

Southwest Airlines Announces Revised Policies For Emotional Support And Trained Service Animals

[Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) today announced that, consistent with new regulations from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the carrier is making changes to its policies regarding trained service animals and emotional support animals. Effective March 1, 2021, the airline will accept only trained service dogs for travel and will no longer transport emotional support animals.

With this revision, Southwest Airlines® will only allow service dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability to travel with the Customer. The types of disability include a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability and only dogs will be accepted (including those for psychiatric service) — no other species will be accepted as a trained service animal.

"We applaud the Department of Transportation's recent ruling that allows us to make these important changes to address numerous concerns raised by the public and airline employees regarding the transport of untrained animals in the cabins of aircraft," said [Steve Goldberg, Senior Vice President, Operations and Hospitality](#). "Southwest Airlines continues to support the ability of qualified individuals with a disability to bring trained service dogs for travel and remains committed to providing a positive and accessible travel experience for all of our Customers with disabilities."

As part of this change, Customers traveling with trained service dogs now must present a complete, and accurate, DOT Service Animal Air Transportation Form at the gate or ticket counter on their day of travel to affirm a service animal's health, behavior, and training. Customers should complete the form, which will be available both on the airline's website and at airport locations, after booking their travel.

Additionally, Southwest will no longer accept emotional support animals for travel effective on March 1, 2021. Customers may still travel with some animals as part of the airline's existing [pets program](#) for a charge; however, the animals must meet all applicable requirements regarding in-cabin stowage and species (dogs and cats only).

Customers who hold existing reservations for travel with unaccepted animals after Feb. 28, 2021 may contact Southwest for more information and assistance. Southwest's policies for traveling with trained service animals can be reviewed at [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com).

ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 50th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](https://www.southwest.com) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by nearly 58,000 Employees to a Customer base that topped 130 million Passengers in 2019. Southwest has a robust network of point-to-point service with a strong presence across top leisure and business markets. In peak travel seasons during 2019, Southwest operated more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 101 destinations in the United States and 10 additional countries. In 2020, the carrier added service to Hilo, Hawaii; Cozumel, Mexico; Miami; Palm Springs, Calif.; Steamboat Springs and Montrose (Telluride), Colo. In 2021, Southwest will begin service to both Chicago (O'Hare) and Sarasota/Bradenton on Feb. 14; both Savannah/Hilton Head and Colorado Springs on March 11; both Houston (Bush) and Santa Barbara, Calif. on April 12; Fresno, Calif. on April 25; and Jackson, Miss. on June 6.

The carrier issued its [Southwest[®] Promise](https://www.southwest.com/Promise) in May 2020 to highlight new and round-the-clock efforts to support its Customers and Employees well-being and comfort. Among the changes are enhanced cleaning efforts at airports and onboard aircraft, and face covering requirements for Customers and Employees. Additional details about the Southwest Promise are available at [Southwest.com/Promise](https://www.southwest.com/Promise).

Southwest coined [Transfarency[®]](https://www.southwest.com/Transfarency) to describe its purposed philosophy of treating Customers honestly and fairly, and low fares actually staying low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free[®] to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some carriers offer free checked bags on select routes or in qualified circumstances). Southwest does not charge change fees, though fare differences might apply.

Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. Learn more about how the carrier gives back to communities across the world by visiting [Southwest.com/citizenship](https://www.southwest.com/citizenship).

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com) or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA.

SOURCE Southwest Airlines Co.

ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

[Southwest Airlines Co.](#) operates one of the world's most admired and awarded airlines, offering its one-of-a-kind value and Hospitality at 121 airports across 12 countries. Southwest took flight in 1971 to democratize the sky through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel and now carries more air travelers flying nonstop within the United States than any other airline(fn. 1). By empowering its more than 73,000(fn. 2) People to deliver unparalleled Hospitality, the maverick airline cherishes a passionate loyalty among more than 134 million Customers carried in 2025. Southwest leverages a unique legacy and mission to serve communities around the world including harnessing the power of its People and Purpose to put communities at the Heart of its success. Learn more by visiting [Southwest.com/citizenship](#).

1. Based on U.S. Dept. of Transportation quarterly Airline Origin & Destination Survey as of Q4 2025
2. Fulltime-equivalent active Employees as of March 31, 2026

Media Contacts:

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