

Your Legal Questions

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Q Two weeks ago I was due to fly to Paris but the snow meant that my flight was delayed until the next day. Am I able to claim compensation for the cost of my hotel?

A As your flight was within the European Union you have certain consumer rights which start to take effect when a flight is delayed for more than two hours. Some rights are not affected by the cause of the delay, so even though the snow was outside the airline's control you will still be able to claim. These rights are under the Regulation (EC) No 261/2004.

In your situation the airline had a requirement to look after you until the flight resumed. You would have been entitled to two phone calls or emails, refreshments, meals, overnight accommodation (as you were required to wait until the next day for your flight) and transport to and from your accommodation.

As you paid for your own accommodation this is something you can claim back. You will also be able to recover the cost of your reasonable meals and refreshments. Airlines are only required to pay what is deemed reasonable, so you may only be able to reclaim part of your costs if you chose a particularly expensive hotel or restaurant.

As the delay was caused by extreme weather outside the airline's control, it is not required to pay you any additional compensation.

To make a claim you will need to contact the airline's customer service department or package holiday organiser (if this is applicable). You must provide copies (keep the originals) of your ticket and receipts to prove the amount you wish to be compensated. Keep a copy of all correspondence you send. If you are unable to resolve the problem with the airline then you can complain to the Civil Aviation Authority. If you are still unhappy you may wish to consider making a claim in court.