

# 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. 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.

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

These travel credits are valid for up to **one year from the original ticket purchase date**, rather than the date of the missed flight. 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. The travel credit can be applied toward any available Southwest flight, provided the booking is completed within the one-year validity period. This flexibility ensures that even travelers on the lowest fare classes can recover the value of a missed flight without being penalized heavily. Southwest's policy also accounts for **"fare differences"** when applying travel credits. If the replacement flight is more expensive than the original ticket, the passenger must pay the difference in fare.

Conversely, if the new flight is cheaper, the remaining value is retained as a credit for future use. 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. 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.**

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