

What To Do If Your Flight Gets Canceled ~

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Flight canceled? We're groaning with you.

American Airlines recently [canceled hundreds of flights](#) and is expected to cancel more this summer. Southwest has also [canceled a slew of flights](#), causing passengers to miss work, vacations, and other important events. It's stressful and expensive, especially if you have non-refundable accommodations, cruises, or other can't-miss activities booked alongside your plane tickets.

We can help lessen the pain. If you know the right moves to make when your flight gets canceled, you can save yourself a lot of stress, money, and time.

Why Do Flights Get Canceled?

While the airline wants to get you to your destination on time, there are a lot of situations that are out of the airline's control. Weather, mechanical issues, air traffic, staffing issues, and pandemics are hard to predict, resulting in occasional cancellations.

What To Do If Your Flight Is Canceled Far in Advance of Departure

You'll likely get an email about the change and be automatically rebooked. If the change looks good, you don't need to do anything. However, if you don't like the change, you can go online where you booked and find another flight that will fit your schedule. You can possibly get an even better flight when this happens as you can often switch to a more expensive flight (like one that leaves at a better time or is a nonstop) for no cost.

What To Do If Your Flight Is Canceled at the Airport

With hundreds of other people suddenly in the same situation, you'll want to act quickly as soon as you find out that your flight is canceled. Flight expert Scott Keyes of [Scott's Cheap Flights](#) recently shared some strategies on the podcast [All The Hacks](#) for handling it like a pro.

Get in line as soon as possible. You may want to sit near the gate agent, just in case something happens. When you're near, you can get rebooked first so you have the best chance at reaching your destination in a reasonable amount of time. Call customer service while you're in line. You may be able to get a customer service agent on the phone faster than the in-person agent can help you. Call customer service in another country, like Canada. If there's a long wait to speak with customer service on the phone, look up the customer service number for another country, such as Canada or Singapore, and try that.

Research other flight options on your phone. Being able to suggest a new flight to the booking agent can help get you on the next flight more quickly, not to mention save time so the agent can help more passengers. You may also want to ask the agent if they can place you on a flight from a different airline, or try rebooking yourself in the airline's app.

[5 Tips for Dealing With Airport Staffing Shortage](#)

Do You Get Compensated for a Canceled Flight?

The [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) has laws regarding air travel. Knowing your rights can be invaluable if your flight gets canceled.

Getting Rebooked

If your flight is cancelled, most airlines will try to rebook you for free on the next flight. In many cases, this will happen automatically.

Cash Refund

If the airline cancels your flight, you are eligible for a cash refund for the price of your ticket if you choose not to be rebooked, according to the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#). You do not have to accept a voucher in lieu of a refund. However, you're not entitled to compensation above what you paid for the ticket like you would be if you were bumped on a flight.

Hotel and Meals

Some airlines provide hotels or meals to stranded passengers. Others do not, but it certainly doesn't hurt to ask. Know you're more likely to get this benefit if you're booked in a premium class seat.

Other Costs

If you miss your cruise, concert, sporting event, or hotel reservation, the airline does not have to compensate you for it. It just sucks.

Flying Internationally

Keep in mind if you're flying from another country, the laws will be different. For example, if your flight was delayed more than three hours in the [European Union](#), you may be able to claim 600€ per person.