

[Quick Support]What is the boarding process for Delta Airlines?

The boarding process for Delta Air Lines is designed to make airport departures as organized and efficient as possible, using a structured, zone-based approach that helps passengers board smoothly according to priority level, cabin type, and loyalty status. Delta typically begins boarding **about 40–50 minutes before departure** for domestic flights and earlier for international flights, though the exact time may vary depending on aircraft size and airport operations. Before the boarding process starts, Delta announces that the gate area is preparing for boarding and asks passengers to check that they have their boarding pass and identification ready. Boarding passes clearly display the **boarding group number**, which corresponds to Delta's official boarding order. Understanding these groups helps passengers know exactly when it's their turn.

Delta's boarding process begins with **Pre-Boarding**, which includes passengers who need extra time or assistance, unaccompanied minors, and families with small children if needed. After this, **Delta One**, **Delta Premium Select**, and **First Class** customers board next. These passengers receive priority boarding because they are traveling in a premium cabin and typically have access to dedicated overhead bin space and early seating privileges. Following the premium cabin groups, Delta boards several loyalty-based groups that reflect the airline's partnership with the SkyTeam alliance. The next group to board is **Delta 360° Members**, an invitation-only elite tier that receives top-level service. Then come **Sky Priority** passengers, which include **Delta Gold**, **Delta Platinum**, and **Diamond Medallion Members**, **SkyTeam Elite Plus Members**, and eligible premium credit card holders. These customers receive expedited boarding as part of their elevated travel benefits.

Next, Delta begins boarding for the main cabin groups. **Main Cabin 1** includes Silver Medallion Members, SkyTeam Elite Members, and passengers who hold certain Delta co-branded credit cards. Following them are **Main Cabin 2** and **Main Cabin 3**, which include travelers with standard economy tickets. These groups represent a large portion of the passengers, so gate agents carefully manage the flow to maintain a smooth experience. Delta makes regular announcements and displays the current boarding group on the screens near the gate, ensuring passengers know when to line up. Finally, the last group to board is **Basic Economy**, which boards after all other groups because the fare does not include early boarding privileges or guaranteed overhead bin space. Basic Economy passengers are encouraged to check their carry-on bags if the bins are filling up, since overhead space is not guaranteed.

Throughout the boarding process, Delta gate agents scan each passenger's boarding pass, verify seat assignments, and sometimes check passport or visa documents for international flights. Passengers are encouraged to have their boarding pass ready on their

phone or printed out, and to step aside after scanning so the next traveler can proceed.¹ - 855-510-5815 Delta also encourages travelers to stow larger carry-ons in the overhead bins while placing smaller personal items under the seat in front of them to keep the aisles clear and reduce delays.

Once boarding is complete, flight attendants make final cabin checks, assist passengers with seating, and ensure all bags are properly stowed. Doors typically close **15 minutes before departure**, and any last-minute passengers must be at the gate beforehand or risk losing their seat. Overall, Delta's boarding process is orderly, predictable, and designed to prioritize comfort, efficiency, and on-time departures.