



FLIGHT DISRUPTIONS

Your flight just got canceled — do this first

The 20-minute rule that separates travelers who get home tonight from travelers stuck in a 4-hour phone queue.

Prepared by Demo Advisor · April 20, 2026

ADVISOR TIP

Demo content — illustrative only. This is a showcase of Compass features, not travel advice. Verify anything you'd actually act on.

Your flight just got canceled. The airline will rebook you automatically — maybe. The rebooking might be 11 hours away. It might route you through three cities. You have a small, closing window to do better than the algorithm.

IMPORTANT

Don't join the rebooking line at the gate. You'll be 80 people deep. Call the airline WHILE standing in the line — whichever works first.

In the first 20 minutes

1. Pull up your airline's app and look at the auto-rebook. Sometimes it's fine. Usually it's not.
2. Call the airline's reservations line (save the number to your phone now, not when you need it).
3. Simultaneously join the gate rebooking line.
4. If your airline has international desks (AA, Delta, United especially), try calling their international line — it's often shorter-queue.
5. Check competitor flights on the same route via Google Flights. Know what's available before you talk to the agent.

What to ask for

- Rebooking on a different carrier — airlines have interline agreements with most competitors for disruptions (legal term: "IROPs rebooking"). They won't volunteer this.
- Direct flights if your rebook has a connection
- Hotel voucher if overnight (required in many jurisdictions — mandatory in the EU under EC 261)
- Meal voucher for delays over 3 hours
- Your checked bag routed to your final destination, not held at the origin

Know your rights

US flights

As of 2024, DOT requires refunds (not vouchers) for canceled flights regardless of reason. Hotels, meals, and transport to/from hotel are airline-by-airline — see their customer service plan on their website.

EU flights (EC 261)

Flights departing EU or arriving EU on an EU airline qualify. Compensation ranges €250–600 based on distance. Delays over 3 hours count. Cancellations within 14 days of departure count.

Who to call for what

Airline

Rebooking, hotel voucher if offered, delay compensation.

Travel insurance

Trip interruption / trip delay coverage if you paid for it. Usually kicks in for delays over 6–12 hours.

Credit card benefits

Chase Sapphire Reserve, Amex Platinum, and several others include trip delay/cancellation insurance if you paid with the card. Often better than a third-party policy.

Your travel advisor

If you booked with us — we can call the airline on your behalf with our advisor line, which usually has a shorter queue.

FAQ

What if I booked through a third party (Expedia, Booking.com)?

The airline may refuse to talk to you directly — they'll send you back to the OTA. This is one reason we book direct with airlines for our clients.

Am I owed compensation for a weather cancellation?

Typically not under US rules. You ARE entitled to a refund, but not hotel/meal vouchers. EU rules are stricter.

Should I rebook and sort out compensation later?

Yes. Get home first. Document everything — screenshots, receipts, original boarding pass — and file for compensation within the airline's required window (usually 2 years).

Will travel insurance cover my lost hotel night at the destination?

If your policy has "trip interruption" and the delay meets the minimum (usually 6+ hours), yes. File the claim within 30 days.

If we booked your trip, call us — even at 2am. We'd rather spend 30 minutes helping you now than hear about it next week.
