

GETTING HELP

File This One Under "Nightmare 101"

It seems that a New Jersey firm called Executive Communications Group periodically confers its Frankenstein Travel Award for the most outstandingly monster-of-a-trip.

The latest honoree a few years ago was is a New York businessman who, on a scheduled four-day business trip to Manila, The Philippines, survived four earthquakes, 3 foot "snow drifts" of volcanic ash, endless lines at the American Embassy and several cancelled and re-scheduled flights. When the 400 year dormant volcano "Mount Pinatubo" erupted it closed the airports, churned the seas into typhoon-like masses and piled drifts of volcanic ash everywhere.

After a two-week wait (with four earthquakes in the interim), the traveler finally secured a seat on the first departing flight. It was scheduled to leave at midnight, was rescheduled for 2 AM, and again for 4, 6 and then 10 AM because the 1,000 locals who had been hired to sweep away the fallen ash from the tarmac couldn't complete the job on time.

The traveler finally boarded a 36 hour flight from Manila to Hawaii to Las Angeles to Minneapolis to Chicago to New York's La Guardia airport, where he literally kissed the ground upon arrival.

Talk about a thrill in Manila!

From time to time things happen to interrupt our perfect vacation. Sometimes it's minor (*services you've paid for are not provided; "they said it was an ocean-view room", etc.*) and sometimes it's major (*an aunt back home is seriously ill; "this room is totally uninhabitable", etc.*)

We know it happens. So, we've provided this guide on how to resolve a problem when traveling.

First, to avoid a lost vacation due to unforeseen trip cancellation, interruption, or expensive monetary losses to return home early due to a sudden illness or accident, we strongly suggest Travel Insurance! Also note, most Health Insurance policies do not cover you outside the United States - check with your policy holder.

We offer Travel Insurance with Travelex Insurance Company. Please see our web site or contact us for more information.

Second, when traveling outside the United States remember that the US Constitution doesn't follow you outside the US - and that neither your Travel Agent nor the US Embassy can circumvent foreign government laws to get you out of trouble or jail - so respect the laws of your host country!

Third, if you do have a problem and need our help...

[1] If you have a minor problem and can wait until your return home... please contact your Travel Consultant upon your return by phone and explain the problem. They will ask you to follow up your problem in writing to us so we can forward a copy to the travel supplier's main office.

[2] If you have any problems, and are traveling with a Tour Operator who has a Local Office or Staff... contact them first. Then contact your Travel Consultant as stated above.

[3] If your problem can't wait and you need to contact us... our office hours are **9 AM - 5 PM, EST, Monday-Friday** with limited hours (*or even closed*) around major holidays. During business hours, and from within the US please call us at **440-248-4949 or 800-391-1167** (*Please Note: We do not accept collect calls.*)

[4] For emergencies and serious matters after business hours and weekends, call our office **440-249-4949** and leave a message as these calls are picked up periodically. (If the number is your hotel, please **Include Your Room Number!** Also note that some pay phones will not allow incoming calls.)

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