

French air traffic control strike dates: Which flights are cancelled, and if ferries and trains are affected

May Day protests and industrial action are bringing disruption to bank holiday travel in France. Here is how your journey could be affected



Pension reform protests in Paris over the weekend (Photo: Andrea Savorani Neri/NurPhoto via Getty)

The May Day – or International Workers’ Day – bank holiday, is a traditional day of protest, with around 300 taking place around France on Monday in **continued defiance against pension reforms**.

French strikes on **Monday 1 May** include all the main unions including those representing air traffic control (ATC) workers. As a result, airlines were asked last week to reduce their flying schedule at French airports affected by the strikes. Many more that were due to pass through French air space are likely to be disrupted by delays and some knock-on cancellations on Monday.

Up to one third of flights at **Paris Orly, Charles de Gaulle and Beauvais** airports, as well as **Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes and Nice** have been cancelled on Monday. Separately, cabin crew working for Spanish low-cost airline Vueling are striking at Paris Orly airport on 1 May.

Flights

Ryanair cancelled 220 flights on Monday, equivalent to almost 40,000 seats. Meanwhile the impact of the ATC strike means that many more flights will be delayed as planes are forced to take longer routes that avoid French airspace.

Ryanair says that in the first four months of 2023, there have been more than 50 days of French ATC strikes which have resulted in more than 3,700 flight cancellations, affected more than 666,000 passengers at short notice.

It has **launched a petition** which it intends to present to EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, demanding that France extend the Minimum Service Legislation that protects French domestic flights during industrial action, to cover overflights from the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Ireland.

British Airways cancelled around 20 flights on Monday, confirming that passengers affected have the option of a full refund or rebooking on another service, including on alternative airlines when a BA service is not suitable.

A total of 28 **easyJet** flights to and from France have been cancelled on 1 May including three round trips from **Bristol** and several to and from **Gatwick and Edinburgh** to France. Delays are likely on some operating services.

A spokesperson for easyJet said the airline was “extremely disappointed at this continued strike action by French ATC, the 39th strike day over the past four months. We have long called for and will continue to ask for immediate actions to protect our customers and our crew.

“It is unacceptable for French ATC to block travel around Europe, especially for hundreds of thousands of customers whose flights aren’t departing or arriving in France. While this is outside of our control, we would like to apologise to our

customers for any inconvenience they may experience as a result of the strike action.”

Ferries

A spokesperson for **DFDS** ferries said the strikes in France are currently having no impact on its services to and from France. All services on the **Dover to Calais and Dunkirk**, and the **Newhaven to Dieppe** routes are currently expected to run on time. It advises passengers to keep updated on the latest information by following its Twitter updates [@DFDSUKUpdates](#) or via [dfds.com](#).

P&O Ferries and **Irish Ferries** services between **Dover and Calais** are also currently scheduled to operate on time on Monday. **Brittany Ferries** from **Portsmouth and Poole** are also unaffected.

Channel Tunnel

Eurostar says the 1 May strikes will not impact its timetable and that its trains will run as normal. However, it has cancelled two trains between **London and Paris** and two between London and Marne La Vallee/Chessy, its **Disneyland Paris** service on Monday.

The train operator also warns that public transport and train connections may continue to be disrupted in France on Monday and that passengers travelling to and from **Lille or Paris** should check the latest service updates on the relevant operator (**SNCF, RATP** and **Ilevia**).

No disruption is anticipated on **Eurotunnel** services.

Passenger rights

Travellers whose journeys have been cancelled as a result of the strikes are entitled to a full refund, or rebooking onto an alternative service, either on the original carrier or with another provider if unsuitable. If the operating airline or travel provider does not offer this option, passengers should rebook and keep the receipt then submit a claim for a refund.

Compensation is not likely since third-party strikes such as ATC are outside their control. However, in the case of the **Vueling strike at Paris Orly**, passengers would be entitled to compensation of £220 if the replacement flight offered (with less than two weeks’ notice) resulted in an arrival two hours or more later than the original scheduled arrival time.

Passengers whose flights are delayed by two hours (for flights up to 1,500km) are entitled to a reasonable amount of food and drink and access to phone calls and emails, as well as accommodation if the delay is overnight. For flights over 1,500km, the delay threshold rises to three hours and for flights over 3,500km it is four hours. If a flight is delayed by more than five hours, passengers have the right not to take flight and can request a refund. **i**