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## Legal experts say beware as Delta offers \$30,000 with ‘no strings attached’ to passengers on Toronto flight that crash-landed



Investigators examine the wreckage of a Delta Air Lines plane on Feb. 18, 2025, a day after it crash-landed at Toronto Pearson International Airport.  
GEOFF ROBINS—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

By: Marco Quiroz-Gutierrez 2/21/2025

- **Delta offered passengers on the plane that crash-landed** in Toronto a \$30,000 payout that was lauded by PR experts. Yet legal experts say the move should be commended only if it really comes “with no strings attached” as Delta says it does. Passengers should be cautious about the fine print of any agreement they sign and shouldn’t be afraid to pursue litigation against the company, the experts added.

After a Delta plane crashed in Toronto, the airline quickly [offered affected passengers \\$30,000 payments](#) with “no strings attached,” yet legal experts say passengers should be cautious nonetheless about accepting the payment.

A spokesperson for Delta confirmed to *Fortune* the \$30,000 payment offered to passengers came with “no strings attached and does not affect rights.” But the payment likely won’t be as simple as sending a check, and passengers should be cautious about the fine print of any agreement they sign, said John Carpenter, personal injury attorney and cofounder of [Carpenter & Zuckerman law firm](#).

“They’re going to ask them to sign something, an acknowledgement, and then what you find very often is you’ll check a box for terms of use,” Carpenter told *Fortune*.

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If asked to sign an agreement, passengers should search for words such as “release,” “waiver,” “setoff,” “reimbursable,” “assignment,” “confidentiality,” “non-disparagement,” and “arbitration,” among others, said Carpenter. These words could indicate the document is more than a simple receipt of funds, he said, and passengers should seek the advice of an attorney.

Although the \$30,000 may seem generous, it might not compare to the costs that could come with more serious injuries passengers may have incurred, said aviation attorney Timothy A. Loranger of Los Angeles–based mass-disaster law firm [Wisner Baum](#).

“All passengers likely experienced emotional distress, with some suffering severe psychological trauma due to the terrifying nature of the crash,” Loranger told *Fortune*. “For those with significant injuries, \$30,000 may be grossly inadequate and far from full compensation.”

However, accepting a payment from Delta shouldn’t preclude passengers from pursuing further damages through litigation, Loranger added.

If the payment is genuinely meant to help out the affected customers, Delta should be applauded, Carpenter said, but passengers shouldn’t look to close the book on their case against the company so soon.

Passengers can develop both mental and physical injuries later on that should be taken into account when considering any settlement with the airline, he added.

“You never want to resolve a case until you have evaluated what your injuries are, short-term and long-term,” Carpenter said.

The Delta flight, operated by Endeavor Air, was carrying 76 passengers and four crew members from Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport to Toronto when it [flipped over upon landing](#) Monday. Although no one was killed, 21 passengers were injured. As of Thursday all injured passengers had been released from the hospital, [according to Delta](#).

Because the flight was international, according to the Warsaw and Montreal Conventions, the airline would owe at least \$20,000 for each passenger who died, the *New York Times* [reported](#). The payment offered to injured passengers is at the discretion of the airline and doesn’t mean they admit liability. If a passenger wins compensation in a future lawsuit, the airline’s payment would be deducted from the overall payout.

The \$30,000 payment Delta offered passengers is purposefully large and a shrewd PR maneuver, said Amanda Orr, the founder of legal and political communications firm Orr Strategy Group.

“By them offering the money, it gives the public an idea that they do care about their passengers, that they would like to make this right,” Orr told *Fortune*. “It’s a very positive thing that they did.” Although it’s likely few of the passengers will accept the money and will work with lawyers, offering it up could still help indirectly cushion Delta against lawsuits, Orr said.

“If any passenger accepts the money, [Delta is] at reduced legal risk because somebody who accepts that money could be less inclined to sue,” Orr said. “It’s just good damage control all around.”