



Trains, Boats and Planes - What You Can Claim When Things Go Wrong

We've all been there. Waiting hours at the airport for your delayed flight to take off, your train is late or cancelled or the ferry is hit by a strike in the destination port. The experience of the contemporary traveller is neither relaxing nor gracious.

Sometimes we're just glad to get on a train home and forget about the hideous overcrowding because the last train was cancelled. If we are going on holiday, despite fractious tired children (and parents) you're happy to at last be on the way to your holiday or homeward bound. At least a ferry might try and land at another port, although of course this could add miles to you getting to your destination.

Some form of actual compensation, rather than the bland excuse of 'we're sorry for any inconvenience caused' will bring at least a grain of satisfaction to the hapless traveller. Catherine Sandbach, a Dispute Resolution specialist solicitor at leading and award winning regional law firm Pictons says "There are a number of regulations in place that give delayed passengers some form of financial compensation. For airlines, that means that if your flight arrives at your destination more than three hours late you are entitled to claim, unless it was due to dangerously bad weather, strike action or a protest similar the one that took place at City Airport recently. There are different complaint organisations for different carriers and the details should be on the company's website, all you need is your flight and booking confirmation details plus your boarding pass if you've kept it.

"Train travel is different, although if your last train home is cancelled you can claim for overnight accommodation. You can also claim for train delays although the time varies from different rail companies. Keep of all your receipts and you can find out how to claim at the station ticket office or on the rail company's website.

"Although ferry companies aren't bound by law to pay compensation for delays due to strikes or bad weather, most of them want your business and to keep the customer happy. There is regulation for any delay that would be classed as being in the company's control, such as staff shortages or a routine technical fault. However, it's unlikely in all of these cases that you'll get your money refunded in full."