



force majeure

Definition

Did you know?



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force majeure noun

force ma·jeure (,fōrs-mä-'zhər ) -mə-

- 1 : superior or irresistible force
- 2 : an event or effect that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled
→ compare [ACT OF GOD](#)



Force majeure translates literally from French as *superior force*. In English, the term is often used in line with its literal French meaning, but it has other uses as well, including one that has roots in a principle of French law. In business circles, "force majeure" describes those uncontrollable events (such as war, labor stoppages, or extreme weather) that are not the fault of any party and that make it difficult or impossible to carry out normal business. A company may insert a force majeure clause into a contract to absolve itself from liability in the event it cannot fulfill the terms of a contract (or if attempting to do so will result in loss or damage of goods) for reasons beyond its control.

Recent Examples on the Web

Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. [Read More](#)[https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/force majeure](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/force%20majeure)

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— Glenn Taylor, *Sourcing Journal*, 6 Apr. 2025

The Gulf and East Coast LNG sites also face hurricane risks, which could lead to long-term **force majeure** events and rising insurance costs.

— Robert Rapier, *Forbes*, 24 Mar. 2025

According to a mix of Academy members, studio executives, and Oscars strategists, the chances of the Academy Awards being postponed at this point are slim to none, barring some cataclysmic escalation of the current **force majeure**.

— Chris Lee, *Vulture*, 21 Jan. 2025

The ticket also includes a clause that prevents the company from being held liable for anything that happens to you owing to **force majeure**, like an unexpected storm or illness, piracy, war, revolution, extortion, terrorist action or threat, hijacking, or bombing.

— Bridget Read, *Curbed*, 18 Dec. 2024

[See All Example Sentences for force majeure](#)

Etymology

French, superior force

First Known Use

1883, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

Time Traveler

The first known use of force majeure was in 1883

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amour

auteur

grandeur

hauteur

velour

verdure

voyeur

doer

poor

poore

raconteur

[See All Rhymes for *force majeure*](#)

force main

force majeure

forcemeat

[See All Nearby Words](#)

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force ma·jeure (ˈfɔrs-ma-ˈzhər, -mà-ˈzhōr )

- 1 : superior or insuperable force
- 2 : an event (as war, labor strike, or extreme weather) or effect that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled : **FORTUITOUS EVENT**
→ compare **ACT OF GOD**, **INEVITABLE ACCIDENT**

Etymology

French, superior force

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