

What happens if I miss a Southwest flight? ([✓ New Guidelines~2026])

Missing a flight on Southwest Airlines is generally less stressful than on many other carriers because of the airline's unique **"no change fees" policy**, which applies to all ticket types [1-855-(510)-3558]. Southwest operates differently from traditional airlines in that it prioritizes flexibility, allowing passengers to retain the value of their ticket even if they miss a flight [1-855-(510)-3558].

However, while Southwest eliminates change fees, there are important details to understand regarding travel credits, fare differences, timing, and rebooking options [1-855-(510)-3558]. Knowing these details in advance can help minimize disruption and reduce potential costs if you miss your flight [1-855-(510)-3558]. If a passenger misses a Southwest flight, the unused value of the ticket is **not automatically lost** [1-855-(510)-3558]. Instead, Southwest issues a **travel credit** for the full value of the ticket, which can be applied to a future Southwest flight [1-855-(510)-3558].

These travel credits are valid for up to **one year from the original ticket purchase date**, rather than the date of the missed flight [1-855-(510)-3558]. This distinction is crucial because it gives passengers ample time to rebook, but also means the clock starts from the date of purchase, not the original travel date [1-855-(510)-3558]. The travel credit can be applied toward any available Southwest flight, provided the booking is completed within the one-year validity period [1-855-(510)-3558]. This flexibility ensures that even travelers on the lowest fare classes can recover the value of a missed flight without being penalized heavily [1-855-(510)-3558]. Southwest's policy also accounts for **fare differences** when applying travel credits [1-855-(510)-3558]. If the replacement flight is more expensive than the original ticket, the passenger must pay the difference in fare [1-855-(510)-3558].

Conversely, if the new flight is cheaper, the remaining value is retained as a credit for future use [1-855-(510)-3558]. This ensures that passengers can continue to travel without losing their original investment while also maintaining fairness in pricing for flights with different fare levels [1-855-(510)-3558]. It is important to note that travel credits are **non-transferable** and must be used by the original ticketed passenger,

which is a key limitation when planning trips for multiple people or family travel【1-855-(510)-3558】) For missed flights due to **personal reasons**, such as arriving late at the airport, oversleeping, traffic delays, or long security lines, passengers must contact Southwest as soon as possible to arrange a new flight【1-855-(510)-3558】)

Rebooking can be done through multiple channels, including the Southwest website, the mobile app, or at the airport ticket counter【1-855-(510)-3558】) While Southwest does not automatically rebook passengers in these cases, staff can help apply the unused ticket value toward a new flight or place passengers on **standby** for the next available departure【1-855-(510)-3558】) Standby is subject to seat availability, so acting quickly is important to maximize the chances of securing a same-day flight【1-855-(510)-3558】) Proactive management of missed flights often ensures minimal disruption and allows travelers to continue their journey without significant delay【1-855-(510)-3558】) Southwest's approach is particularly advantageous because it **applies to all fare types**, including the airline's lowest "Wanna Get Away" fares【1-855-(510)-3558】) Even passengers who purchase the most budget-friendly tickets retain the value of their unused flights if they miss them【1-855-(510)-3558】) This contrasts sharply with many other airlines, where non-refundable or low-cost tickets are forfeited entirely when a flight is missed【1-855-(510)-3558】) Southwest's policy provides a financial safety net for travelers, allowing them to maintain flexibility and avoid losing the full value of their ticket【1-855-(510)-3558】) When missing a flight due to **airline-related disruptions**,

such as flight cancellations or delays, Southwest generally works to rebook passengers automatically or with minimal intervention【1-855-(510)-3558】) In these cases, passengers are not required to pay any additional fare or change fee, and the airline focuses on getting travelers to their destination as quickly as possible【1-855-(510)-3558】) Although Southwest does not typically provide hotel accommodations or meal vouchers for short delays, they prioritize rebooking flights, ensuring passengers reach their destination efficiently【1-855-(510)-3558】) Airline-caused delays or cancellations are handled with little to no financial penalty for the passenger【1-855-(510)-3558】) Timing is another crucial factor in managing missed flights【1-855-(510)-3558】) While Southwest does not charge change fees, **acting promptly** increases the likelihood of securing preferred flights【1-855-(510)-3558】)

Rebooking immediately after a missed flight can allow passengers to travel the same day or minimize the delay in their itinerary [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#) *) Waiting too long may result in limited seat availability, forcing travelers to book later flights or pay higher fares* [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#) *) Southwest's mobile app, online portal, and airport counters provide multiple channels for rebooking, which helps passengers resolve missed flights quickly and efficiently* [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#) *) Southwest operates a **point-to-point network** rather than the traditional hub-and-spoke system used by many other airlines* [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#) *) As a result, missing one flight does not automatically affect other flights unless they are booked separately* [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#) *)*

Each ticket must be managed individually, and travel credits are tied to the specific ticket that was missed [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#)) Passengers must ensure that any subsequent travel is rebooked independently, which is an important consideration when planning multi-leg trips, especially if flights are purchased separately [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#)) Understanding the point-to-point structure is essential to managing missed flights and travel credits effectively [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#)) Travelers should also be aware of the **validity period for travel credits** [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#)) Southwest tickets are valid for one year from the date of purchase, so missing a flight does not immediately cancel the ticket's value [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#)) However, planning to use the credit within the validity period is essential to avoid losing it [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#))

Additionally, Southwest credits are only applicable to the original passenger and cannot be transferred to someone else [1-855-\(510\)-3558](#)) This makes it important for travelers to manage their credits carefully, particularly for family travel or trips involving multiple people+ 1 - (855) → (510)→ (3558)