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Championing the rights of air travellers

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- [Letters](http://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/letters)
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IMAGINE you are at the airport to catch a flight. You arrive early for check in and to clear security. To your dismay, you find that the flight has been delayed. You did not receive any notification of the delay and the rest of your journey is going to be disrupted since you couldn't make alternative arrangements. Furthermore, the airline you are travelling with cannot provide any satisfactory reason for the delay.

This may well have happened to you as this is among the numerous complaints received by the National Consumer Complaints Centre (NCCC) on airline services. Other complaints are lost baggage, hidden charges, poor customer service and difficulty claiming refunds. In 2015 alone, NCCC received 2,113 complaints on airline services.

One of the most upsetting complaints raised by many is lost baggage, which they describe as a violation to their personal property. Customers whose checked-in luggage is lost or damaged have the legal right to claim compensation from the airline. However, most of those who have been through the experience feel the compensation awarded is not sufficient compared to the loss they suffered.

Many customers are also not happy with the additional charges imposed by some airlines that are not made clear during the booking process. How clearly this information is presented/ made available varies between airlines, and there is a growing number of customers who had to pay more than what was initially advertised/ offered by the airline concerned.

NCCC would like to advise consumers to lodge complaints with the airline concerned first. If the airline or aviation service provider does not resolve your complaint within 30 days after you sent it, you may submit a complaint to the Malaysian Aviation Commission (Mavcom) or the NCCC. The Malaysian Aviation Consumer Protection Code 2016 through Mavcom protects air travellers and defends the rights of consumers who have problems with their flight.

For example, if the flight is delayed by more than two

hours, consumers are entitled to meals, telephone and Internet access (where applicable). If the flight is delayed by five hours or more, consumers are entitled to claim the same benefits as in the two-hour delay period plus hotel accommodation (including transport to and from the hotel). Consumers can find more information at www.mavcom.my.

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