



Consumer Affairs Tabloid



Keeping you in the “KNOW”

287- CITY

Army Community Service Financial Readiness Branch

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Excerpt from the Better Business Bureau

www.bbb.org/us/article/new-rules-go-into-effect-to-protect-air-travelers-18574

New Rules Go Into Effect to Protect Air Travelers

Following are the new regulations that go into effect April 29 by the Department of Transportation (DOT) to improve customer protections when flying in the US:

Customer Complaints - Airlines are now required to acknowledge customer complaints within 30 days and address the issue within 60 days.

Tardy Takeoffs - DOT is now allowed to penalize airlines for any domestic flight that is more than 30 minutes late on at least half its trips each month for four months in a row.

Tarmac Tribulations - Airlines are required to provide adequate food and potable drinking water for passengers within two hours of the aircraft being delayed—lavatories must also remain available and operable. If the plane is delayed more than three hours on the tarmac, it must return to the gate and deplane the passengers—barring any safety or airport disruption concerns.

Relaying Your Rights - Airlines must include on their Web site a customer service plan which, as recommended by DOT, would outline the company policies in regard to overbooking, baggage handling, handling customer complaints and many other customer service issues.

More information on these new rules can be found online at www.regulations.gov.

Excerpt from the Federal Trade Commission

www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt012.shtm



Travel Tips: How to Gear Up for a Great Trip

Whether you're off to see the sights, ski the slopes, or sunbathe on the sand, it pays to be an informed travel shopper. To help you avoid vacation frustration, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, offers these tips.

Verify and clarify - Call to verify your reservations and arrangements. Get the details behind vague promises that you'll be staying at a “five-star” resort or sailing on a “luxury” cruise ship. When you have the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the airlines, car rental companies, and hotels you'll be using, confirm all arrangements for yourself.

Put it on paper - Get the details of your vacation in writing. Get a copy of the company's cancellation and refund policies, and ask “What if...?” Consider whether some form of travel cancellation insurance may be appropriate.

Use a credit card to make your purchase - If you don't get what you paid for, you may be able to dispute the charges with your credit card company. However, don't give your account number to any business until you've verified that it is reputable.



Excerpt from the Department of Transportation
<http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/publications/flyrights.htm>

Fly- Rights: A Consumer Guide to Air Travel

DELAYED AND CANCELED FLIGHTS

Airlines don't guarantee their schedules, and you should realize this when planning your trip. There are many things that can-and often do-make it impossible for flights to arrive on time. Some of these problems, like bad weather, air traffic delays, and mechanical issues, are hard to predict and often beyond the airline's control.

If your flight is canceled, most airlines will rebook you on their first flight to your destination on which space is available, at no additional charge. If this involves a significant delay, find out if another carrier has space and ask the first airline if they will endorse your ticket to the other carrier. However, finding extra seats may be difficult, especially over holidays and other peak travel times.

Each airline has its own policies about what it will do for delayed passengers waiting at the airport; there are no federal requirements. If you are delayed, ask the airline staff if it will pay for meals or a phone call. Some airlines, often those charging very low fares, do not provide any amenities to stranded passengers. Others may not offer amenities if the delay is caused by bad weather or something else beyond the airline's control. Contrary to popular belief, airlines are not required to compensate passengers whose flights are delayed or canceled.

For more information on Air Fares, Reservations, Overbooking, Baggage, Travel Scams, etc., please visit the Department of Transportation at <http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/publications/flyrights.htm>.



From the files of Fort Hood Consumer Affairs Office

If you have a problem with the airlines please try to resolve it with the airline's customer service representative. If they are unable to resolve the problem your next step is to contact the airline's corporate office. You should write, email or fill out the form on the airline's website. Include copies of tickets and all other pertinent documentation.

Always remain professional, calm and stick to the facts. Be prepared to include flight information, dates, times and employee names.

If the airline is unable to resolve your problem you may file a complaint with DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division (ACPD). You can call, write or use their web-based complaint form at <http://airconsumer.dot.gov>.

If your complaint is about a safety concern contact the Federal Aviation Administration at 1-866-TELL-FAA (1-866-835-5322).

The Financial Readiness Branch offers a monthly Consumer Awareness class. The topics include pre-purchase advice, consumer law, avoiding scams, dispelling myths, identity theft and how to effectively resolve disputes with businesses. Call 553-4698 for dates, times and locations or to schedule a class for your unit or family readiness group.

Have questions? Contact: melody.squires@us.army.mil 287-CITY (2489)