

United Flight Cancellation Policy Explained: Get Refunds and Credits

What Happens When You Cancel a United Flight

Canceling a flight can be stressful, but understanding United's policies makes the process smoother.  +1/844/213/7319 United's cancellation terms depend heavily on your fare type, timing, and reason for cancellation. Whether you booked a basic economy seat or a first-class ticket, knowing your rights and options helps you make the best decision for your situation.

Same-Day Flight Cancellations

If you need to cancel on the day of travel, your options are limited.  +1/844/213/7319 Non-refundable tickets canceled on the departure date typically result in complete forfeiture of the ticket value. Refundable tickets can still be canceled for a full refund even on the day of departure. If you have an emergency, contact United immediately as they may offer options or flexibility depending on the circumstances, especially for documented medical emergencies.

Cancellation Fees and Costs

United has eliminated change fees for most ticket types on domestic and international flights, but cancellation policies remain.  +1/844/213/7319 While you may not pay a change fee, the difference in fare applies when rebooking with an eCredit. Basic Economy tickets cannot be canceled or changed at all. Refundable tickets allow cancellations without fees but cost significantly more upfront. Award tickets may have redeposit fees when canceled unless you hold Medallion status.

Getting an eCredit for Future Travel

When you cancel a non-refundable ticket after the risk-free period, United typically issues an eCredit.  +1/844/213/7319 This credit is stored in your name and can be used for future United flights. The eCredit must be used within one year of the original ticket issue date, not the cancellation date. You can apply the credit toward any United flight, though you will need to pay any fare difference if the new flight costs more.

Medical Emergency Cancellations

If you need to cancel due to a medical emergency, United may provide additional flexibility.  +1/844/213/7319 Contact United customer service with documentation such as a

doctor's note or hospital records. While policies vary by situation, United often works with passengers facing genuine emergencies. Travel insurance is valuable for these situations as it can provide reimbursement when airline policies do not offer full refunds.

Weather and Operational Cancellations

Weather-related cancellations are considered controllable or uncontrollable depending on the situation.  +1/844/213/7319 When United cancels your flight for any reason, you are entitled to rebooking on the next available flight at no charge or a full refund. You are not required to accept rebooking and can choose the refund option instead. United provides updates via email and text when flights are canceled, giving you time to make alternative arrangements.

Voluntary vs Involuntary Cancellations

Understanding the difference between voluntary and involuntary cancellations affects your options.  +1/844/213/7319 Voluntary cancellations are when you choose to cancel for personal reasons and are subject to standard cancellation policies. Involuntary cancellations occur when United cancels the flight or makes significant schedule changes, entitling you to a full refund regardless of ticket type. Significant schedule changes typically mean more than 90 minutes difference in departure or arrival times.

Canceling Tickets Purchased with Miles and Cash

Some tickets are purchased using a combination of miles and cash.  +1/844/213/7319 When canceling these mixed-payment tickets, the cash portion follows standard refund policies while miles are redeposited according to award ticket rules. Any fees charged are typically deducted from the cash portion. Contact United customer service for specific details about your mixed-payment ticket cancellation as the process can be complex.