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Southwest Plane Landed at Midway With Both Nose Tires Flat, No Injuries

Both nose-gear tires lost pressure on landing; first responders on scene found no injuries at Midway

By [PATRICIA GRAHAM](#)

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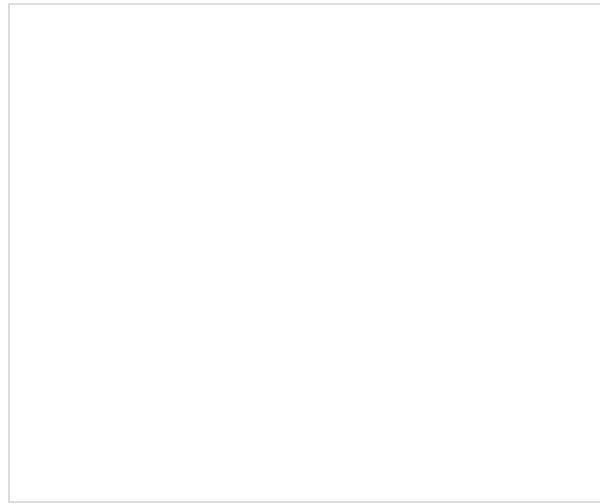


(PHOTO: FORSAKEN FILMS / UNSPLASH)

What Happened to Southwest Flight 1243 at Chicago Midway This Morning

A Southwest Airlines Boeing 737-800 touched down at Chicago Midway International Airport on Monday morning with both nose-gear tires having lost air pressure, triggering an emergency response from the Chicago Fire Department and a 46-minute delay for the flight — but no injuries to anyone on board and no disruption to the wider airport. Read the full [Southwest flight 1243 nose gear incident](#) coverage from ABC7 Chicago.

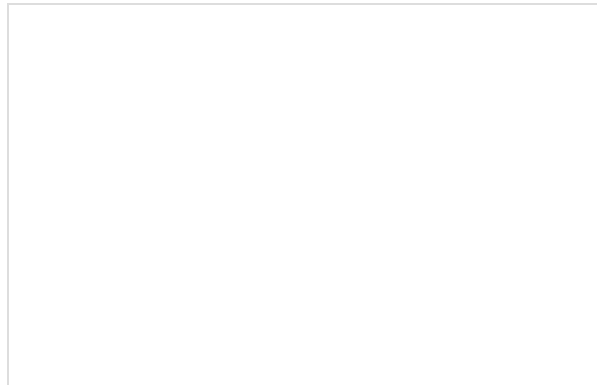
Southwest Flight 1243, which departed Fort Myers, Florida, was scheduled to arrive at Midway at 7:00 a.m. CT. The aircraft, operating in Southwest's "California One" state livery, rolled to a stop on the runway as its nose-gear tires deflated; mechanics then changed the tires and the plane was towed to its gate, with [flight-tracking data showing the 46-minute delay](#) — scheduled at 7:00 a.m. CT and arriving at 7:46 a.m. CT — according to Southwest and FlightStats.



Chicago firefighters were on scene at the nose landing gear by approximately 7:00 a.m. CT, with aerial footage from ABC7's Chopper 7 showing emergency vehicles surrounding the aircraft. Southwest confirmed in a statement that both tires "lost air pressure" during landing and that mechanics replaced them on the airfield. No injuries were reported among passengers or crew.

No Injuries and No Airport-Wide Delays, Despite the Emergency Response

The visual drama of the incident — first responders encircling the plane, aerial cameras overhead — belied a relatively contained operational outcome. [WGN-TV citing real-time airport data](#) from FlyChicago.com reported that as of 8:30 a.m. CT Monday, Midway showed no flight cancellations and average delays of under 15 minutes across the airport, indicating that the tire incident did not cascade into broader schedule disruption.



The affected flight itself recorded a total arrival delay of 46 minutes. Passengers connecting onward from Midway's morning bank would have been the primary group at risk of a ripple effect, but the FlyChicago data indicates that risk did not materialize into widespread misconnections or gate holds.

Southwest's statement offered no detail on passenger accommodations beyond confirming the aircraft was towed to the gate. No passenger compensation was mentioned; under [DOT's current passenger rights framework](#), airlines are not federally required to pay passengers cash compensation for flight delays.

What Caused the Nose-Gear Tires to Deflate? Southwest Has Not Said

Southwest's public statement describes the tires as having "lost air pressure" but does not attribute a cause. Aviation maintenance standards provide several possible explanations: runway debris (foreign object debris, or FOD) can puncture tires during the landing roll; a hard touchdown can generate heat that exceeds a tire's tolerance, causing rapid pressure loss; or pre-existing under-inflation can make tires vulnerable to failure at landing loads. The [FAA safety alert on aircraft tire pressure](#) — Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) 11001, issued in January 2011 — specifically warns that high-pressure aircraft tires cannot be assessed as adequately inflated by visual inspection alone.

That both nose-gear tires deflated simultaneously is notable. The Boeing 737-800's nose landing gear carries two tires side by side on the same axle; if one tire fails due to FOD, the second can be affected by the same debris or by the asymmetric load transfer. Under [FAA tire maintenance standards for axle-mate removal](#), if a tire has operated at below 80 percent of its target pressure, it must be removed from service — and so must its axle partner, the "mate" tire.

No FAA or National Transportation Safety Board investigation into this specific incident had been announced as of publication. The aircraft was expected to be removed from service pending a full maintenance review, a standard procedure following any landing gear anomaly.

What Passengers on Board the California One Aircraft Experienced

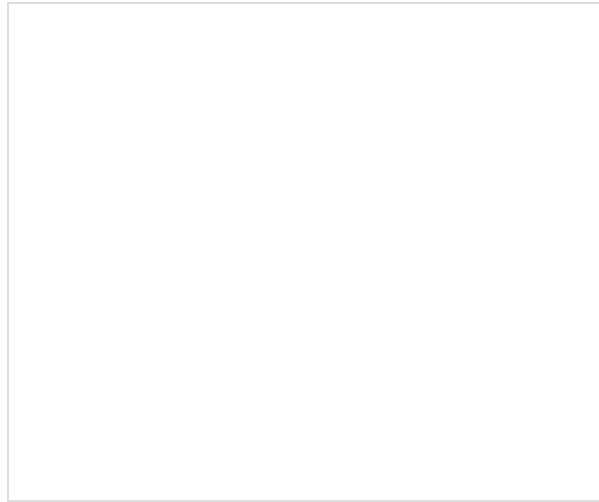
The aircraft involved, identified by Southwest as the "California One," refers to one of the airline's [state-themed liveries](#) — a 737-800 painted with California state flag imagery, including the state's grizzly bear and red star. The Boeing 737-800 in question had been in service for approximately 11 years and eight months, according to [Trip.com flight data](#), making it one of the older aircraft in Southwest's current 737-800 fleet, which averages about 10.5 years in service.

Passengers on the flight were not evacuated via emergency slides. The aircraft was towed normally to its gate, where deplaning occurred through standard means. No reports of smoke, fire, or structural damage to the aircraft emerged from any news source covering the incident.

Southwest's Only Chicago Hub Makes Every Midway Incident Worth Watching

Southwest completed its exit from Chicago O'Hare, [exiting Chicago O'Hare in June 2026](#) and consolidating all Chicago-area flying at Midway, where the carrier has operated for more than 40 years. The airline now runs up to 244 daily departures from Midway to more than 80 destinations, making it the airport's dominant — and in passenger terms, near-exclusive — carrier.

Any significant mechanical incident at Midway therefore has potential network implications far beyond a single flight. Monday's tire event did not trigger those wider consequences, but it comes against a backdrop of documented operational strain on Southwest's aging Next Generation (NG) fleet. With hundreds of Boeing 737 MAX 7s on order and FAA certification of that aircraft expected in 2026, Southwest has been keeping its older 737-700s and 737-800s in service longer than originally planned. Aviation analyst Addison Schonland, writing in [AirInsight analysis of Southwest's aging fleet](#) on July 23, 2026, found that Southwest's second-quarter results showed the airline's 737-700 fleet producing rising technical cancellations — an indication that maintenance pressure on the NG aircraft is measurable, if not yet acute.



The 737-800 involved in Monday's incident is a different variant from the 737-700 referenced in Schonland's analysis, and the two should not be conflated. The cause of Flight 1243's tire failure remains unknown, and no investigative body has linked it to fleet-wide maintenance conditions. What the incident illustrates, however, is that Southwest's consolidated Midway hub — and the aging fleet that serves it — means Chicago-area travelers are better served by monitoring Southwest's operational performance closely heading into the fall travel season.

Tags [Southwest airlines](#)

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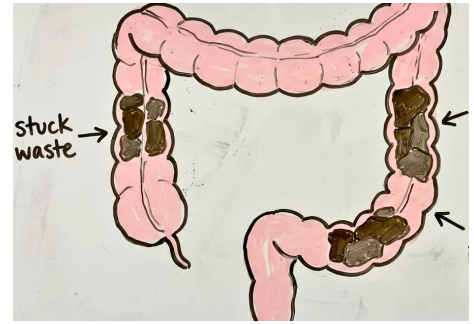
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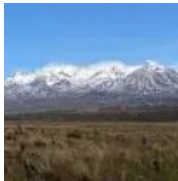
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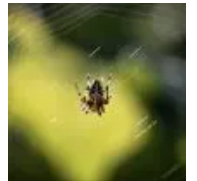
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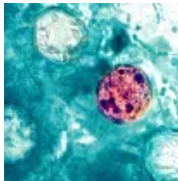
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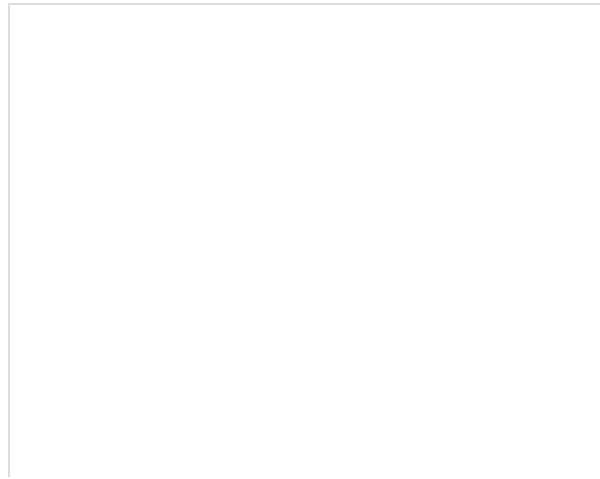
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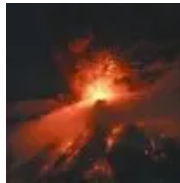
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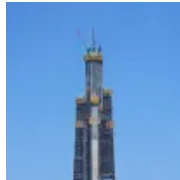
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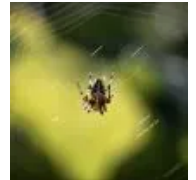
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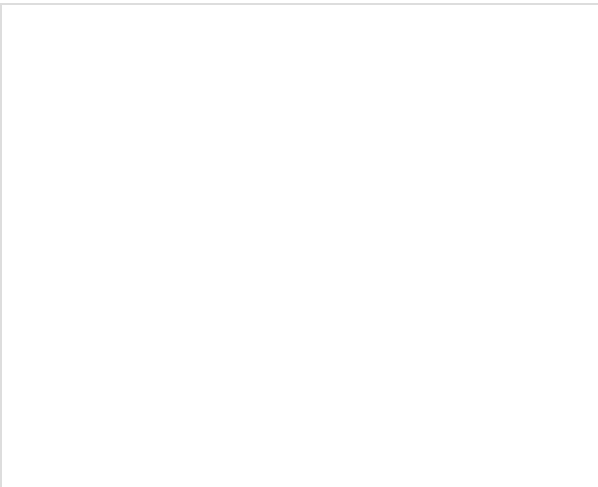
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