

# Leaked Southwest Airlines Memo Asks HQ Employees to Help Get Flights on Track

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Southwest Airlines is working so hard to right its corporate ship that it is enlisting Dallas HQ employees as volunteers on shifts helping with crew scheduling.

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Southwest airlines passenger planes at terminal at Portland International Airport (PDX).

Citing a leaked memo sent on Wednesday, Business Insider

reported that the shifts would be eight hours long and run around the clock. The airline also wants employees to take a break from their regular positions and make the temporary switch.

Southwest told Insider that additional employees are lending a hand. However, the memo did not mention extra pay for anyone answering the call.

New hires in crew scheduling reportedly undergo extensive training. The memo said untrained corporate employees would be trained using a “train the trainer” approach – essentially shadowing schedulers to learn the ropes on the fly. Crew schedulers handle logistics to ensure Southwest flights have correctly scheduled cabin crew members who know their flight assignments.

The call for scheduling volunteers appears to be related to the airline’s disastrous Christmas weekend. Thanks partly to a “once in a generation” winter storm, more than 9,000 flights – over 91% of domestic flights alone – were canceled between Sunday and Wednesday.

The storm wasn’t entirely to blame, as Insider reported that Southwest is running on out-of-date software, though an airline rep indicated a system upgrade might happen in the near future. The rep said that in Southwest’s “desired state,” the airline “will have automation that can handle crew reassignments quickly and efficiently.”

Late Wednesday, the *New York Times* reported that over 2,300 Thursday flights were already canceled and that the airline said “it could be days until normal service resumes.”

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