

## Explorers – Ash Cloud Policy

Explorers will do everything reasonably possible to minimise the inconvenience and disruption caused by volcanic ash and we are committed to offering the best advice and support we can provide for our customers.

We do recognise that many of you will have some concerns about what might happen in future, whether you've already got a booking to travel with us, or whether you're still at the stage of planning. **If you are have yet to book, please be aware that the best protection is provided if you choose a flight inclusive trip with us as we are then responsible for delivering all elements of your trip.**

### Fight Inclusive Customers – outbound pre-departure

If we know that you are likely to be affected by closure of airspace in UK or connecting flight areas, we will notify you as soon as possible prior to departure. Unless we advise otherwise you should assume that your trip will operate as planned. While flights are still showing as operational we advise you to travel to the airport for departure. If you do otherwise you may be liable to pay cancellation charges.

Where we are notified of a flight cancellation we are normally able to re-book you on the next available operational flight to enable the tour still to take place.

If we do have to cancel your trip in advance due to closure of airspace, we will offer you a full refund of the money you have paid including the deposit, or the option of an alternative trip of equal value (or a refund in price difference for a cheaper trip). Sometimes we can offer you the same trip at a later date or an alternative trip around the same date.

Where there are delays and cancellations on the outbound flight the airline has a duty to provide passenger care and assistance. This applies to **all** airline flights departing from European airports, both EU and non EU carriers. By law, they are responsible for providing meals and refreshments in a reasonable relation to waiting time and hotel accommodation where a stay of one or more nights becomes necessary. You can find out more about passenger rights in relation to airlines from [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk). If you experience problems in exercising these rights you should contact us for help.

Where a full group is delayed to the extent that it is no longer viable for us to operate the tour we will cancel it and provide you with a refund, or the option to transfer to another trip at a later date. This circumstance is rare, however, as we are normally able to change the itinerary to accommodate a delayed start. Where we operate the trip with a delayed start, customers may be entitled to any recoverable costs we can obtain from providers for any lost elements of the itinerary, which we would endeavour to recover, but cannot guarantee.

Where a small number of the group are delayed we will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the tour will still run as scheduled with the remainder of the group. Where possible we will arrange for you to join after a delayed start. In this situation you may be entitled to any recoverable costs we can obtain from providers for lost elements of the itinerary (which we would endeavour to recover, but cannot be guaranteed). However if there are additional in country costs associated with joining your tour which are not recoverable through your insurance policy, we will give you the option to transfer your trip to a later date or cancel with a refund of monies paid.

Our policy applies where all flights, including regional flights connecting with an international flight have been booked through Explorers. Where you have booked your regional flights independently we cannot be responsible and cannot provide a refund in the event of your regional flight being cancelled.

## **Flight inclusive Customers – inbound**

In the event that you experience delays and cancellations on your return journey home to the UK we will work through our local agents and airline representatives to secure you on the earliest possible alternative departure or provide assistance to secure alternative travel arrangements.

All EU carriers have a duty of care to passengers (whether flying within the EU or returning from outside the EU back to Europe). By law, where there are delays, they are responsible for providing meals and refreshments in a reasonable relation to waiting time and hotel accommodation where a stay of one or more nights becomes necessary.

However, in the last period of ash some passengers on non EU airlines were not provided with welfare assistance by their airline. Our policy in these instances, is to make arrangements for accommodation whilst delayed. We will normally provide accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis at a location we consider convenient to facilitate repatriation, plus transfers between airport and hotel, and we will cover these expenses.

In the last round of volcanic ash, some customers with connecting flights were also disrupted whilst in transit. Once customers have boarded flights, the airline has a duty to look after passengers and to provide accommodation if required. However, should this not happen, we will make sure the same policy as above applies, in terms of paying for accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis.

Based on our previous experience we advise that you do not accept offers from airlines to take flights to travel hubs in Europe without confirmed and airline guaranteed onward flights into the UK, unless you are willing to take on yourself any additional expense and arrangements for your onward journey home.

Please also be aware that if you do decide to make your own independent arrangements by any other route or means other than the arrangements we provide, this will be at your own expense and risk.

In a situation where you have not used part of a return airfare, it may be possible to claim a refund for the unused portion from the airline (providing the ticket has been cancelled with the airline before the date booked for travel). However, if we have incurred additional costs in providing you with alternative transport back to the UK, this refund will not be passed on to you as it will be used to offset our additional costs.

## **Land only Customers – booked on a tour with us but not our flights**

In this case the level of support we provide will commence from the point you join the tour though we will obviously provide whatever advice or information we can that will help at all times.

Land only passengers should keep in close contact with their airlines to ensure they have the latest information as it is your responsibility to ensure you arrive at the joining point on time. Unless otherwise notified, land only passengers should always assume that the tour will operate as planned.

Unless the entire tour is cancelled Land only passengers will not be entitled to any refund of money paid in the event of them being delayed at the start of the tour.

Land only passengers with their own independent flight arrangements have the same passenger right with airlines under EU law and we advise you to deal directly with the airline concerned.

Land only passengers who are delayed from returning home to the UK will be offered the same advice and assistance as our flight inclusive passengers, via our local providers, but will be liable

for their own accommodation and meal expenses and for re-booking their own return travel arrangements.

Land only customers may also find that their insurance provides additional protection in the event of delays and cancellation and we advise you check your policy.

### **A word about Travel Insurance**

We advise you check the cover afforded by your travel insurance policy as terms vary widely.

At present there is generally no insurance available that provides specific cover for cancellations as a result of volcanic ash.

However, the policy available when you booking through Explores provides cover relating to Travel Delay, failure of transport connections in the UK and failure of inter-continental Flight Connections in Europe.

The main Travel Delay section provides £25 compensation for the first complete 12 hour delay. and £12.50 for each subsequent 12 hour period of delay up to £100 per person, subject to proof of delay being provided.

The Delayed Tour Expenses section provides up to £150 per person for additional transport charges incurred in order to join a tour as a result of a flight delay of at least 12 hours.