



## Baggage Claim/Web Portal FAQ

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The following information is provided to assist in the submission of your Passenger Property Loss Claim. This information is applicable for situations when travel was on Southwest Airlines or AirTran Airways. Please take a moment to review the section pertaining to your specific issue. Providing the listed documents and information accurately can greatly expedite the processing of the submitted claim.

### Topics:

- **General Questions**
- **Lost Baggage Questions**
- **Delayed Baggage Questions**
- **Missing Article Questions**
- **Damage Baggage Questions**

*Note: Click on the topic to go directly to the page containing that information. You may click on the Southwest Plane on any page to return to this page.*



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### General Questions:

**Q - I left a message on the web page. How long will it be before I hear back?**

**A -** It may take up to 30 days to respond to your communication, however, we will make every effort to respond before that time. You will receive an email notifying you when any activity or communications have been updated to your claim.

**Q – Why haven't I received any emails concerning my claim?**

**A –** It may simply be an issue that no updates have been made to your claim. You may want to make sure to check your spam or junk mail filters to be sure that no communications with "Southwest Airlines" in the subject line have been blocked. You can always access the web page at any time to get the latest information on your claim.

**Q - How long does the claims process take to complete?**

**A -** Southwest has 30 days to respond to claims and is usually less than that. However, if additional information is needed such as receipts or ID, the process could take longer depending on how quickly we receive the requested items.

**Q – Who will contact me to advise of my claim being resolved?**

**A -** All correspondence advising of settlement made will be in written form and mailed to your address on file, or sent electronically to you via the Customer Web Portal (this page). An email will be sent notifying you of any updates to your claim.

**Q - Why do you not scan your bags at all points of handling?**

**A -** Currently, we only scan bags at the baggage service office in the event a bag is not claimed. There is work in process for future planeside and transfer scanning.

**Q - Why do you not secure the carousels at the airport from outside traffic?**

**A -** Southwest Airlines, as all other commercial carriers, lease our operating areas at all airports we serve, at many locations we share those same areas with other carriers. Our Baggage Service agents closely monitor activity around active carousels and randomly request to see claim checks. Any bags not claimed from the carousel are pulled and secured in our Baggage Service Office.



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### **Q – How do I provide documentation to Central Baggage Services?**

**A –** You may provide any documentation referred to in this document, by uploading it electronically on the web page under “Communicate with Us”, or by mail to:

Southwest Airlines Co.  
Central Baggage Services  
PO Box 36663  
Dallas, TX 75235-1663

### **Q – How do I upload a document or picture?**

**A –** Scan the document or take a photo of it and save it to your computer. Select the “Browse” button on the web page under “Communicate with Us”. After locating your document or photo select the button labeled “Add File” which will upload it to this web page. Finally, type in a brief message in the text box and select the “Send” button. The page will respond with “File information saved successfully” and the information will be shown in the “Communicate with Us” section.



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### Lost Baggage Questions:

**Q - Why do I have to wait five days to begin my claim?**

**A -** In most cases, lost/delayed bags are located and returned within 24 hours. Unclaimed bags are held at the local baggage service office and are then sent to our Central Baggage Services warehouse if unclaimed after five days.

**Q - You have received my information, what happens next?**

**A -** Once your information is received, a preliminary search is performed in our unclaimed baggage warehouse for your property based upon the bag description and contents listed provided. If we are unsuccessful in locating your property, the claim form is then assigned to a claims representative for processing.

**Q - I saw the agent affix a tag to my bag, why can't you find it?**

**A -** All airports utilize mechanical transfer equipment from curbside, or the ticket counter to the TSA screening area and on to the T-Point or transfer point, where they are sorted and loaded onto baggage carts to be transported to the aircraft. With that being said, there are occasions that bags will become lodged in the equipment and tear the tag from the bag.

**Q - Why do you need such a detailed description of my bag, I listed the items inside of it?**

**A -** One of the most important tools to locate your bag is to provide a detailed description of the bag... i.e.: weight, size, markings, ribbons tied to handles, number of wheels, etc.

**Q - I gave you a description of my bag, why do you need a list of all of the contents?**

**A -** Many bags look alike. In addition to the bag description that you provide, the contents also help us distinguish your bag from many others that look similar to yours. All bags received in our unclaimed warehouse are completely inventoried and the contents documented into our onhand database to provide an additional search tool. This information also provides the value of your property in the event we are unsuccessful in locating it.

**Q - Why would my bag be in Dallas?**

**A -** All unclaimed property after five days is forwarded to our Central Baggage warehouse at our headquarters in Dallas, TX

**Q - Why are you asking for a copy of my identification?**

**A -** We need to verify that the person filing the claim is the person (or guardian) of the claimant.



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**Q - Why are you requesting receipts for only some of the items in my bag?**

**A -** Depending upon the amount of the total claimed or higher priced Items; Southwest reserves the right to verify ownership and value.

**Q - Why did I receive a lesser amount than I claimed and how did you come up with that amount?**

**A -** Airlines, unlike insurance companies, will only reimburse for the lost property's actual value. Depending on the age of the item, there is an industry standard depreciation for prior usage. Additionally, we do not cover for loss or damage of items specifically excluded as outlined in our Contract of Carriage which can be obtained on Southwest.com.

**Q - Am I able to see a breakdown of the depreciation and exclusions from my claim?**

**A -** Yes, your claim representative can provide that upon your written request.

**Q - You only reimbursed me for my lost bag and items, why did you not reimburse me for the items I had to purchase on my trip?**

**A -** In the event of a monetary settlement for lost property, we are only obligated to reimburse for the lost items. If we make reimbursement for lost items and interim expenses, we would in a sense be paying for the items twice.

**Q - The baggage receipt I received at the airport when I filed my claim is the only evidence that I have of a pending claim; I do not want to send that copy. What can I do?**

**A -** Your copy of the Baggage Report may contain information helpful in the further tracing, location, or settlement of your baggage claim. You can submit a clear, legible, and identifiable copy of the Baggage Report received at the airport when you filed your claim.

**Q - Do I need to provide proof of flight travel?**

**A -** Yes, enclose your baggage tags and boarding passes for outbound and return travel.

**Q – I believe my bag may have been stolen, what should I do?**

**A –** If you were told or believe that your bag was possibly stolen we recommend filing a police report at the airport where the incident may have occurred.

**Q - What kind of picture identification is acceptable?**

**A -** Any clear, legible, and identifiable copy of a State issued Driver's License, State or Federal issued Identification Card or Passport is preferred.



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**Q - I do not have receipts for everything in my baggage. What is acceptable and/or required?**

**A** – Proof of ownership for some items may be required prior to settlement of your claim. Ownership and value may be evidenced by submitting originals of the following items...

- a) Store receipts
- b) Credit card/bank statements
- c) Cancelled checks
- d) Owner's manuals
- e) Photographs or appraisals dated prior to loss

If you feel that an explanation is necessary for any submitted documentation, or lack of documentation, please enclose a note of explanation.

**Q - What do I enter in the columns for the area describing Luggage Contents?**

**A** - Column "Item": General item description, i.e. 'shirt', 'pants', 'shoes', 'blouse', etc.

Column "Qty": Quantity of the missing item(s)

Column "Color/Material": Specific color and material (i.e. leather, cotton)

Column "Brand/Label": Specific brand (Arrow, Manhattan, Sony) or model/serial number (FM60/SN123-456).

Column "Store Name": Store this item was purchased from.

Column "Size": Specific size (specific to clothing items contained in luggage).

Column "Gender (M/F/CHD)": Indicate item for Male (M), Female (F), or Child (C).

Column "Purchase Date (MO/YR)": - date item was purchased, acquired, or received as gift.

Column "Original Cost (In USD)": Original price of item in US Dollars. If you've listed multiple items on a single line, list the price per item (i.e. for 3 pairs of socks purchased at \$2 each, you may list 3 in the QTY column and \$2 in the Original Cost column).

NOTE: Please be as descriptive and accurate as possible with the above fields, as our first interest is to locate your missing luggage and we're dependent on the information submitted to do so.

**Q - I do not have enough space to list all my items. What should I do?**

**A** - You may make copies of the form in the quantities necessary to list each item on a single line or list items on additional lined paper maintaining same column format.



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**Q - Everything is complete! Where do I send the Property Loss Claim?**

**A –** Send your completed claim form to the address on the last page of the form or scan and upload it electronically to this web page containing your claim information.

**Q – How long will it take to get my claim resolved?**

**A –** Once we receive your claim form it is assigned to a Baggage Specialist for individual attention. You will receive a response from your assigned Baggage Specialist with 30 days from receipt of the claim form – it will usually be much quicker but may depend on work volumes at that time.

**Q – Can I contact Central Baggage Services?**

**A –** You may contact Central Baggage Services at (214) 560-3600 Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm CST. Specific information on your claim, however, will not be available until your assigned Specialist has had time to review the information you submitted.



### **Delayed Baggage Questions:**

**Q - The baggage service office only paid me \$50 for the clothing items that I had to purchase for my meeting, are you able to reimburse me the remaining amount?**

**A -** Our Baggage Service Offices are capped at \$50 for reimbursement. Any reasonable additional requests are considered and funded from Central Baggage Services.

**Q - What do I need to submit for reimbursement of these items?**

**A -** We request that all original receipts for interim expenses be forwarded to Central Baggage Services for consideration. If you need a copy, keep a photocopy for your records.





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### Missing Article Questions:

**Q – How do I get started? Do I need to fill out a claim form?**

**A –** No claim form is required for you to fill out. Please provide a detailed list of your missing articles as well as any additional information that may assist in locating your item(s). While we are happy to search for your missing property, please be aware that Southwest Airlines does not assume liability for missing articles when there is no evidence of delay or damage to the baggage.

**Q - My bag was zipped closed, how did my zipper come open?**

**A -** Zippers from bags stacked together will often become hooked together and thus on occasion come open.

**Q - Why was my bag rummaged through? I didn't see a TSA document.**

**A -** The Transportation Security Administration inspects all checked luggage prior to being placed for transport on a commercial aircraft. They do make every effort to place items back as they were packed and insert a document to advise of the inspections. This is a human function and occasionally the document may fail to be placed in the bag.

**Q - Do you look for my missing item and how long does this process take?**

**A -** We make every effort to locate all items reported missing. This can take up to 30 days once we receive your detailed description of the item(s).

### Damage Baggage Questions:

**Q – How do I get started? Do I need to fill out a claim form?**

**A –** No claim form is required for you to fill out. Please provide a detailed description of your issue under the “Communicate with Us” section of the Customer Portal web page. Also include any photo’s or other information that may help in resolving your claim.

**Q - The baggage service office kept my bag and said they were sending it to Dallas, what happens next?**

**A -** In the event that we cannot replace your damaged bag with a new trade-out bag locally, your bag is sent to our luggage vendor who will attempt to repair or replace with the same or similar bag. If our vendor is unsuccessful with repair or replacement, we will then compensate you the fair market value of the bag. Please be prepared to provide the age of the bag this will help us in determining the fair market value. Unfortunately, the number of times the bag was used will not help in determining the bag's value.

**Q - My bag was part of a set, will you be able to get the exact bag that I had or replace the entire set?**

**A -** Our vendor makes every effort to obtain the same or similar bag. We are only liable for the damaged bag itself, not the entire set.

**Q - The baggage service office offered me a bag but I don’t want somebody’s used bag.**

**A -** All trade out bags offered by our Baggage Service offices are new bags provided by our replacement luggage vendor. We will never offer a used bag as a replacement.

**Q - Why do your baggage handlers handle the bags so roughly?**

**A -** Due to the nature of our business, unpredictable weather and the fast turnaround of our flights, it may appear that the luggage handlers are mishandling the baggage. Most reputable bags are constructed to withstand this type of handling. Additionally, our ramp agents are specially trained in the proper way to manually handle baggage.

**Q - Why do you not cover damage to zippers, zipper tabs, wheels and pull handles?**

**A -** Due to the mechanical equipment in place in all airports, zippers and tabs often become snagged in this equipment; therefore airlines have excluded these items from liability from damage. Over packed bags often result in damage to the zipper as well. In regards to pull handles, due to the shape of the cargo hold in aircraft, bags must be stacked on top of one another and sometimes the unprotected pull bar cannot withstand this excessive weight or the shifting that commonly occurs during takeoff, landing and turbulence.