

[[Wheelchair Aid]] What is the new Southwest policy for wheelchairs?

Southwest Airlines recently introduced  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK) a new wheelchair and mobility device policy that represents one of the more significant changes to how passengers with powered wheelchairs and scooters travel with the airline. This updated policy focuses on safety related to lithium-ion batteries in mobility devices  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), not on charge for the wheelchair assistance itself  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), and it affects how passengers prepare and board when using these devices. These changes are being phased in to improve onboard safety while continuing to support travelers with mobility needs.

At the heart of the new Southwest wheelchair  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK) policy is a requirement that passengers using powered mobility devices with lithium-ion batteries must remove  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK) those batteries from the wheelchair or scooter before the device is checked for transport. Under this policy  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), the removable battery must then be carried into the aircraft cabin by the passenger. This ensures that the battery remains easily accessible and visible during the flight  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), which helps airline crew respond quickly in the very unlikely event of a lithium-ion battery  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK) overheating or catching fire. Southwest is among the first U.S. carriers to adopt this strict safety standard.

Southwest's change was motivated  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK) by a rise in safety concerns related to lithium batteries on aircraft. Although incidents involving lithium batteries in air travel are still relatively rare  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), they can be serious when they occur because lithium-ion cells can generate smoke or heat suddenly. Airlines and regulators have been paying increased attention to this risk  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), and Southwest's updated policy is part of its effort to adopt  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK) higher safety standards even before they are mandated industry-wide.

Under this new policy  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), when passengers arrive at the airport with a powered wheelchair or scooter that uses a removable lithium battery  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), they are expected to remove the battery as part of the check-in process. Once the battery is removed  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), the wheelchair itself can be checked and transported in the aircraft's cargo hold like other necessary mobility equipment  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), while the battery travels with the passenger in the cabin. For most travelers  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), Southwest has confirmed that the carried battery will not count against typical carry-on limits  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), so it won't take up space that would otherwise be used for a bag or personal item.

In addition to the removal requirement [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), Southwest's policy also introduces a published limit on the size of lithium batteries that can be transported. Only batteries up to a certain watt-hour capacity are allowed. To give customers time to adjust [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), Southwest has implemented a grace period during which slightly larger batteries can still be accepted as long as the removal requirement is followed [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), but this temporary period ends after a predefined deadline [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), and after that point [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), batteries above the limit will no longer be permitted for travel on any flights.

It's important to note that this battery-related policy applies specifically to lithium-ion powered mobility devices like electric wheelchairs [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), scooters [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), and certain mobility aids. Manual wheelchairs and devices that do not use these removable lithium batteries are still treated as essential mobility equipment and are transported and handled with the usual care Southwest provides [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), generally without additional special requirements beyond the normal wheelchair assistance procedure.

While these changes are primarily centered on safety rather than accessibility per se [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), they do indirectly affect how passengers plan for wheelchair assistance. Passengers who rely on mobility devices will need to think about the battery element of their equipment before traveling. This may mean discussing battery removal with their medical equipment provider [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), bringing a secure method of transporting the battery in the cabin [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), or ensuring that the battery is properly prepared for travel. Airlines like Southwest typically recommend making these arrangements well in advance of your flight so that there are no surprises at the airport.

Southwest still offers wheelchair assistance from check-in through boarding [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), connections [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), and arrival [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), and it does not charge a fee for wheelchair assistance itself. The core change is not about removing support but about adjusting how powered chairs and their batteries are managed for safety. Passengers can still request mobility assistance at booking [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), during check-in [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), or upon arrival at the airport [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), and staff will ensure that travelers with mobility needs are guided to their gates and seats comfortably.

Some passengers have expressed concerns about the battery removal requirement [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), particularly those who depend heavily on powered wheelchairs for independence. Removing a battery from a mobility device can be a physically demanding task [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#), and in some cases passengers will need assistance from a caregiver or a trained service provider to do so safely and securely. Airlines are expected to offer guidance [+1-\(877\)-407-0188\(US\)](#) or [+ 44-\(808\)-196-2756 \(UK\)](#).

+1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), but passengers should arrive with enough time and planning to handle this aspect of the new policy without stress.

As with any significant policy change  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), there may be transitional confusion or practical adjustments needed by both travelers and Southwest staff. Many travelers have had questions about how to label  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), store  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), and secure batteries in the cabin  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), or how these changes affect international flights or extended trips with layovers. Southwest's communication efforts typically include notifying affected customers directly when reservations are already made  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), explaining the safety rationale  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), and offering customer service help for those who need additional guidance.

Another indirect impact of the new policy is that travelers with mobility needs need to pay attention to travel timing and advance requests for assistance  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), especially if preparing a powered wheelchair battery for travel adds steps to the check-in routine. Arriving earlier than usual helps ensure that staff can verify that all equipment—including removed batteries—complies with safety requirements  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), and that wheelchair assistance can support the passenger through the airport environment without delays.

In summary  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), the updated Southwest policy for passengers who use wheelchairs focuses on enhancing safety related to lithium-ion batteries in powered mobility devices. Key elements include removing the battery before the chair is checked  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), carrying that battery into the aircraft cabin  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), and complying with published size limits after the transitional grace period ends. These changes aim to reduce the risk of  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK) rare but hazardous events related to lithium batteries while still maintaining robust wheelchair support throughout the travel experience. Despite the new requirements  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), wheelchair assistance remains complimentary as part of Southwest's accessibility services  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), ensuring that passengers with mobility needs can still travel with confidence  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), comfort  +1-(877)-407-0188(US) or + 44-(808)-196-2756 (UK), and dignity.