

Brexit

Important information to share with your customers

...Updated: 4 March 2019.....

Many people are already booking their travel plans for 2019, and have questions about what might happen after 29 March 2019 when the UK leaves the European Union (EU). While the political situation remains uncertain, ABTA has identified actions travellers may wish to take in advance to help avoid unnecessary future disruption.

The information only covers areas where people can take reasonable action or put plans into place now. Areas where the situation is still unclear are not included, but the information will be updated once clarified. The Government also has information for travellers available at [gov.uk/EUexit](https://www.gov.uk/EUexit).



Passports

Check the date your passport expires. When travelling to the EU after 29 March 2019, the UK government recommends that you have six months left on your passport on the date of your arrival to an EU country.

You should also check when your passport was renewed. If you renewed a 10 year adult passport before it expired, extra months may have been added to your passport's expiry date. These extra months over 10 years will not count towards the 6 months that must be remaining. The UK Government has published a [website tool](#) to check the validity of your passport under these rules.

You can renew your passport online or by going to a Post Office with a Check and Send service.

You may wish to renew your passport sooner rather than later, in order to make sure you have it in time for your holiday or travel plans.

Full details on renewing your passport can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/renew-adult-passport/renew>.

European Health Insurance Card and travel insurance

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows any EU citizen to access state medical care when they are travelling in another EU country. In the event of a no-deal Brexit, UK registered EHICs will no longer be valid.

ABTA has always advised holidaymakers and business travellers to make sure they have appropriate travel insurance, whether they have an EHIC card or not, as there are limitations to EHIC.

When travelling in the EU and beyond, it is important you take out travel insurance and check that it covers your current circumstances, including any medical conditions. If you have an annual policy, make sure you check the Terms and Conditions and contact your insurance provider if you're not sure.

Advice on travel insurance can be found at <https://www.abta.com/travelinsurance>.

Driving licences

As long as you have a full UK driving licence, you don't currently need an additional licence to drive in the EU. This is likely to change in a no-deal scenario. UK travellers looking to drive in the EU on or after 29 March 2019 may need to apply for the relevant International Driving Permit.

These cost £5.50 and are available directly from the [Post Office](#). The Government has extended the network of Post Offices where you can apply for an International Driving Permit, find your nearest branch [here](#).

Check carefully which permit is required for each country you intend to drive within, as you may need more than one permit to comply with the law.

You need to make sure you have your International Driving Permit before you travel from the UK as you will not be able to apply for this when you are in the EU.

More information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/driving-abroad>.

Green cards for car insurance

If the UK leaves without a deal, UK citizens driving their vehicle within the EU would be required to obtain and carry a physical Green Card in order for your UK car insurance to be applicable in the EU. These cards would be issued by insurers and you may be charged a small fee to cover administration costs.

Speak with your insurer for more information on obtaining a Green Card for any trip on or after 29 March 2019.

The ABI – the trade body for the insurance industry – recommends you contact your car insurance company at least one month in advance of travelling.

Taking pets abroad

In the event of a no-deal, pets would continue to be able to travel from the UK to the EU, but the requirements for documents and health checks would change. If you wish to take your pet to the EU on or after 29 March 2019 pet owners would need to discuss preparations for their pet's travel with an Official Veterinarian at least four months in advance of the date they wish to travel. Pet owners should keep an eye out for any further instructions issued by the UK Government.

More information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit>.

Data roaming

Under EU rules, the cost of making calls, sending messages or using the internet on your phone in the EU is the same in the UK. If the UK leaves without a deal these rules will no longer apply – however, some UK companies have said they may continue to offer this benefit to their customers. Before you travel, check with your mobile phone provider about the costs of using your phone in the EU.

Frequently asked questions

Will flights still operate?

UK citizens can be reassured that regardless of the Brexit outcome planes will still fly between the UK and the EU: if a deal is agreed then we will be in a transition period, meaning everything will stay the same until the end of December 2020 and flights will continue as normal. Even if we are in a no-deal scenario, the [European Commission](#) has said that UK airlines will still be able to operate flights between the UK and the EU. The [UK government](#) has offered similar assurances for EU airlines.

Will ferries and cruise ships still sail?

Ferry services and cruises will still sail as the majority of the rules under which they operate are not based on EU rules, but are international.

Will my coach journey still operate?

Coaches will still be able to travel to and from the EU, and are expected to continue to take passengers to and around EU countries as usual.

Will trains from the UK to the EU still operate?

It is expected that trains from the UK to the EU will continue to operate. Ahead of your journey, check with your travel company to see if there is any additional information you need to be aware of.

Will I need a visa to travel to the EU after Brexit?

You shouldn't need a visa to travel to the EU after Brexit. The European Commission proposed in November 2018 that, even in a no-deal scenario, UK travellers can still visit the EU without a visa, providing the same is offered to European citizens visiting the UK. The European Commission has said that from 2021, UK citizens will need to pay a fee (of around 7 Euros) for this visa exemption. This is part of a new electronic travel authorisation system applying to all third country visitors to the EU, similar to the US ESTA regime.

What happens if customers book to travel after 29 March 2019 and their holiday cannot go ahead due to Brexit?

There is nothing to suggest that you will not be able to continue with your holiday plans after 29 March. Even in a no-deal scenario, the European Commission has said flights to and from the UK will still be able to operate.

Customers who book a package holiday with a UK travel company enjoy the most comprehensive consumer protection: if you book a package, your holiday will be protected under the Package Travel Regulations, meaning you have a right to a full refund if your holiday can no longer be provided.

The UK [Government has confirmed](#) that the Package Travel Regulations will remain in the UK law when the UK leaves the EU.

Should I take out travel insurance to cover Brexit?

The best way to protect your holiday is to book a package – it is the travel provider's responsibility to make sure your holiday is provided and to offer an alternative or refund if it cannot be delivered.

It is important that whenever and wherever you travel that you have adequate travel insurance which covers your specific needs, including any known medical conditions or activities you plan to do. It is also worth checking the detail of the policy around travel disruption including delays or cancellations as policies do vary.