

Basics of Minimum Crew

How many Flight Attendants need to be in their boarding positions to start boarding? What about deplaning during a plane change? How is Minimum Crew different when we're at our overnight as opposed to finishing a trip in domicile? FAA Minimum Crew Requirements and SWA policy can be a bit confusing. So, let's break down what is expected of us and our Contractual protections when it comes to fulfill our Minimum Crew obligations.

Reporting to the Aircraft and Boarding

YOU ARE HERE

													Totals				
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	En Route	Position	I	L	MT	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	GTP	Credit	Overfly
		Rpt 1400															
23 Nov	4156	MDW 1500	MIA 1805	800	125				305	50	S					360	
23 Nov	4233	MIA 1855	STL 2200	800	115				305	55	S					360	
23 Nov	4781	STL 2255	OKC 0030	800	41				135	1725						180	
		Rls 0100											745	1100		900	
OKC:1625 Hotel: Sheraton Downtown #405-235-2780 Trans: #405-681-3311																	
		Rpt 1725															
24 Nov	4109	OKC 1755	DEN 1935	7M8	147				140	150						190	
24 Nov	3428	DEN 2125	IND 2345	800	50				220	1740						280	
		Rls 0015											400	650		506 D	
IND:1640 Hotel: Courtyard Downtown #317-822-9029 Trans: #954-573-1717																	
		Rpt 1655															
25 Nov	4352	IND 1725	AUS 2010	7M8	157				245	45						320	
25 Nov	3278	AUS 2055	MDW 2320	7M8	112				225	0						280	
		Rls 2350											510	655		600	

This Flight Attendant's check-in time is 1400 Central Time (CT). Because they are working a non-regulatory requirement flight (MDW-MIA), they must report to the gate no later than 1430 CT.

"A Flight Attendant is required to be at the aircraft thirty (30) minutes prior to departure, and no more than forty-five (45) minutes prior to departure for working (not deadheading) Flight Attendants on Regulatory Requirements (RR) flights, 737 MAX 7 (150 seats), or scheduled -800 aircraft." (Article 8.2.A.1.c)

***** IMPORTANT NOTE:** Report time does not equate to boarding time.

"Check-in times will include appropriate time for Flight Attendants to perform their pre-flight duties prior to the commencement of boarding." (Article 8.2.A.1.c)

Flight Attendant Responsibilities:

- As the "A" Flight Attendant, you must coordinate with "B", "C" and "D" that everyone is ready to board.
- The "A" Flight Attendant will notify the Operations Agent that all Flight Attendants are ready to board the aircraft.
- All Flight Attendants are responsible to report any irregularities during boarding. If the Ops Agent has passengers lined up in the jetway before the "A" Flight Attendant has given the go ahead to start boarding - file an IR.
- Boarding earlier than required (30 minutes prior to scheduled departure) is permissible as long as all Flight Attendants agree and all safety/security checks are complete.

Remember: Once boarding has commenced, all Flight Attendants must remain onboard the aircraft. The only exception is if there is a safety or security concern that needs to be addressed.

Basics of Minimum Crew

Ground Time - No Aircraft Swap

YOU ARE HERE														Totals			
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Pax	Position	I	L	MT	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	GTP	Credit	Overfly
Rpt 1400																	
23 Nov	4156	MDW 1500	MIA 1855	800	125				305	50	S					360	
23 Nov	4233	MIA 1855	STL 2200	800	115				305	55	S					360	
23 Nov	4781	STL 2255	OKC 0030	800	41				135	1725						180	
Rls 0100														745	1100	900	
OKC:1625 Hotel: Sheraton Downtown #405-235-2780 Trans: #405-681-3311																	
Rpt 1725																	
24 Nov	4109	OKC 1755	DEN 1935	7M8	147				140	150						190	
24 Nov	3428	DEN 2125	IND 2345	800	50				220	1740						280	
Rls 0015														400	650	506 D	
IND:1640 Hotel: Courtyard Downtown #317-822-9029 Trans: #954-573-1717																	
Rpt 1655																	
25 Nov	4352	IND 1725	AUS 2010	7M8	157				245	45						320	
25 Nov	3278	AUS 2055	MDW 2320	7M8	112				225	0						280	
Rls 2350														510	655	600	

This Flight Attendant has landed in STL. They do not have to change aircraft. If they go get food, when do they need to be back at the plane for boarding?

The language in Article 8.2.A.1.c about report times apply to stops throughout the day as well. This means you must be onboard the aircraft thirty (30) minutes before a non-regulatory flight or forty-five (45) minutes before a regulatory requirement flight, 737 MAX 7 (150 seats), or scheduled -800 aircraft.

***** IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you arrive early, Contract 2024 has added language that says we are not required to be in our boarding positions prior to scheduled arrival time.

"Flight Attendants will not be responsible to be in their boarding positions for the outbound flight prior to the scheduled arrival time. However, the company may reasonably require early boarding under critical circumstances."
(Article 8.2.A.1.i)



"What are "critical circumstances," and who can require early boarding?"

"Critical circumstances" refer to events that would affect the ability of the aircraft to depart as scheduled, such as severe weather moving in that could shut down airport operations, etc. Dispatch may direct the Captain of the need for an early departure, which could require early boarding.

***** IMPORTANT: "Critical circumstances" are NOT operational issues such as excessive wheelchairs or full flights. *****

Flight Attendant Responsibilities:

- All Flight Attendants must be in their boarding position prior to the commencement of boarding.
- The "A" Flight Attendant will communicate Flight Crew readiness for boarding with the Ops Agent.

Basics of Minimum Crew

Ground Time - Aircraft Swap

														Totals		
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Eq	Pax	Position	I	L	MT	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	GTP
Rpt 1400																
23 Nov	4156	MDW 1500	MIA 1805	800	125					305	50	S				360
23 Nov	4233	MIA 1855	STL 2200	800	115					305	55	S				360
23 Nov	4781	STL 0030	MDW 0100	800	41					135	1725					900
OKC:1625 Hotel: Downtown #405-235-2780 Trans: #405-681-3311																
Rpt 1500																
24 Nov	4109	OKC 0035	DEN 1935	7M8	147					140	150					190
24 Nov	3428	DEN 2125	IND 2345	800	50					220	1740					280
Rls 0015																
IND:1640 Hotel: Courtyard Downtown #317-822-9029 Trans: #954-573-1717																
Rpt 1655																
25 Nov	4352	IND 1725	AUS 2010	7M8	157					245	45					320
25 Nov	3278	AUS 2055	MDW 2320	7M8	112					225	0					280
Rls 2350																
														510	655	600

This Flight Attendant has landed in DEN and has an aircraft swap. When do they need to be at the new aircraft for the DEN-IND leg?

"A Flight Attendant is required to be at the aircraft thirty (30) minutes prior to departure, and no more than forty-five (45) minutes prior to departure for working (not deadheading) Flight Attendants on Regulatory Requirements (RR) flights, 737 MAX 7 (150 seats), or scheduled -800 aircraft." (Article 8.2.A.1.c)

***** IMPORTANT NOTE:** The language about variable report times and forty-five (45) minutes report time for -800 series aircraft has NOT been implemented to date of this publication. Communication will come from TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines when those two changes become procedure.

"We landed late and have to go from B16 to A4a in MDW! Can some of us run to the next plane and get it ready?"

When your duty day is not complete and you have an aircraft swap, Flight Attendants can go to the new plane as long as Minimum Crew is maintained for deplaning the inbound aircraft.

"What is Minimum Crew for this situation?"

At no time when passengers are onboard the aircraft, can Flight Attendants go below Minimum Crew. For a -700 aircraft, there must be at least one (1) Flight Attendant onboard and for a -800/MAX8 aircraft, there must be at least two (2) Flight Attendants.

Keep In Mind: When swapping out Crews with through passengers onboard, Minimum Crew numbers **MUST** be kept. At no time can Minimum Crew be reduced below the required one (1) for a -700/MAX 7 or two (2) for a -800/MAX 8. This may mean that an inbound Crew Member(s) may need to stay onboard until an outbound Crew Member(s) can board the aircraft and assume responsibility of the cabin and passengers onboard.



Basics of Minimum Crew

End of Duty Into RON

													Totals					
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Eq	Pax	Position	I	L	MT	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	GTP	Credit	Overfly
Rpt 1400																		
23 Nov	4156	MDW 1500	MIA 1805	800	125					305	50	S					360	
23 Nov	4233	MIA 1855	STL 2200	800	115					305	55	S					360	
23 Nov	4781	STL 0030	OKC 0030	800	41					135	1725				745	1150	900	
YOU ARE HERE																		
OKC:1625 Hotel: Courtyard Downtown #405-235-2780 Trans: #405-681-3311																		
Rpt 1500																		
24 Nov	4109	OKC 0030	DEN 1935	7M8	147					140	150						190	
24 Nov	3428	DEN 2125	IND 2345	800	50					220	1740						280	
Rls 0015																		
IND:1640 Hotel: Courtyard Downtown #317-822-9029 Trans: #954-573-1717																		
Rpt 1655																		
25 Nov	4352	IND 1725	AUS 2010	7M8	157					245	45						320	
25 Nov	3278	AUS 2055	MDW 2320	7M8	112					225	0						280	
Rls 2350																		
														510	655		600	

This Flight Attendant has landed in IND and is done for the day. When can they leave and head to the hotel for rest?

"During a Crew change at the end of a duty day when there are through passengers, all inbound Flight Attendants must remain with the aircraft until the outbound Crew arrives. In the event the outbound Crew is delayed, Crew Scheduling may direct the inbound Crew to begin the boarding process."
(FAM 8.8.6.1)

***** IMPORTANT NOTE:** During a Crew change where there are no through passengers, Flight Attendants are not required to remain with the aircraft unless Crew Scheduling instructs them otherwise.

"I'm flying 'D' and just finished my second day of three. My Crew is continuing on with through passengers and I'm heading to the hotel with the Pilots. Do I have to wait until the outbound 'D' arrives? The Captain is telling me that we need to go."

Because you are finishing your duty day, you must wait for your replacement "D" to arrive before leaving for your overnight. Your Captain is likely not aware that our work rules require us to remain with through passengers until we've been replaced just in case Crew Scheduling needs us to board an aircraft.

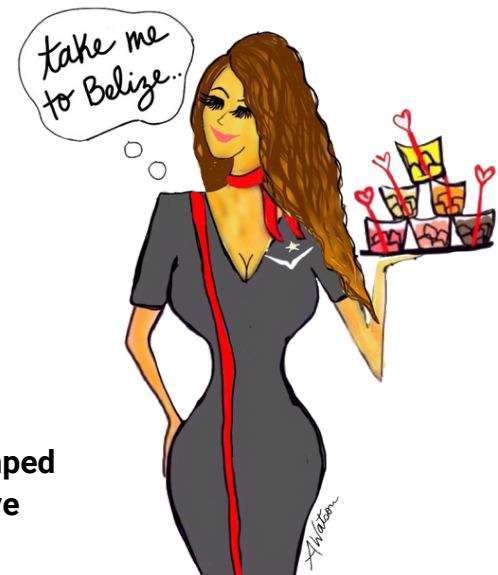
"We just landed at our overnight and all of the through passengers jumped off to grab food. Do we still need to wait for the outbound Crew to arrive before leaving?"

Yes.



"Can we use End of Pairing Procedures into a RON?"

Unfortunately, no. End of Pairing Procedures are only applicable when returning to domicile at the end of your pairing.



Basics of Minimum Crew

Pairing Completion in Domicile

													Totals					
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Eq	Pax	Position	I	L	MT	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	GTP	Credit	Overfly
Rpt 1400																		
23 Nov	4156	MDW 1500	MIA 1805	800	125					305	50	S					360	
23 Nov	4233	MIA 1855	STL 2200	800	115					305	55	S					360	
23 Nov	4781	STL 2255	OKC 0030	800	41					135	1725						180	
Rls 0100														745	1100		900	
OKC:1625 Hotel: Sheraton Downtown #405-235-2780 Trans: #405-681-3311																		
Rpt 1725																		
24 Nov	4109	OKC 1755	DEN 1935	7M8	147					140	150						190	
24 Nov	3428	DE	345	800	50					220	1740				400	650	506 D	
YOU ARE HERE																		
IND:1640 Hotel: Co #317-822-9029 Trans: #954-573-1717																		
Rpt 1																		
25 Nov	4352	IND 17	AUS 2010	7M8	157					245	45						320	
25 Nov	3278	AUS 2055	MDW 2320	7M8	112					225	0						280	
Rls 2350														510	655		600	

This Flight Attendant has landed in MDW and is done with their pairing. When can they leave to head home?

If the flight is terminating (not a through flight) or no through passengers are present, Minimum Crew must be maintained for the entirety of the deplaning process.

If it is a through flight with passengers, all Flight Attendants must remain with the aircraft until the outbound Crew has arrived or End of Pairing Procedures has been approved by Crew Scheduling.



“What are End of Pairing Procedures?”

In an attempt to increase our Flight Attendants’ quality of life while continuing to protect the operation, Southwest tested and permanently implemented the End of Pairing Procedures. When finishing a pairing in domicile, these procedures allow for Crew Scheduling to release inbound Flight Attendants from duty prior to the arrival of the outbound Flight Attendants. (FAM 11.33.3.4)

“How do we initiate the End of Pairing Procedures?”

Upon arrival into domicile and after completion of all deplaning responsibilities, a Flight Attendant would need to call Crew Scheduling and let them know that it’s the end of the pairing and the Crew would like to initiate End of Pairing procedures to reduce down to Minimum Crew. Crew Scheduling will review the situation and determine if releasing Crew is operationally feasible.

“My ‘C’ has a family dinner to get to. Can we agree that they would be released first and tell Crew Scheduling?”

Yes. If the Crew agrees, they can share that information with Crew Scheduling. As long as your “C” is finishing their pairing and contractually legal, Crew Scheduling would prioritize their release request.

Note: If all through passengers have deplaned (i.e., to grab food), Minimum Crew requirements still apply. If all through Passengers deplane, Flight Attendants must remain in the gate area and accessible to Crew Scheduling until the outbound Crew arrives.

