

# Southeastern

## Complaints Handling Procedure (September 2010)

your questions answered



southeastern.

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## Introduction

- Rail passenger claim or an application for a refund may be submitted by you to us if you are dissatisfied with our service or if you have suffered damage as a result of our service.
- London & South Eastern Railway Limited (trading as Southeastern) is the company providing rail services in parts of South East England. This is our policy on handling complaints. It tells you:
  - How to contact us when you wish to make a complaint
  - How your complaint will be treated
  - How long we will take to respond to your complaint
  - When we will consider paying you compensation
  - What action you can take if you feel we have not treated your complaint fairly
  - When we will not respond to your complaint

This complaints handling procedure has been written in accordance with the Strategic Rail Authority Guidelines published in 2005.

## I want to make a complaint. What do I do now?

You and your feedback are very important to us. Your feedback will help us to make changes that can develop and grow our business. When you wish to make a complaint, it is very important that you feel you can do so safely and be responded to politely, with a promise of redress or action when this is appropriate. Where we have got it wrong, we will accept responsibility and say we are sorry.

You may make your complaint in different ways.

### In person

You can talk to a member of staff. You can also talk to the Duty Manager or Station Manager. You may have to make an appointment to do this as they are in charge of more than one station.

### In writing

You may make your complaint in several ways.

- You can fill out a 'comments' form, available at every staffed station on request and either hand it in to the station, or send it directly to our Customer Services department
- You can write us a letter
- You can send us a fax
- You can complete a feedback form on our website

### By telephone

You can speak to a member of the Customer Services team 24 hours a day, every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day if no train services are operating

### By textphone

You can contact us using textphone 24 hours a day, every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day if no train services are operating. The textphone is on a special number

## Where can I find the addresses and telephone numbers?

We will tell you how to contact us:

- In all our major publications, such as our pocket timetables and our Passenger Charter
- On our website
- On posters displayed at every station where Southeastern operates
- On notices displayed on our trains
- On request from a member of staff

If we share a station or train with another Train Company we will:

- Display the other Train Company's details on the shared train, if they ask us to do so
- Give information verbally about how to contact the other Train Company(ies)
- Display on our station information posters details of how to contact the other Train Company(ies)

We will also

Make sure our on train staff carry contact details with them at all times.

Our address is

Southeastern Customer Services  
PO Box 10422  
Unit 16 Coalfield Way  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch  
LE65 9EL

0345 322 7021

Our website address is

[www.southeasternrailway.co.uk](http://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk)

## **What if my complaint is about someone else?**

All train companies follow the same principles when dealing with complaints referring to more than one company. To save you any trouble, we will, as per Annex B of the Strategic Rail Authority Guidance on Complaints Handling Procedures, work together with the other companies to provide you with one response and will tell you who is leading that response.

If the complaint refers in part to another transport provider (for instance a bus operator), we will explain this in our reply and give you the correct address to complain to. If you ask us to do so, we will forward your complaint to them.

If the complaint refers to someone else, we will forward the complaint to them, and tell them that we have done so.

## **Will you give my details to other people?**

In processing and using personal data we will have full regard to our duties under the Data Protection Act. We won't pass on your personal information to another organisation other than those where it's necessary for us to carry out our obligations such as:

- The Department for Transport
- Other Train Operating Companies
- Other Transport Providers when your complaint relates to their services
- Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch
- Any other such body carrying out their statutory functions

## When do I get compensation?

We know that in many cases, an apology is enough. However, sometimes we will also offer compensation or a goodwill gesture, so that you will feel satisfied and wish to travel again with us. This is usually given as National Rail Travel Vouchers, or if appropriate a cheque will be sent. Compensation is given under arrangements described in the National Rail Conditions of Carriage and the Southeastern Passenger Charter.

## If I am still not satisfied, what else can I do?

We will aim to address all the points you raise in your complaint to us. But if you are dissatisfied with our reply we will review your complaint and respond to you again. If you are still unhappy we will provide you with the details of Passenger Focus or London TravelWatch. You can continue to correspond with us, or write to them about your complaint, and if appropriate, they will write to us on your behalf.

The address for Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch are available on request from Southeastern ticket offices and our Customer Services department. They are on posters at every station, in our Passenger Charter and on our website.

## **When won't you respond to my complaint?**

Complaints handling policy

### **By telephone**

Our Customer Services staff are trained to remain polite at all times. If you use abusive language or tone, they may put the receiver down after telling you this is what they will do.

### **In person**

If you use abusive language or behaviour to a member of our staff, they may walk away, or seek assistance from another staff member. In extreme circumstances, the police may be called. It is unlikely in these circumstances that your complaint will be taken seriously.

### **By letter, fax or website**

If a complaint contains abusive language or is aggressive in tone, we will reply, but will advise you in our response that this is unacceptable.

We will also reserve the right to terminate correspondence if we consider that it is 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' as defined below,

Frivolous – paltry, trifling; lacking seriousness, silly, not serious or sensible in content

Vexatious – Annoying. Not having sufficient grounds for action and seeking only to annoy.

Under these circumstances, we will only terminate correspondence about a specific complaint where it is clear that despite our best efforts, we are unlikely to satisfy you.

The decision to terminate correspondence will only be made by a senior manager after making sure that the matter has previously been referred to Passenger Focus or London TravelWatch.

We will always tell you when we are about to terminate correspondence, and the reason why we are taking this action.

The procedure we apply is described in Annex A of the Strategic Rail Authority's Guidance on Complaints Handling Procedures.

## How can I make a claim against you?

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If you have had an accident, or require compensation for damages, you must write to our Customer Services department giving as much detail as possible of your claim. If you wish to hand in your letter at a ticket office you can do so, and our staff will forward this on.

All claims received by Customer Services are dealt with immediately and an acknowledgement will be sent to you so you know we have received it. If the claim is for an accident, it may be forwarded to a separate organisation who will act on our behalf and write directly to you. If your claim has a safety implication the details will be passed to the appropriate department to investigate and take action if necessary.

As with all other correspondence, we will keep a record of your letter, and the action we have taken with it.

## **Do you publish information about complaints?**

This procedure, and the commitments made in it, are regularly monitored and audited. We use all the information about complaints to help us make decisions about how we should make changes to our services and improvements to our stations and trains.

We produce internal reports every four weeks which help our Directors and other managers to better understand the opinions and concerns of our passengers. Separate reports, containing the same information, are given every four weeks to the Department for Transport, Passenger Focus, and London TravelWatch. These reports also confirm that we are maintaining the promises made in our Customer's Charter.

In addition to reports, a random selection of letters is audited by senior management every four weeks.

All of our auditing and monitoring procedures are regularly reviewed. This procedure will be reviewed at least once a year or more frequently if changes are needed and will continue to be consulted with Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and the Department for Transport.

## Sources

Strategic Rail Authority (now Department for Transport) – Guidance on Complaints Handling Procedures (February 2005)  
Services First – How to deal with complaints

END