

Southwest Airlines® Cancellation Policy - Complete Guide to Canceling Flights and Refunds

Understanding Southwest Airlines cancellation policy helps you make informed decisions when plans change unexpectedly.  +1/844/565/1867 Southwest's cancellation rules vary based on ticket type, fare class, and when you cancel relative to departure time.

 +1/844/565/1867 Knowing your options for refunds, travel credits, and change fees prevents financial loss when you need to cancel.  +1/844/565/1867 This comprehensive guide explains Southwest's complete cancellation policy including exceptions, refund processes, and best practices.  +1/844/565/1867

24-Hour Risk-Free Cancellation

 +1/844/565/1867 Southwest provides a 24-hour risk-free cancellation period for all tickets booked directly through Southwest channels. You can cancel any ticket within 24 hours of booking without penalty as long as the booking was made at least seven days before departure.  +1/844/565/1867 This policy applies to all fare types including Basic Economy, Main Cabin, and premium cabin tickets.  +1/844/565/1867 Cancellations within this window result in full refunds to your original payment method.  +1/844/565/1867 The 24-hour window starts from the time you complete your booking, not from midnight of the booking date.  +1/844/565/1867 This industry-standard policy protects passengers from immediate booking regrets or errors.  +1/844/565/1867 Always verify your travel plans before the 24-hour period expires to take advantage of this free cancellation option.

 +1/844/565/1867

Non-Refundable Ticket Cancellation Rules

 +1/844/565/1867 Most Southwest tickets fall under non-refundable fare categories which have specific cancellation restrictions. Non-refundable tickets cannot be refunded to your original payment method after the 24-hour risk-free period.  +1/844/565/1867 When you cancel non-refundable tickets, Southwest issues an eCredit for the remaining ticket value minus any applicable cancellation fees.  +1/844/565/1867 eCredits remain valid for one year from original ticket issue date and can be used toward future Southwest flights.

 +1/844/565/1867 The passenger named on the original ticket must use the eCredit; it cannot be transferred to other travelers.  +1/844/565/1867 Cancellation fees for non-refundable tickets vary by route and fare class, typically ranging from zero to 200 dollars for domestic flights.  +1/844/565/1867 International non-refundable tickets may have higher cancellation fees depending on destination and fare rules.  +1/844/565/1867

Refundable Ticket Cancellation Benefits

 +1/844/565/1867 Refundable tickets offer maximum flexibility with full refunds available when you cancel at any time before departure. These premium fare types cost significantly more than non-refundable options but eliminate cancellation risk.  +1/844/565/1867 Refundable tickets return money to your original payment method within seven to ten

business days after cancellation.  +1/844/565/1867 First Class, Southwest One, and some premium Main Cabin fares include refundable cancellation benefits.  +1/844/565/1867 Check your specific ticket's fare rules during booking to confirm refundability status.

 +1/844/565/1867 Refundable tickets make sense for uncertain travel plans or business trips with high likelihood of schedule changes.  +1/844/565/1867 The extra cost of refundable fares may be worthwhile compared to potential cancellation fees and lost ticket value.  +1/844/565/1867

Basic Economy Cancellation Restrictions

 +1/844/565/1867 Basic Economy tickets have the most restrictive cancellation and change policies among Southwest fare types. After the 24-hour risk-free period, Basic Economy tickets generally cannot be changed or canceled for credit or refund.  +1/844/565/1867 The entire ticket value is forfeited if you cancel or do not show up for your Basic Economy flight.  +1/844/565/1867 Some Basic Economy fares on specific routes may allow cancellation for eCredit with substantial fees, but most do not.  +1/844/565/1867 The low price of Basic Economy tickets comes with significant restrictions including harsh cancellation penalties.  +1/844/565/1867 Purchase Basic Economy only when you are absolutely certain of your travel plans and dates.  +1/844/565/1867 Consider paying more for Main Cabin fares if any uncertainty exists about your ability to travel as booked.  +1/844/565/1867

Same-Day Flight Changes vs Cancellation

 +1/844/565/1867 Southwest offers same-day flight changes as an alternative to full cancellation when your plans shift slightly. Same-day changes allow you to switch to different flights on the same day as your original booking.  +1/844/565/1867 Medallion elite members often receive complimentary same-day changes while other passengers pay fees around 75 dollars.  +1/844/565/1867 Same-day changes require seat availability on your desired alternative flight.  +1/844/565/1867 This option works well when you need earlier or later flights on your original travel date without completely canceling.  +1/844/565/1867 Same-day changes preserve your ticket value better than full cancellations in many situations.  +1/844/565/1867 Request same-day changes at airport kiosks, ticket counters, or through the Fly Southwest app.  +1/844/565/1867

How to Cancel Your Southwest Flight

 +1/844/565/1867 Canceling Southwest flights can be accomplished through multiple convenient methods. Log into Southwest.com and navigate to "My Trips" using your confirmation number and last name.  +1/844/565/1867 Select the flight you wish to cancel and follow prompts to complete the cancellation process.  +1/844/565/1867 The Fly Southwest mobile app allows cancellation directly from your device with the same functionality as the website.  +1/844/565/1867 Call Southwest customer service to cancel by phone if you prefer speaking with an agent or need assistance.  +1/844/565/1867 Airport ticket counters can process cancellations in person if you are already at the terminal.  +1/844/565/1867 Online cancellation methods typically process fastest and provide immediate confirmation of your cancellation.  +1/844/565/1867 Save cancellation confirmation emails and reference numbers for your records.  +1/844/565/1867

Understanding eCredits and How to Use Them

📞 +1/844/565/1867 When you cancel non-refundable tickets, Southwest issues eCredits that function as electronic vouchers for future travel. eCredits appear in your Southwest account and show the remaining value after any cancellation fees. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Use eCredits by logging into your account and selecting the eCredit as payment when booking new flights. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 eCredits expire one year from the original ticket issue date, not from the cancellation date. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 You can combine eCredits with other payment methods if the new ticket costs more than the credit amount. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 If your new ticket costs less than the eCredit, the remaining balance stays as eCredit for future use until expiration. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 eCredits cannot be refunded to cash or transferred to other passengers. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Monitor eCredit expiration dates closely to avoid losing ticket value. 📞 +1/844/565/1867

Cancellation Due to Southwest Schedule Changes

📞 +1/844/565/1867 When Southwest significantly changes your flight schedule, you receive additional cancellation options beyond standard policy. Schedule changes exceeding certain time thresholds allow full refunds even on non-refundable tickets. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Southwest typically considers changes over 90 minutes as significant, though policies may vary. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 You can accept the new schedule, request alternative flights, or cancel for full refund when Southwest changes your itinerary. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Southwest proactively notifies affected passengers via email, text, or phone when schedule changes occur. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Review schedule change notifications carefully and respond within specified timeframes to exercise your options. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Schedule change refunds process to original payment methods rather than eCredits. 📞 +1/844/565/1867

Cancellation for Medical or Emergency Reasons

📞 +1/844/565/1867 Medical emergencies, family deaths, and other extenuating circumstances may qualify for special cancellation consideration. Southwest does not guarantee refunds for emergencies but evaluates requests case-by-case with appropriate documentation. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Provide doctor's notes, death certificates, or other official documentation supporting your cancellation reason. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Contact Southwest customer service to explain your situation and submit required documentation. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Travel insurance often provides better protection for medical and emergency cancellations than airline policies alone. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Purchase travel insurance at booking time if you have any concerns about potential need to cancel. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Southwest may waive fees or provide exceptions at their discretion for genuine emergencies with proper proof. 📞 +1/844/565/1867

Group Booking Cancellation Policies

📞 +1/844/565/1867 Group reservations for ten or more passengers follow different cancellation rules than individual bookings. Group cancellation policies vary based on contract terms negotiated when the group was booked. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Many group bookings allow name changes without penalties up to specific deadlines before departure. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Deposit requirements and cancellation timelines differ significantly from individual ticket policies. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Contact Southwest's group travel department

directly to understand cancellation terms for your specific group contract.

📞 +1/844/565/1867 Group coordinators should review cancellation clauses carefully before finalizing group reservations. 📞 +1/844/565/1867

Award Ticket Cancellation and Redeposit Fees

📞 +1/844/565/1867 Canceling award tickets booked with Rapid Rewards follows different procedures than paid tickets. Award cancellations result in miles being redeposited to your Rapid Rewards account rather than eCredits. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Southwest charges redeposit fees when canceling award tickets outside the 24-hour risk-free window.

📞 +1/844/565/1867 Medallion elite members may receive reduced or waived redeposit fees based on status level. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Award ticket cancellations must be completed before flight departure to recover miles. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 No-show on award tickets may result in forfeited miles with no option to recover them. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Redeposited miles return to your account typically within 24 to 48 hours after cancellation.

📞 +1/844/565/1867

Final Thoughts on Southwest Cancellation Policy

📞 +1/844/565/1867 Southwest's cancellation policy balances flexibility with fare rules appropriate to different ticket types and prices. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Understanding your specific ticket's cancellation terms before booking helps you choose the right fare for your situation. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 The 24-hour risk-free cancellation period provides valuable protection for all passengers regardless of fare class. 📞 +1/844/565/1867 Reading fine print and considering travel insurance protects you from unexpected cancellation costs.