

# Southwest Airlines Recovering from Operational Challenges

## Southwest Airlines Working to Recover from Operational Challenges: Update 6 – Dec 26, 2022

With consecutive days of extreme winter weather across our network behind us, continuing challenges are impacting our Customers and Employees in a significant way that is unacceptable.

And our heartfelt apologies are just beginning.

We're working with Safety at the forefront to urgently address wide-scale disruption by rebalancing the airline and repositioning Crews and our fleet ultimately to best serve all who plan to travel with us.

We were fully staffed and prepared for the approaching holiday weekend when the severe weather swept across the continent, where Southwest is the largest carrier in 23 of the top 50 travel markets in the U.S. These operational conditions forced daily changes of an unprecedented volume and magnitude to our flight schedule and the tools our teams use to recover the airline remain at capacity.

This safety-first work is intentional, ongoing, and necessary to return to normal reliability, one that minimizes last-minute inconveniences. As we continue the work to recover our operation, we have made the decision to continue operating a reduced schedule by flying roughly one third of our schedule for the next several days. And we're working to reach Customers whose travel plans will change to offer specific information and available options, also available at [Southwest.com/traveldisruption](https://www.southwest.com/traveldisruption).

Our Employees and Crews scheduled to work this holiday season are showing up in every single way. We are beyond grateful for that. Our shared goal is to take care of every single Customer with the Hospitality and Heart for which we're known.

On the other side of this, we'll work to make things right for those we've let down, including our Employees.

With no concern higher than ultimate Safety, the People of Southwest share a goal to take care of each and every Customer. We recognize falling short and sincerely apologize.

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### Southwest Airlines Monitors Winter Storm Elliott: Update 5 – Dec. 24, 2022

We continue to proactively manage and update our operational plan and flight schedules in response to Winter Storm Elliott, and we are grateful for the support of our Employees as we work to stabilize our network. With more than half of the airports where we operate in the continental U.S. under duress from the storm, Southwest is uniquely affected given our size and structure.

As it remains a very dynamic situation, we don't have specific numbers to share on flight disruptions, but the storms have forced thousands of cancellations throughout our network. We appreciate our Customers' patience and apologize for inconveniences as we work to get them to their destinations as quickly and safely as possible this holiday. Customers are encouraged to confirm their flight status at [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com) or on the Southwest app.

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### Southwest Monitors Winter Storm Elliott: Update 4 – Dec. 23, 2022

We continue to proactively manage and update our operational plan and flight schedules in response to Winter Storm Elliott. With more than half of the airports where we operate in the continental U.S. under duress from the storm, Southwest has been uniquely effected given our size and structure.

As it remains a very dynamic situation, we don't have specific numbers to share on flight disruptions, but the storms have forced hundreds of cancelations throughout our network. We appreciate our Customers' patience and apologize for inconveniences as we work to get them to their destinations as quickly and safely as possible this holiday. Customers are encouraged to confirm their flight status at [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com) or on the Southwest app.

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### Southwest Monitors Winter Storm Elliott: Update 3 – Dec. 22

Southwest continues to alter its operational plan as Winter Storm Elliott affects a number of airports in our Network.

Challenging working and travel conditions, especially in Denver and Chicago, have resulted in disruptions to Southwest's nearly 12,000 scheduled flights Wednesday, Dec. 21 through Friday, Dec. 23.

Most of these disruptions were proactive schedule adjustments to ensure safe operations, to protect the integrity of the entire Southwest Network, and to limit prolonged exposure in dangerous working conditions. However, the changing operational environment and treacherous conditions led to additional later cancellations.

Customers are encouraged to confirm their flight status at [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com) or in the Southwest app.

We apologize for inconveniences as our Team works to get Customers to their destinations as quickly and safely as possible. Customers traveling to, from, or through airports listed in our [travel advisory](#) may voluntarily change their travel plans within 14 days of the originally scheduled departure.

We'll continue to provide updates on [SWAMedia.com](https://www.swamedia.com) as our operational plan evolves.

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#### Southwest Monitors Winter Storm Elliott: Update 2 – Dec. 21

As Winter Storm Elliott marches eastward, Southwest has implemented operational adjustments to its schedule through Dec. 23.

The Safety of Employees and Customers is Southwest's top priority and proactive schedule adjustments aim to ensure safe operations, protect the integrity of the entire Southwest Network, and limit subjecting our People to dangerous working conditions.

We have reduced operations at some airports we serve, primarily Denver and Chicago Midway. Of the nearly 8,000 scheduled flights for both Thursday, Dec. 22 and Friday, Dec. 23, Southwest has canceled about 500 flights.

Customers are encouraged to confirm their flight's status at [Southwest.com](https://www.southwest.com) or the Southwest app. We apologize for inconveniences as our Team works to get Customers to their destinations as quickly and safely as possible.

A [travel advisory](#) remains active for scheduled travel beginning Tuesday, Dec. 20 and continuing through Monday, Dec. 26. Customers traveling to, from, or through airports listed in the advisory may voluntarily change their travel plans within 14 days of the originally scheduled departure.

We'll provide updates via [SWAMedia.com](https://www.swamedia.com) as our operational plan evolves.

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## Southwest Airlines Monitors Winter Storm Elliott: Update 1

Southwest Airlines is monitoring the development and forecast of Winter Storm Elliott and has offered increased flexibility to Customers across a wide swath of our Network.

Based on the current forecast, a [travel advisory](#) is active for scheduled travel beginning Tuesday, Dec. 20 and continuing through Monday, Dec. 26. Customers traveling to, from, or through airports listed in the advisory may voluntarily change their travel plans within 14 days of the originally scheduled departure.

Southwest [never charges fees](#) to change or cancel an existing reservation. The travel advisory waives any applicable fare difference for Customers who may be affected by Winter Storm Elliott and wish to alter their itineraries. Customers are encouraged to confirm their flight's status at [Southwest.com](#) or through the Southwest app.

We'll provide updates via [SWAMedia.com](#) as our operational plan evolves.

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## 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

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