

The Travel Traffic Light System Explained

On 17 May, the Government introduced a 'traffic light system' to signal a return to international travel during the coronavirus pandemic.

The system is based on the level of risk that travel to certain countries might present to catching and potentially spreading the virus once a traveller returns to their home country. The traffic light system is constantly being updated with countries being added and removed depending on their level of risk.

Here, we lay out what the traffic light system is, what it could mean for your holiday and your rights if your travel plans are affected.

What is the traffic light system?

The traffic light system outlines what people must do when they arrive in the UK from different countries.

The Government has categorised countries into **green, amber and red lists** which have different requirements for testing and quarantine.

If travelling to countries on the **red list** you must **quarantine** in a listed hotel for 10 full days upon arrival. You must also take a coronavirus test on day 2 and 8 of quarantine.

For **amber list** countries, you must quarantine at home for 10 days and also book and pay for day 2 and 8 covid-19 travel tests.

If you arrive in the UK after visiting a country on the **green list** you must take a covid-19 test before arrival, book and pay for a day 2 covid-19 test and also fill out a passenger locator form.

It's not illegal to travel to these countries but it might invalidate your travel insurance.

Make sure you check **foreign office guidance** before you travel.

For up to date advice on where and how to travel, you can read our constantly evolving **coronavirus travel advice**.

Will I get a refund because my holiday destination is added to the amber or red traffic light list?

If you book a holiday to an amber or red list country or the government moves your holiday into these lists once you have booked or departed, the cost of cancellation or additional quarantine could fall to you.



You may have to pay a cancellation charge or a rebooking fee to postpone the holiday to another date unless holiday providers have specific terms and conditions that allow free changes or a refund.

If you insist on travelling to these countries be prepared to factor in these extra costs.

When can I get a refund?

To get a refund you would need to look at the conditions in the country you have booked to travel to and whether you have booked a package holiday or flight only.

If you have booked a package holiday and your tour operator cancels your holiday you will get a full refund.

You can only cancel a holiday for a full refund if there are unavoidable or exceptional circumstances at your destination as outlined by the the **Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018**.

This would have to be based on the travel services you receive or issues with the location rather than having to take tests to travel or return.

If your tour operator changes your travel services significantly from your original holiday booking you may be able to obtain a full refund. However, this can be tricky if the package services will be the same for the holiday and it is the government who is imposing any quarantine or testing on return.



Where the foreign office recommends no travel or essential travel only to the destination, the terms of your contract may allow a refund. If your holiday provider is an ABTA member it should follow [**ABTA recommendations**](#) on package holiday refunds where the foreign office advises against all but essential travel.

For current information on [**ABTA recommendations**](#) during the coronavirus pandemic, follow the link.

Flight only trips

Your rights are more limited where you book a flight only or separate services.

Unless you have booked a flexible ticket you would need the airline to cancel the flight before you could get your choice of refund or rebooking.

As always, you can contact the Which? Legal lawyers to get information on your rights if you intend to travel during the coronavirus pandemic.