



Bumping is the term for when a passenger is required by the airline to miss a scheduled flight. The situation usually involves overbooking, and all seats are occupied, or when more tickets were sold than actual seats available. It's a common airline gamble to avoid losing money, because on a typical schedule, several reserved-seat passengers with tickets will miss the flight.

Bumping can also be an option, in airline terms called Voluntarily Denied Boarding. This happens when the flight is full and late-arriving ticket holders won't be permitted to board unless some already-aboard passengers opt to give up their seats. The incentive for this willing bumping is usually cash and/or free tickets for future flights. Usually, the volunteer may be offered the next available flight. If the delay will be overnight, the airline may also pay for a nearby hotel room.

Involuntarily Denied Boarding means the flight is overbooked and one or several already seated passengers may be chosen to be bumped. If it happens to you, there are several steps to take.

First, if this flight is absolutely essential, tell the attendant. It could be for medical condition, family situation, important business meeting or other need to stay on the flight. If denied, get the employee's name and report facts immediately on the airline customer service phone or Email address.

As with those voluntarily bumped, if you're forced to miss your flight, the airline may offer incentives. It could be the next available flight, overnight hotel, free round-trip on your next flight and/or cash settlement.

Whether being bumped is voluntary or not, be sure you pass the changed info promptly to anyone waiting for you at your destination. When you've confirmed booking on a later flight, give that specific info.