

New Hire Letter of Agreement (LOA) Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: “What is considered a New Hires ‘first line of time’?”

- If the New Hire graduates **on or before the 4th of the month**, that month will be considered their first line of time.
- If the New Hire graduates **on or after the 5th of the month**, the remainder of that month plus the next month will be considered their first line of time.

Q2: “When do the ‘five (5) days off’ after training start?”

All New Hire classes graduate on a Friday with an Inflight Seniority Date starting the next day, Saturday. The five (5) days free from assignment after graduation is calculated as Saturday being the first day off.

Q3: “From which domicile will the New Hires initial pairing be assigned?”

All New Hires submit a Vacancy Bid while in Initial Training. This, along with class seniority, will determine which domicile their initial pairing will be assigned to originate out of. The intention is to assign this original multi-day pairing from a domicile closer to the New Hires top vacancy choice, essentially, closer to their home. Because assigning a pairing from their top vacancy selection will not always be possible, the New Hire may receive an assignment out of a different domicile or the domicile they are assigned to out of Initial Training.

Example: In Initial Training, I submitted a Vacancy Bid that listed my vacancy choices as PHX (Contingency 100%), LAS (Contingency 100%), LAX (Contingency 100%), DEN (Contingency 100%), and so on through all SWA Inflight Bases. I was awarded DEN for my first domicile as a Southwest Airlines Flight Attendant. Dependent on my Inflight Class seniority, Crew Planning will first look to assign my initial multi-day pairing in PHX. If there is no uncovered flying that meets the New Hire requirements (i.e., position, one New Hire per trip, and required time off after graduating from Initial Training) in PHX, they will look to assign me a trip in LAS. Crew Planning will continue down my Vacancy Bid looking to assign me a pairing in a domicile in the order of my vacancy choices, until they reach my awarded domicile. So, in my situation, if there isn’t an available pairing in PHX, LAS or LAX, Crew Planning will assign me a pairing in DEN.

Note: Like current practice, the initial multi-day pairing may, or may not, be an assignment originating in the New Hires assigned domicile.

Q4: “Will a New Hire Flight Attendant be assigned an initial pairing out of a Satellite Base?”

No.

Q5: “Where will this initial pairing be pulled from to assign it to a New Hire?”

Like current practice when a New Hire graduates with a significant break between graduation and the start of the new month in their assigned domicile, an unassigned pairing can be given to a Probationary Flight Attendant. These unassigned pairings can be those pulled for Primary Bid Award Vacation adjustments or Open Time.

***Note:** These initial pairings will not be taken out of Trip Trade/Give Away (TTGA). They will ONLY come from unassigned pairings.*

Q6: “Can the pairing be in the “A” or “D” position?”

Like current practice, the initial pairing assigned to a New Hire Flight Attendant cannot be in the “A” position. This agreement clarifies that the only way for a New Hire to be given a “D” position pairing is if the trip was originally built by Crew Planning in all four (4) positions (all on the same pairing number).

Q7: “Will a New Hire being given a pairing out of a domicile other than the one they’re assigned, negatively affect my Vacancy Bid? I’ve been waiting to get into DAL for months!”

No. All New Hires will continue to be awarded their domiciles based on operational need, vacancy availability and Inflight Seniority. Domicile bidding procedures will continue to follow the contractual language in Article 29.1 and awards will be made in order of seniority (most senior to most junior).

Q8: “What happens after the New Hire completes their initial pairing?”

The Probationary Flight Attendant will be given at least 72 hours off free from assignment and then can be assigned Ready Reserve blocks in their awarded domicile. These partial-month Reserve blocks will be constructed by Crew Planning dependent on operational need.

Q9: “Will the Reserve blocks that are constructed and assigned for a partial month out of training have a monthly block guarantee?”

Yes, all assigned Reserve blocks for a New Hire will be treated as original (K label) and go towards a monthly guarantee based on the number of Reserve days assigned. The calculation for this monthly guarantee will be the same as in Article 11.16.C of our Contract - 6 TFP per day of assigned Reserve.

For Example: If the New Hire is assigned 9 days of Reserve, their monthly guarantee will be 54 TFP (9 days x 6 TFP per assigned day).

Q10: “How will Crew Planning process the assigning of the New Hires Reserve blocks? And how will they determine which days of the week will be awarded?”

Crew Planning will determine the need for constructing these partial month Ready Reserve blocks based on operational need in the New Hires assigned domiciles. These blocks will then be assigned to the New Hires in class seniority order (most senior to most junior).

Q11: “Since Crew Planning will be building the blocks of Ready Reserve for the New Hire, how many days will these blocks be in duration?”

The constructed RR blocks will be the same duration as others in the Secondary Bid Packet.

For Example: If the Secondary Bid Packet in a specific domicile consists of all 3-day Reserve blocks, the Probationary Flight Attendant will be assigned the same duration blocks (3-day).

Q12: “What is ‘straight Reserve’?”

“Straight Reserve” is simply spelling out what has historically been the case for Probationary Flight Attendants... they will be on Reserve until the end of their probationary period, which is six (6) months.

The only exception to sitting “Straight Reserve” would be if the New Hire has an awarded vacation (internal transfer) or were somehow in a situation where they could hold a line (example: a significant number of people bidding down, their seniority has increased due to the number of New Hires being added to the Bases Seniority List, etc.). The latter happens very infrequently.

Q13: “When am I off probation?”

The Probationary Period is defined in Article 7.1 as “the first six (6) months of employment extended by any periods of furlough, suspension or leave(s) of absence.” This means that if you are projected to complete probation by the last day of the current bid period, you won’t be required to continue sitting “Straight Reserve” into the next month. Your bid award in month seven (7) will be based on your domicile seniority and the Base rotation. This means, depending on your seniority and the Reserve rotation in your domicile, you may be awarded a line... or you may be required to sit Reserve for your first month off probation.

For Example: I graduated January 19, 2021. My projected off-probation date is June 20, 2021 (six months and one day after my graduation date). I will participate in the Primary Bidding process for July and will not be required to sit Reserve for August, unless I fall into a rotation that requires me to do so.

Please note, this is the current practice for calculating the Probation Period.

Q13: “Is this New Hire change part of our Contract?”

This new language is a Letter of Agreement (LOA) negotiated between TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines Management. It will remain a LOA throughout Section 6 negotiations until a Tentative Agreement (TA) is ratified by the Membership. It was also specified that this LOA can be terminated within 90 days by either party with a written notice of intent.