

Isle of Man Office of Fair Trading

Travel Insurance Guidance Sheet

Europe and Worldwide

If you intend to travel outside of the Isle of Man you should think very carefully about the need to obtain travel insurance. If your trip is to Europe or further afield travel insurance is essential. There is a wide range of travel insurance cover available. You can choose between single trip, annual/multi trip and long stay policies. When developing policies insurance companies calculate the chances of someone making a claim on their policy – this is known as “risk”. The “risk” calculation allows companies to calculate how much you have to pay for insurance cover. If you intend to travel to far flung countries, take part in higher risk activities such as skiing, are an older person or have a pre-existing medical condition you may find that your insurance cover is more expensive or may even be restricted.

It is most important that you discuss with your insurance company the extent of the cover you need. It is wise to remember that we live on an Island and generally have an additional journey to make compared to UK residents which gives an extra opportunity for things to go wrong. Be specific - some policies may not cover travel between the Island and the UK and return when you really require cover to and from your front door; others may demand that you spend a number of nights in a hotel as part of your trip when your intention is to stay with relatives - make sure you know exactly what you need before you approach an insurance company and then make it clear to the company what your needs are. Always be honest with your insurance company – not doing so can lead to any claim you make being refused.

What cover you require will of course depend on your circumstances but there are some basic elements which you should include.

What should my travel insurance policy cover

Your travel insurance should cover the following:-

- Medical expenses and repatriation (returning you home) (also see below) for an injury or sudden illness including;-
 - cost of relatives flying out (and back)
 - accommodation for relatives
 - bringing you back to your home
 - treatment in a third country – in an emergency you may be taken across a border to be treated.
- 24 hour emergency service and assistance
- Personal liability cover in case you're sued for causing injury or damaging property
- Lost and stolen possessions cover (check the amount covered to ensure it is sufficient to cover the items you are taking with you)
- Missed departures/connections of air/sea/rail or land transport (do not confuse this with cover for travel delay which is a separate issue). This is an important item for Island residents. You should be aware that insurance companies may include in policies the need for you to allow a reasonable connection time between the various legs of your journey
- Cancellation and curtailment (cutting short your trip) cover. Remember that you may have to pay more for short notice replacement travel so take this into account when arranging the level of cover
- Financial protection if your airline goes bankrupt before or during your trip. (Please note that if you book directly with the airline your flight costs more than £100 and you pay either all or part of the cost with your credit card you may be able to claim back the cost from your card company if the airline goes bankrupt.)
- Extra cover for activities that are commonly excluded from standard policies, such as jet skiing

The policy should cover the whole time that you are away.

A good insurance policy will cover you for cancelling or cutting a trip short. Check carefully to see exactly whether you are covered for:

- accident
- illness
- pregnancy (unknown when you buy the policy)
- jury service or witness summons
- home emergency: fire, storm or flood, burglary
- redundancy
- strikes
- bad weather – affects the departure of flights and ships

Ensure your policy:

- will refund the full cost of your holiday
- pays out if you need to cancel or cut short a trip because you fall ill for example
- covers pre-paid expenses such as excursions

You may also wish your policy to have:

- personal accident cover for permanent disability or death
- legal expenses cover
- travel delay cover – check this carefully as your insurer may only pay a claim if you are delayed for a significant period of time

Medical expenses and repatriation

If you don't have medical expenses cover and become ill or require hospitalisation following an accident on holiday, you may have to pay thousands of pounds in medical costs. In addition repatriation (returning you home) can be very costly and should be included in any insurance cover you choose. Island residents should be very careful though that the repatriation element of the policy covers returning you to the Island not just to the UK.

Many people who have travelled abroad will be familiar with taking out travel insurance which includes medical cover. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (www.fco.gov.uk) provides extensive and valuable advice on the medical expenses and repatriation cover required for travelling to Europe and worldwide including the minimum levels of medical cover. You should check the information on this website if you are considering travelling to Europe or worldwide.

Travel to/from UK only

The recent debate over the Reciprocal Health Agreement between the **United Kingdom** and the Isle of Man has highlighted that under the Agreement travellers to and from the UK have never had their repatriation costs paid. At the present time it does not seem possible to obtain repatriation cover on its own. Travellers are urged to consider taking out travel insurance for this risk as the potential cost of repatriation can be well in excess of £20,000.

This information has been compiled from a range of sources by the:

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