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Currently aviation industry is full of vivacity and is brimming with stringent competitions. However, the biggest nightmare of travellers taking short haul flights or buying long haul airline tickets to India or other distant destinations generally remains flight cancellations, boarding denials and long delays. This makes it important for travellers to know about their passenger rights to stay away from getting stranded at the airport. Here's a rundown of what are the passenger rights in case of flight cancellations, long delays, or denied boarding issues:

## Denied boarding

As per the EU regulations, airlines need to request passengers to voluntarily give up their seat in exchange for cash or other related benefits. And the volunteers are liable to get the choice between a refund and re-routing. Passengers are also entitled to compensation between \$125 and \$600 (between £105 and £507) depending on the distance of the flight and the delays incurred before being re-routed. If a passenger chooses to be re-routed, the airline should also offer, if necessary, food, telephone calls, hotel accommodation and transportation.

## Flight Cancelled

The compensation offered is identical to that of denied boarding if the flight is cancelled unless airlines offer at least 14 days' notice of the cancellation or re-route the passengers close to the original time under similar conditions. Airlines should also help with phone calls, food, accommodation and transport between the hotel and the airport and offer the full reimbursement of the ticket within seven days.

It is imperative to know about the airlines' "get-out clause" here. As per this clause, if the cancellation is caused by extraordinary events for example terrorism, unfavourable weather or strikes, airlines may not pay compensations.

## Long delays

In most, but not all cases, passengers with air tickets to India, Australia, Thailand or any other location are entitled to get recompense for delayed and cancelled flights. There are three levels of compensations:

• For long delays (two hours or more, depending on the distance of the flight), airlines are liable to offer free meals and refreshments with two free telephone calls, telex or fax messages, or emails to the passenger.

• In case the time of departure is delayed to the next day, passengers are entitled to get free hotel accommodation and transport to the place of accommodation by the respective airlines unless the airline can prove that the delay was caused by extraordinary circumstances.

• If the delay is five hours or longer, passengers may choose to get reimbursement of the ticket along with, if applicable, a return flight to the original point of departure.

• Passengers with tickets obtained after online air tickets booking or directly through airline counters at the airport are liable to be paid in full through cash, cheque or bank transfer.

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