

Rail regulator acts to make claiming for train delays easier

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Simpler ways for passengers to claim compensation for train delays have come a step closer. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has now finalised a new licence condition on train companies which they must comply with by next April.

The licence condition requires train companies to comply with a new Delay Compensation Code of Practice which provides passengers with clear information about their entitlements to compensation both before and during their journey.

Train companies will also have to improve the way they process claims for compensation as a result of train delays, and publish data on how well they are meeting these obligations.

From April 2022:

- A simplified claims process must be in place to make it easy for passengers to submit claims for delay compensation.
- Clear and accurate information must be available to passengers on their rights to claim delay compensation – during the booking stage, online and in stations.
- In the case of a delay, train companies must inform passengers via in-train or on-platform announcements and electronic notifications of their rights to claim.
- Train companies will have 20 working days to process claims and if rejected, give passengers clear justification and details about how to contest the decision.

This new code of practice will help close the ‘compensation gap’, between those who could claim compensation and those that actually do so.

In 2019-20, only 37% of passengers eligible for compensation actually made a claim, a figure unchanged in recent years. The low claim uptake is caused by many passengers not knowing when they are eligible to claim, or from confusion over train companies’ compensation schemes.

Stephanie Tobyn, deputy director for consumers at ORR said: “All train companies have now agreed to these new requirements, so the process for making a delay compensation claim will be a whole lot clearer for passengers.

“When things go wrong, passengers will now have a clear understanding of the eligibility criteria for making a claim, the levels of payment, methods to claim, what information they will need to provide, timescales, payment options and how to contest a rejection.”

Photo credit: Office of Rail and Road