

## WORST-CASE SCENARIO.

# HOW TO DEAL WITH A CANCELED FLIGHT

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### Do not stand in line.

When a flight is canceled, for any reason, hundreds of people line up at the ticket counter for rebooking. Ignore them and find a telephone.

*Do not stand in line at the ticket counter. Locate a telephone and call the airline to book a new flight.*



## **2** Call the airline.

Ask the airline (or your travel agent) for a seat on the next flight going to your destination. You will get into the airline's computer system quickly, without having to stand in line. Your airline may be able to transfer your ticket to another flight on that airline, in which case you can proceed directly to the gate.

## **3** Book a new flight.

Carry a list of all airlines that fly to your destination. The airline on which you are ticketed may not be able to rebook you on a later flight, or might not be the airline with the next available flight. Call other airlines and book a seat on a convenient flight. Depending on the fare you originally purchased and its restrictions, it might be simpler and faster to purchase a new ticket on a different airline, over the phone, and not use your original ticket. If you purchase a new ticket, proceed directly to the new airline's gate.

## **4** Have your ticket endorsed.

If you have made a reservation on a different airline but have not purchased a new ticket, you will need to get your existing ticket endorsed over to the new carrier. You will have to stand in line at the counter of the airline that canceled the flight, but you, unlike others in line, will already have another flight arranged.

## **5** Save unused tickets.

Unused tickets, one-way or round-trip, are almost as good as cash: They can be credited toward another flight on the same airline or, in some cases, refunded.

## **Be Aware**

- When flying within the United States, know Rule 240, which covers what an airline will do for you in the event of a flight delay or cancellation. Legally, airlines must compensate only ticketed passengers who arrive on time but are denied a seat. In the event of a lengthy flight delay or cancellation, airlines as a matter of good public relations generally will provide passengers a hotel, meal, free phone call, and other amenities (be sure to ask if they're not offered) or arrange flights on another airline. Check each airline's website for their delay/cancellation policies.
- If you know you will be traveling on a busy holiday weekend to a very busy airport, and especially if there is the possibility of severe weather, book a room in an airport hotel; you will be ready if your flight is canceled. Check the hotel's cancellation policy, so you are not charged for an unused room, and be sure to cancel the room if you don't need it.
- Do not use electronic tickets if there is a chance of bad weather, labor problems, or security delays. The computer systems of different airlines cannot communicate with one another, so e-tickets cannot be endorsed from one airline to another. A paper ticket must first be issued, extending the amount of time you will have to spend at the ticket counter.
- Carry on your bags whenever possible. If your luggage has been checked through to your final destination but you encounter delays, you may not be able to switch your luggage's flights and airlines as easily as your own.