

A Guide to Navigate Southwest Cancellations



Sometimes, for reasons beyond anyone's control, you miss your flight. It might be that you locked your keys in the car, lost your passport, or you accidentally turned off your alarm instead of hitting snooze. No matter the reason for missing your flight, Southwest works hard to make a stressful situation a little less so.

We have implemented and refined many policies to support easy, stress-free travel, like easily rescheduling missed flights, allowing you to change or cancel your flight for a refund up to 10 minutes before your scheduled departure, and even better flight tracking.

Understanding Southwest Flight Cancellations

Why Do Flights Get Canceled?

Any number of reasons can cause a flight cancellation, regardless of the airline. These include standard maintenance tasks, severe weather, and staffing logistics (planes are legally required to have a minimum number of staff on the plane.)

Regardless of why your flight was canceled, Southwest Airlines is committed to finding a solution that works for you, whether it's a [flight credit](#), [Transferable Flight Credit](#), or method-of-payment [refund](#). In most cases, you'll receive a new itinerary from Southwest, and if that new itinerary doesn't work, you can [cancel](#) or [change](#) your flight with no fees or hassle.

Read More: [Southwest Airlines' Official Cancellation Policy](#)

What Are Common Weather-Related Reasons for Southwest Flight Cancellations?

To keep all flights and passengers comfortable and safe, Southwest keeps planes on the ground when there is bad weather, especially weather that might cause unfavorable conditions. These weather events can include dense fog, heavy rainfall, low clouds, heavy snowfall, lightning, and

other extreme weather at any point along the route, not just at the departure and arrival cities. Weather in other areas can also have a significant impact on flight logistics.

Navigating Southwest Flight Cancellations

What Should I Do Immediately After My Southwest Flight is Canceled?

When your Southwest flight is canceled, you'll receive a new itinerary automatically via email, text, phone call, or you will see it in your Southwest app. This new itinerary is your new reservation; you don't need to call or do anything else to confirm that it is reserved.

If that new itinerary doesn't work with your schedule, you can [cancel](#) or [change](#) your flight easily. If the new itinerary works, just check in and board according to your new flight time. If, for some reason, you don't receive a new itinerary, you can still [cancel](#) or [change](#) your flight to a better flight for you or [contact us](#).

How Can I Rebook or Reschedule After a Southwest Flight Cancellation?

If Southwest cancels your flight, you'll receive a new itinerary automatically. This will come to you as a text, email, or phone call, or you'll be able to see it in your app. If you canceled your flight and booked a Business Select or Anytime fare, you can choose to receive a method-of-payment refund or a flight credit. If you booked a Wanna Get Away or Wanna Get Away Plus fare and you cancel your reservation, you'll receive a [flight credit](#) or [Transferable Flight Credit](#).

What Are My Rights and Compensation Options for a Canceled Southwest Flight?

If your flight is canceled, Southwest will do its best to make it right. First, you should receive a new itinerary automatically with a new flight time. Receiving this new itinerary means the reservation is confirmed, but if the new time doesn't work, you can [cancel](#) or [change](#) your flight to a better time.

If you cancel, you can receive a [flight credit](#) or method-of-payment [refund](#). If a flight cancellation is due to factors within their control (airplane maintenance, aircraft swap) that lead to an overnight stay away from home, they will consider reasonable reimbursement for hotel stays, meals, and transportation to and from the airport. Additionally, if your flight is delayed for reasons within our control that result in a three or more-hour wait, they will consider reasonable requests for reimbursement of meals. For more information about how to request reimbursement, check out their [cancellations page](#) and go to the “Other cancellation and refund considerations and expense reimbursements” sections.

Read More: [Southwest Airlines' Official Refund Policy](#)

Southwest Flight Cancellation Deadlines and Policies



What is the Time Frame for Canceling a Southwest Flight Without Penalty?

You have up to 10 minutes before your departure flight to [cancel](#) or [change](#) your flight, even if you've already checked in.

Read More: [Southwest Airlines' Official Cancellation Policy](#)

Can I Cancel My Southwest Flight and Still Receive a Refund or Credit?

You can cancel your flight up to 10 minutes before the flight and receive a [flight credit](#) or a method-of-payment credit if you booked an Anytime or Business Select ticket. If you cancel, you will not be reimbursed for extra purchases like [Early Bird Check-In](#). Wanna Get Away and Wanna Get Away Plus are non-refundable but can be used as a [Transferable Flight Credit](#) or a [flight credit](#).

Read More: [Southwest Airlines' Official Flight Credit Policy](#)

Southwest Flight Refund Questions

How Do I Request a Refund for a Canceled Southwest Flight?

Southwest tries to keep [refunds](#) very straightforward. If you choose a method-of-payment refund, you'll receive it in the form of the original payment within seven business days. For cash refunds, you'll receive a check within 20 business days. If you used Rapid Reward Points, they will return to the account used to book the flight.

What is Southwest's Refund Policy for Canceled Flights?

If you [cancel your flight](#), and the flight was an Anytime or Business Select fare, you will receive a method of payment refund or a flight credit on your Southwest account. If you booked a Wanna Get Away or Wanna Get Away Plus ticket, you'll receive a refund in the form of a flight credit or [Transferable Flight Credit](#).

You must cancel your flight at least 10 minutes before the scheduled departure time. If you don't, the value of Anytime or Business Select tickets will be applied to your account as a Transferable Flight Credit. If you booked a Wanna Get Away or Wanna Get Away Plus ticket and don't cancel at

least 10 minutes before your flight's scheduled departure time, points, taxes, and fees will be forfeited.

Read More: [Southwest Airlines' Official Transferable Flight Credit Policy](#)

Utilizing Southwest Flight Credits and Vouchers

How to Redeem Southwest Flight Credits After a Cancellation?

It's easy to use your flight credit when booking a flight with Southwest. When you book your flight and get to the payment screen, you'll see an option to apply a flight credit. Enter the confirmation number associated with the flight credit, and you'll see it applied to the cost of your flight. You can use up to three forms of payment per reservation. Flight credits don't expire, so you have plenty of time to book a flight using flight credits.

Can I Transfer or Gift My Southwest Flight Vouchers or Credits to Someone Else?

In some cases, yes. This is called a [Transferable Flight Credit](#), and only Business Select, Anytime or Wanna Get Away Plus fares are eligible to change their flight credit to a Transferable Flight Credit. Both the person giving and the person receiving the Transferable Flight Credit must be [Rapid Rewards Members](#).

Modifying or Changing Your Southwest Flights

What is the Deadline for Changing a Southwest Flight?

You can cancel or change your Southwest flight until 10 minutes before departure. You can easily do this online or on the app by selecting "Manage Booking."

How Can I Change My Southwest Flight?

It's easy to change your Southwest flight. Simply go to our [change your flight](#) page, log in, or enter your name and flight confirmation number. Look for the Manage Reservation link and follow the instructions to change your reservation. You can also change your flight through the [Southwest Airlines app](#). Log in, find the trip you want to change, select Manage Reservation, and follow the instructions to change your flight.

Read More: [Southwest Airlines' Official Flight Change Policy](#)

Are There Any Fees or Charges for Changing a Southwest Flight?

Southwest doesn't charge fees for changing your flight. However, if you book a fare that is more expensive than your original flight, you will have to pay the difference. For example, if your first flight was \$500, then you changed it to a different flight that was \$700, you will have to pay the \$200 difference.

Mastering Southwest Flight Tracking

How Can I Use the Southwest Flight Tracker Effectively?

The Southwest Flight Tracker makes it easy to track your flight. Simply add the airport codes for departing and arrival airports, the departure date, and the flight number. Right above the departure time, you'll see a status update.

Most of the time, you'll see an "On Time" status. If you see a "Delayed" status, don't panic. Feel free to hold off on canceling or changing your flight plans until just a few hours before takeoff. Most flights have a knack for sticking to their scheduled departure times, giving you a better chance for smooth sailing.

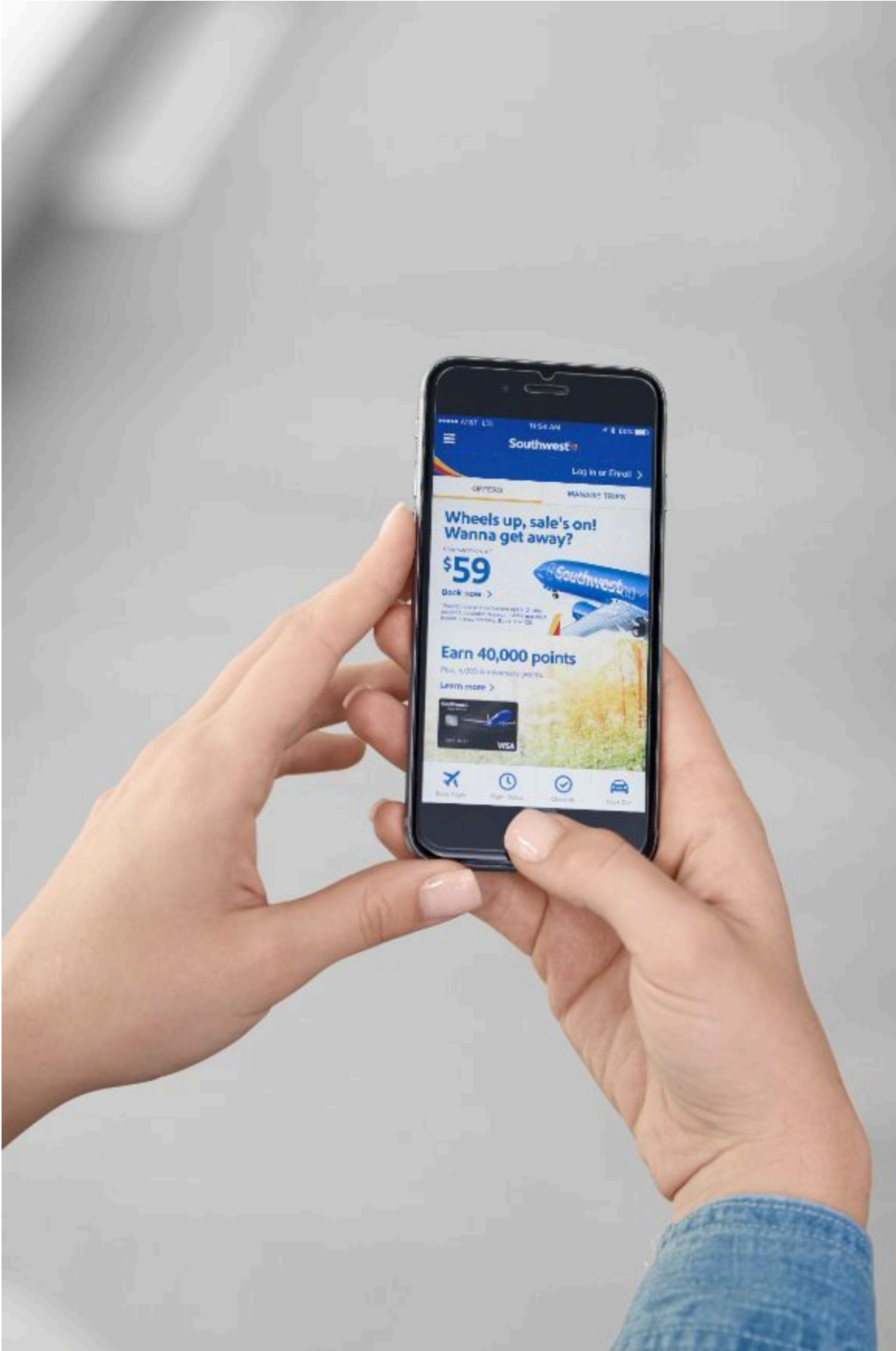
We advise customers to arrive at their scheduled departure time. The issue could be resolved at any given moment, and they may board everyone quickly to take off at the scheduled departure time.

What Are the Best Ways to Stay Updated on My Southwest Flight Status?

The best way to stay updated on your Southwest flight status depends on your preferences. Some people love the [Southwest Airlines app](#), where they can check flight status and set notification preferences to include changes in the flight schedule.

Others prefer to set up notifications through their Southwest account, sending updates to their email or opting for text notifications. Still, others like to use the [flight tracker page](#) to keep up to date on their flight. We recommend the app, as it is the most seamless and easy to use, but any of these methods will keep you up to date regarding the flight status of your trip.

Southwest Layovers and Connections



What Should I Know About Southwest Layovers?

Southwest tries to make connections as seamless as possible. Checked bags booked under the same reservation will automatically be moved to the new plane. If you added a leg to your journey after booking your first leg, you'll need to get your checked bags from the baggage claim and then re-check them for your next flight.

They also try to keep connections a reasonable amount of time, not too long and not too short. However, due to the demands of air travel, you might have an [overnight connection](#). This layover occurs between midnight and five am at the connecting airport. If you have an overnight connection, consider checking the amenities of the connecting airport before you travel and plan accordingly, as some airports don't keep restaurants open throughout the night, may not have a Southwest Airlines staff member available, and TSA might close down the security during the night (meaning that if you leave the airport, you might not be able to get back to the gate before your flight departs).

Bring snacks, comfortable clothing, a pillow, books, work, etc., to keep you busy during your overnight connection. Keep your carry-on and personal item stocked with anything you might need during an overnight connection, including toiletries, a fresh change of clothes, and medications.

If you have a fast layover, there are some practical tips you can implement to help you get to your connecting flight on time.

- If you aren't familiar with the connecting airport, take some time before you travel to look at its layout.
- Look at your confirmation to see what gate you are arriving in and departing from, and find the fastest route to the departing gate.
- Remember to use the restroom on your first flight before landing if possible, so you don't have to stop at the connecting airport.

How Do I Manage Tight Connections with Southwest?

As with all airlines, sometimes your connection is quick. This can feel stressful, but we have some tips to help you get to your connecting flight quickly.

- First, before you travel, look at the layout of the connecting airport and find the gate you'll be landing in and the gate you depart from.
- Then, look at the fastest way to get from your arrival gate to your departure gate.
- Make sure your personal items and carry-on are easy to carry quickly through the airport.
- Use the bathroom on your initial flight so you won't need to stop for a bathroom break in the airport.
- Finally, remember that we're here to help, so don't hesitate to ask for directions or assistance.

What Are My Options for Overnight Connections with Southwest?

If you have an [overnight connection](#), you have a few options to make your experience as seamless as possible. First, research the connecting airport. Find out if it has restaurants or other food available throughout the night. If they don't, make sure to pack any snacks or meals you'll want throughout the night.

If you plan to leave the airport, check to see if it keeps its TSA staff throughout the night. If not, security might not be open when you need to return to your gate, making you miss your flight. Airports keep their bathrooms open 24/7, so bringing toiletries or a change of clothes in your carry-on or personal item might help you feel refreshed.

You cannot access your checked luggage during an overnight connection. Additionally, minors (under 18 and not traveling with an adult passenger) and Unaccompanied Minors are not allowed on overnight connections.

Read More: [Southwest Airlines' Official Overnight Connections Policy](#)

Managing Southwest Flight Delays

What Causes Southwest Flight Delays and How Can I Stay Informed?

Delays are sometimes unavoidable, especially regarding weather, standard maintenance tasks, or air traffic. While the delays are certainly inconvenient, our first priority is a comfortable, safe flight for all passengers. You can check any [travel advisories](#) for your flight on the day of your departure. Or, you can track your [flight status](#) to know if your flight is delayed or canceled. We recommend downloading the [Southwest Airlines app](#) to see all your flights and their status easily.

How Should I Handle a Delayed Southwest Flight?

If you check the status of your flight and see that your flight is delayed, but the delay is for less than an hour, still head to the airport for your original departure time. For example, if your departure time is 10:00 am and the flight is delayed 45 minutes, still show up as if the plane is leaving at 10 am.

This is because delays of less than an hour often get caught up, and you don't want to miss your flight if it is on time. If your flight is delayed more than an hour, you can stay home and pay close attention to the flight tracker. Head to the airport when you see your flight getting caught up; make sure to give yourself plenty of time to check any luggage, get through security, and go to your gate. You can easily [change your flight](#) with no fees if a flight delay interferes with other travel.



How Can I Check the Status of My Southwest Flight?

You can check the status of your flight in the [Southwest Airlines app](#) or on the [check flight status page](#). Additionally, you can check any [travel advisories](#) for airports on the day of your flight. If you see a delay for your flight, remember that most delays, especially under an hour, usually catch up to their original departure time.

Handling Missed Southwest Flights

What Should I Do If I Miss My Southwest Flight?

If you missed your flight and didn't cancel it, it is considered a no-show. If you can get to a Southwest ticket desk within 2 hours of your missed departure time, we will help you get on the next available flight to your destination as a standby rider. If you booked an Anytime or Business Select ticket, you will receive a refund in the form of a Transferable Flight Credit. If you booked a Wanna Get Away or Wanna Get Away Plus ticket, your funds are forfeited.

How Does Southwest Airlines Assist with Missed Flights?

Southwest understands that life happens, and missing a flight is already stressful. That's why they have a policy that if you miss your flight and you check in at a Southwest ticket desk within 2 hours of your missed departure, we will do our best to get you on the next flight to your destination as a standby passenger.

Can I Receive Compensation or Refunds for a Missed Southwest Flight?

If you miss your flight and you booked with an Anytime or Business Select fare, you will receive a Transferable Flight Credit. If your fare was a Wanna Get Away or Wanna Get Away Plus fare, the funds will be forfeited. To ensure you don't forfeit your funds, make sure to [cancel](#) or [change](#) your reservation at least 10 minutes before departure time.

Exploring Southwest Travel Protection Options

What Does Southwest Travel Protection Cover?

[Southwest Travel Protection](#) specifically covers Southwest Vacations, not all flights. If you book a Southwest Vacation, you can purchase Southwest Travel Protection for that vacation. If you cancel your Southwest vacation and have purchased Southwest Travel Protection for that trip, you will receive a refund in the form of a flight credit.

To get travel insurance for your flight, use the Southwest Rapid Rewards Premier Credit Card. This card offers travel insurance that covers rental car damage or theft, serious injuries, lost luggage, and delayed baggage for trips paid for with the card.

Because Southwest offers a no-fee change policy and generous cancellation policies, we don't offer travel protection or insurance on our flights.

Should I Consider Getting Travel Insurance for My Southwest Flight?

Southwest works hard to make sure that there won't be a need for flight insurance or protection with flexibility, traveler-friendly policies like no fees to change your flight, flight credits, and refunds when flights are canceled or missed. However, if you are traveling internationally, have more than one layover, or are traveling with young children, you might want to purchase third-party flight insurance for peace of mind. While they will do everything they can to ensure you won't need flight insurance, they understand that passengers sometimes prefer flight insurance.

When Southwest Flight Cancellations and Delays Happen, We're Here With Help and Resources

Any disruptions to your travel, from a canceled or delayed flight to a last-minute change in your plans, are stressful. That's why Southwest works so hard to make flying with Southwest Airlines a seamless experience, even if you have to change your flight at the last minute or miss your flight because of a flat tire. When you choose Southwest Airlines for your travel, you choose flexibility and ease, even if you forget to set your alarm clock.