How do bereavement flights work, and how do you book one?

Key facts

- Air Canada, Delta, Alaska, WestJet and Hawaiian still publish a bereavement fare; Alaska and Hawaiian now share one unified policy rather than Hawaiian's old interisland-only fare (Air Canada, Delta Air Lines, Alaska Airlines, WestJet, checked 2026-09-22).
- American Airlines and Southwest Airlines say directly they do not offer bereavement or emergency fares (American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, checked 2026-09-19).
- United Airlines discontinued its bereavement discount on March 14, 2014, and now handles a family death through case-by-case customer service exceptions (AFAR, checked 2026-09-19).
- Air Canada requires travel to occur within 10 days of booking and no more than 60 days out, and it wants supporting proof emailed within 7 days of your return (Air Canada, checked 2026-09-19).
- Delta requires travel to begin within 7 days of the death or imminent death, and the fare can only be booked by phone or through the Fly Delta app, not on delta.com (Delta Air Lines, checked 2026-09-19).
- A separate federal rule applies to any airline ticket, bereavement or not: one bought 7 or more days before departure can be held or canceled free for 24 hours (US Department of Transportation, checked 2026-09-19).
- Industry reporting puts typical bereavement fare savings around 5 to 25 percent off the lowest available fare, not the deepest discount on the route (AFAR, checked 2026-09-19).
- Alaska Airlines now shares one bereavement policy with Hawaiian Airlines: a 10 percent discount off the lowest available fare, booked by phone and requiring an Atmos Rewards account rather than the airline's old Mileage Plan program (Alaska Airlines, checked 2026-09-22).
- Delta's immediate family definition for its bereavement fare reaches past parents and siblings to include aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews (Delta Air Lines, checked 2026-09-22).
- JetBlue defines immediate family for its bereavement fee waiver as parents, spouses, children, siblings, grandparents and their equivalents by marriage or adoption (JetBlue, checked 2026-09-28).

Step-by-step checklist

- [ ] Confirm your relationship fits that airline's own definition of immediate family
- [ ] Check whether your airline currently publishes a bereavement fare, using the table above
- [ ] Call the reservations line; none of these fares can be booked online
- [ ] Have the funeral home's, hospital's or hospice's name, address and phone number ready
- [ ] Ask the agent to compare the bereavement fare against the lowest published fare
- [ ] Send any required documentation by the deadline, such as Air Canada's 7-day-after-return email window
- [ ] Keep a copy of your confirmation and any documents sent, in case of a dispute