

Saudi Arabia introduces airline compensation rules

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 21 November, 2023



Riyadh: From November 20, 2023 Saudi Arabia's air travellers are getting benefit from enhanced passenger rights as the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) began implementing new passenger protection guidelines.

The new rules provide substantial compensations and safeguards for passengers facing travel disruptions.

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Under the guidelines, airlines are now obligated to offer a compensation of SR6,568 for lost or damaged luggage, ensuring that passengers are not left at a disadvantage due to mishandling of their belongings.

The regulations come as part of a broader overhaul designed to protect the rights of passengers and elevate the quality of services provided by

air carriers.

Among the key changes, the guidelines also address scenarios such as delayed or cancelled flights, overbooking, and changes in ticket class, with some refunds up to to 150-200 per cent of the original ticket price.

Compensation for disabled passengers

In circumstances where a passenger with special needs is denied boarding or provided inadequate facilities, airlines are mandated to offer a compensation of SR500 or 200 per cent of the ticket fare, ensuring that their travel experience is as seamless as possible.

In addition to these, the new framework ensures that passengers are not left stranded during unscheduled stops, with compensations set at approximately SR500 for each occurrence. Travellers facing overbooking can expect refunds and compensations up to 200 per cent of the fare, while those experiencing a downgrade in their ticket class are now entitled to a 200 per cent compensation.

Furthermore, for the inconvenience of delayed baggage, the compensation has been significantly increased to SR740 for the first day of delay and SR300 for each subsequent day, up to five days. This is to incentivize airlines to handle baggage promptly and efficiently.

To address on-ground delays, passengers who experience over three hours of delay on the runway are now empowered to disembark and receive compensation in line with the newly established regulations.

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