

# IRREGULAR OPERATIONS

*Survival Guide*

*Spirit Airlines Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA)*



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## Understanding Spirit Airlines' Airline Disruption Plan (ADP)

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In December of 2021, Spirit Airlines developed and implemented the *Airline Disruption Plan* to improve how the company responds to any irregularities to the operation. The ADP standardizes the response and focuses on proactively engaging the right teams at the right time to attack and de-escalate operational challenges. The company has defined the following levels of irregular operations (IROP) as such:

- **Normal Operations**
- **Level 1 IROP:** Cancellations are at 4 to 5.9%, A:14 drops below 70%.
- **Level 2 IROP:** Cancellations are at 6 to 7.9%, A:14 drops below 60%.
- **Level 3 IROP:** Cancellations are 8% or greater, A:14 drops below 50%.

Information regarding Irregular Operations should be communicated to all employees via your Spirit Airlines Employee email. Your Spirit Airlines AFA-CWA Leaders will do their best to communicate to the membership as well via e-lines as information becomes available. If you are not subscribed to receive communications from your Spirit AFA-CWA team, please subscribe today by clicking [here](#).

Keep in mind that every irregular operation will be handled slightly differently and will still follow the same guidelines as outlined in the company's airline disruption plan. If you work with crew members who state that during the last IROP, "self-releasing" was okay to do, it might not be okay to do "now." You are required to follow company policy, etc. And if it has not been explicitly stated in a communication from the company, it is in your best interest to not do what another crew member stated was once ok.

If in doubt, follow company policy, contact an Inflight Supervisor, or reach out to your AFA Team for guidance! Email is preferred, especially when communicating with anyone from management as this creates a paper trail and can solidify your case in the event you receive a Notice of Investigation.

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## Part 1: Starting a Pairing During Irregular Operations

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1. Unless you are notified of a change by crew scheduling on a recorded line, you **MUST** report to the crew room at your scheduled report time. Only Crew Scheduling can tell you not to report at your respective report time (CBA 7.G.3.)
2. Please keep in mind, you might see on your [insert app name here] that your flight is delayed or canceled. Regardless of what the internet is telling you, unless you are notified by crew scheduling to deviate, you must report to the crew room for your scheduled report time.
3. There is no need to call crew scheduling to tell them your flight is delayed/canceled. They know. They work pairings one at a time, and when they get to you, they get to you. There is no way to “jump the line.” So just wait patiently for your phone call. Find a good show on Netflix to binge-watch while you wait - just make sure you keep your ringer on.
4. If your flight is canceled, they can give you another flight to work that is not your own, so long as the new pairing arrives NO LATER than 2 hours after your original pairing. (CBA 8.N.) *For example, if you are starting a four-day trip on Aug 1st and your original pairing had you returning to base at 1700 on August 4th, the new assignment they give you must return no later than 1900 on August 4th.*
5. How long do you have to wait for a new assignment? Unfortunately, the CBA does not provide a time limit for crew scheduling to reassign you, so just check in for your flight and wait. Although, keep in mind, your ORIGINAL REPORT TIME cannot change, and you have a maximum **scheduled** duty day of 14 hours (Flight Attendants are not required to remain on duty in excess of fifteen (15) hours). If you have been in the crew room for 8 or 9 hours... *THEN MAYBE* we would call crew scheduling and ask what you are supposed to be doing... But please EXPECT to wait several hours for your reassignment or release.

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6. If you are released to Time Recoverable/Time Available (TAJ), you are good to head home. The company has the option to reassign you TODAY, RIGHT NOW, or put you on TAJ for the rest of your trip. When on TAJ, if the company does not provide you an assignment when you get notified, they will need to assign you with 24 hours' notice. (8.N.) For example: *You were supposed to do that four-day on August 1st, but they canceled the pairing and marked you TAJ. When they call you, they say you are released for today (go home) and you'll be on TAJ for August 2nd through August 4th. If they want you to work a pairing on August 3rd, they will need to notify you between 2000-2400 on August 1st for you to be assigned a pairing on August 3rd.*

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**There is NO SUCH THING as “Self-Release.” You are required to make positive contact with a Crew Scheduler prior to leaving the airport.**

-Spirit AFA-CWA Scheduling Team

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## Part 2: Irregular Operations While Mid-Pairing

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1. Again, even though you may see your flight is delayed/canceled, unless you have received notification from crew scheduling, you **MUST** check out of the hotel and report to the airport at your scheduled report time. You are not permitted to change your shuttle time without conferring with Crew Scheduling.
2. As before, calling crew scheduling isn't going to change this fact, so we wouldn't even waste our time trying. Remember, your duty day begins at your scheduled report time unless it has been changed by crew scheduling before you report. So, just go to the airport and start the clock running for your duty day.
3. Remember, only crew scheduling can reschedule you. So, if a ground service agent comes hunting you down and tells you that you must board a flight to [insert city here], politely inform them that, until scheduling notifies you, you cannot deviate from your original schedule. A professional response to our fellow ground handling team members would be: "Have them call me, then and I'll be right over there."
4. Again, if it's been many hours of relaxing airport time, and you realize that you're going to time out sitting there, THEN MAYBE call crew scheduling and ask to get a hotel room and legal rest.
5. If it is the last day of your pairing and your flight back to base is canceled, this is the worst - and it is miserable. Just remember that CBA 8.R. applies in this scenario. The company must put you on positive space on the next available Spirit flight back to your base. Now, AFA means positive space to be a deadhead, but the company disagrees and says that positive space could be that you're working the flight. We've never been able to agree on this and it's unlikely you're going to solve 5 years' worth of arguing over this language with a heated conversation with a crew scheduler. So, unfortunately, if you have to work it, please open a ticket on the [support center](#) and your case will be added to the 8.R. grievance that is planned for arbitration.

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6. If the next flight back to base isn't until tomorrow, you will need to get a hotel room for the night. The company will provide you with a room. This takes a little bit of time, but it shouldn't be too long. Just call the crew scheduling accommodations desk and wait on hold while they book you a room.

## Part 3: No Hotel or Deadhead Confirmation(s)

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1. THESE are the issues you should be calling crew scheduling about. All those other Pilots and Flight Attendants with non-urgent concerns, calling about their flight that shows canceled for tomorrow, should not be tying up the lines for you. If you are without a hotel or deadhead locator (positive space seat on a scheduled deadhead), call Crew Scheduling immediately! I would send them an email as well. Paper trails are everything.
  - a. Please check your Spirit Airlines Employee email frequently as the company now emails positive space/deadhead record locators and hotel confirmations during irregular operations.
2. Please do not call crew scheduling unless one of the urgent issues above applies to you.
3. Do **NOT** call Hotel Connections directly for a hotel room. First, their phone lines are not recorded, and this cannot be used as evidence in a future grievance case. Secondly, Hotel Connections cannot book you a room without authorization from crew scheduling. So, you are just wasting your time by calling them. Call the crew scheduling hotel accommodations desk instead.
4. If you show up at some strange hotel you have never been to before and they ask you for a credit card, you can either provide them with one for incidentals or call the crew accommodations desk to provide the hotel with the Spirit Corporate credit card. This is a huge pain, we know. But with non-contracted hotels that are not accustomed to having crews, this is often an issue. The only upside is, if you give them your credit card, you will NOT get charged for the room, but you WILL get the points. Or stand on principle and have the company reset your rest when you finally get into your room after they work everything out with the hotel (4.A.6.)

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## Part 4: After Irregular Operations is Over

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1. Check your pay report at [www.spirit.com/link](http://www.spirit.com/link). Ensure that you were paid the greater of either YOUR ORIGINAL SCHEDULED PAIRING or the PAIRING YOU ACTUALLY WORKED.
  - a. Example: *If your four-day trip was worth 22:30 to start, but you have a screenshot from [insert app here] showing that on day two of your trip you had 37 credit hours, but you only ended up working 18, you will only get paid the 22:30. What you were scheduled to work or what you actually worked ONLY, whichever is greater.*
2. If your rescheduled pairing went into your scheduled days off, you are owed a DOR that YOU MUST take in this month unless you have no other trips, then it can be carried over into the next bid month.
3. If you feel the contract was violated, use this time to open a ticket on the [AFA support center](#).

## Part 5: General Irregular Operations Survival Tips

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1. If you are sick, call crew scheduling as far in advance as possible as hold times are going to be excessive.
  - a. Take advantage of the Crew Chat Bot on your FAEFB as well and take a screenshot once the chat indicates your sick call has been recorded.
2. If you end up with a broken pairing/mixed crew, and you have five flight attendants on your A321 that all signed in as lead, just rebid for positions based on seniority. Fighting about it will only make the day go worse. If you get stuck flying lead when you DIDN'T sign in as lead, make sure you fill out a pay exceptions report.
  - a. NOTE: broken pairings should be handled according to the procedures outlined in the FAM (6.2.3).
  - b. If you are selected to fly lead, ensure you update the positions on NKabin, if able.
  - c. If unable to sync/update positions on NKabin, complete an exceptions report found on [Spirit LiNK](#).

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3. Your AFA Scheduling / Reserve / Hotel reps and your Local Officers are resident experts in a little bit of everything but do not have magic powers. Calling them to ask them what scheduling is going to give you or asking them to “fix” something on your schedule will only end in disappointment for you. We use the CBA section 22 grievance procedure when filing contractual complaints.
  4. Again, your AFA Representatives are resident experts in a little bit of everything and remember that a Flight Attendant in the crew room that says they are AFA rep may not have all the correct answers. Your scheduling reps know about scheduling and your hotel reps know about hotels and so on. Make sure you’re getting the right advice from the right rep and follow up with the appropriate committee:
    - a. How many times can crew scheduling change my schedule? If you’re not canceled, and you’re legal, just ONCE per month and FIVE TIMES per year (8.Q.). But a true reroute is when your flight is OPERATING, and you are LEGAL, but crew scheduling decides to have you do something else instead. This is what is limited to once per month. But, if your flight cancels, and they schedule you to work a different flight, this is NOT a reroute as defined in section 8.Q. You are only guaranteed schedule integrity if your flight operates, and you are legal to fly it. So, the short answer, if your scheduled flight isn’t happening due to a cancellation, scheduling can reschedule you infinitely until they finally put you on a flight that actually departs.
  5. HELP EACH OTHER OUT and MAKE THE MOST OF IT. If you’re in the crew room and you see someone having a difficult time, try to cheer them up. If you see a crew in the lobby of a hotel waiting for rooms, offer to watch their bags while they change their clothes. If you are stuck in an airport with your crew, well, we don’t know how to make that good, but still try. Don’t let crew scheduling suck you down into this nightmarish hole they create. STAY POSITIVE and ENJOY EACH OTHER’S COMPANY as we work our way through our not-so-irregular, irregular operations.

## REMEMBER:

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There is absolutely no such thing as self-release nor has there ever been, contrary to what you have been told by senior Flight Attendants, or social media. Always follow company policy or updates issued by the company during specific irregular operations. Current company policies, CBA sections, and communications issued by the company supersede previous IROP communications.

### References:

[Contacting Crew Scheduling & Release from Duty \(2022\)](#)  
[IROP Survival Guide \(2021\)](#)