, if a re-routing was offered to you for the same date; but with a departure schedule allowing you to leave not more than 1 hour prior to the original departure time, and arriving at your final destination 2 hours at the latest, after the original arrival time

◆ **The airline company will not have to pay the compensation if the cancellation is due to a case of force majeure.**

*In the case of an "overbooking":*

◆ You reserved a plane ticket but when arriving at the check in desk, they told you there were no more seats available on the plane? You have the **right to receive the assistance, refund or re-routing, compensation (as listed above).**

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If you, as a foreign consumer, are feeling mistreated by a French professional, the European Consumer Centres (ECCs) will be pleased to help you to find an amicable settlement of the dispute. You can find further information and a complete list of all ECCs under: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/ecc\\_network/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/ecc_network/index_en.htm)

**ECC France** (French/English/German)  
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from France for only 9 Cents per minute

