3 LEVELS OF AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS

1st Level: Rights With Compensation
When an airline fails to perform as required or promised, it has to pay you something.

2nd Level: Rights Enforced By Gov’t
When an airline violates government rules, the government can impose a fine.

3rd Level: Rights In Airline Contracts
When an airline fails to perform as promised, its official contract with you requires that it either accommodate you or refund your money.

RIGHTS WITH COMPENSATION

BUMPING
- Cash penalty - If an airline bumps you from a flight, it owes you 200% of the one-way fare, with a $650 maximum, if it can’t get you to your destination within two hours; or 400%, with a maximum of $1300, if the delay is more than four hours. Those time limits double for international flights.
- Overbooking - This rule applies only when you’re bumped due to overbooking: it does not cover “denied boarding” for other reasons.
- Cash requirement - An airline may offer vouchers or some other non-monetary compensation, but you can demand a check or a credit to your credit card.

BAGGAGE
- If an airline loses or damages your checked baggage, it owes you up to $3200 (domestic) or $1600 (international).
- Loss compensation applies only if an airline can’t locate and deliver your baggage within 30 days, and it does not apply at all to delayed baggage.

RIGHTS ENFORCED BY GOVERNMENT
The Department of Transportation enforces many regulations that apply to airlines. Beyond safety and corporate behavior, four are specific to passenger rights:

1. To deplane if your flight is delayed on the tarmac for more than three hours, with a few minor exceptions, and the right to water and a working toilet during a long tarmac delay.
2. To see honest, airfare advertising and online postings on airline and third-party websites.
3. When you reserve and buy a ticket, if the flight is more than a week in the future, you can cancel and get a full refund without penalty if you can find a better deal within 24 hours of your first purchase.
4. To full and accessible disclosure of the terms and conditions of each airline’s contract of carriage.

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