

DOT 5-11

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No Tarmac Delays Longer Than Three Hours for the Second Month in a Row

November was the second month in a row that the nation's largest airlines reported no flights with tarmac delays of more than three hours, while the carriers reported only a slight increase in the rate of canceled flights during the month, according to the Air Travel Consumer Report released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). This past October and November were the only months with no tarmac delays of more than three hours by the reporting carriers since the Department began collecting more comprehensive tarmac delay data in October 2008.

Data filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) showed there have been only 12 total tarmac delays of more than three hours reported from May through November 2010 by the 18 airlines that file on-time performance data with DOT, compared to 550 during the same seven-month period of 2009. November was the seventh full month of data since the new aviation consumer rule went into effect on April 29, 2010. BTS is a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA).

The largest carriers canceled 0.7 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in November, up from the 0.5 percent cancellation rate of November 2009. They posted a 0.97 percent cancellation rate in October 2010. The number of canceled flights with tarmac delays of more than two hours increased only slightly, from 224 between May and November 2009 to 241 between May and November 2010. There were 11 canceled flights with tarmac delays of more than two hours in November 2010, up from zero in November 2009.

The new tarmac delay rule prohibits U.S. airlines operating domestic flights from permitting an aircraft to remain on the tarmac for more than three hours without deplaning passengers, with exceptions allowed only for safety or security or if air traffic control advises the pilot in command that returning to the terminal would disrupt airport operations. The Department will investigate tarmac delays that exceed this limit.

The monthly report also includes data on on-time performance, chronically delayed flights, flight cancellations and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department by the reporting carriers. In addition, it has information on reports of mishandled baggage filed by consumers with the carriers, and consumer service, disability and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. This report also includes reports of incidents involving pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

On-Time Performance

The reporting carriers recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 83.2 percent in November, down from both the 88.6 percent on-time rate of November 2009 and October 2010's 83.8 percent.

Tarmac Delays

In November, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that .0200 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of two hours or more, down from .0300 percent in October. There were no flights with tarmac delays of more than three hours in November.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of November, there was only one flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two consecutive months. There were no flights chronically delayed for three consecutive months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is [available](#) from BTS (www.bts.gov).

Causes of Flight Delays

In November, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.38 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.79 percent in October; 5.64 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.54 percent in October; 4.58 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.44 percent in October; 0.31 percent by extreme weather, equal to October's 0.31 percent; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, equal to October's 0.03 percent. Weather is a factor in both the extreme-weather category and the aviation-system category. This includes delays due to the re-routing of flights by DOT's Federal Aviation Administration in consultation with the carriers involved. Weather is also a factor in delays attributed to late-arriving aircraft, although airlines do not report specific causes in that category.

Data collected by BTS also show the percentage of late flights delayed by weather, including those reported in either the category of extreme weather or included in National Aviation System delays. In November, 31.72 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 5.12 percent from November 2009, when 33.43 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 4.05 percent from October when 33.06 percent of late flights were delayed by weather.

Detailed information on flight delays and their causes is available on the BTS site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.bts.gov>.

Mishandled Baggage

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.93 reports per 1,000 passengers in November, up from both November 2009's rate of 2.83 and October 2010's rate of 2.91.

Incidents Involving Pets

In November, carriers reported six incidents involving the loss, death or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from the four reports filed in November 2009, but less than the seven reports filed in October 2010. November's incidents involved five pet deaths and one pet injury.

Complaints About Airline Service

In November, the Department received 667 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 20.2 percent from the 555 complaints filed in November 2009, and down 10.9 percent from the 749 received in October 2010.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in November against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 43 disability-related complaints in November, up from the total of 39 filed in November 2009 but down from the 49 complaints received in October 2010.

Complaints About Discrimination

In November, the Department received 11 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – equal to the total of 11 recorded in November 2009, but up from the total of six recorded in October 2010.

Consumers may file their complaints in writing with the Aviation Consumer Protection Division, U.S. Department of Transportation, C-75, W96-432, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20590; by voice mail at (202) 366-2220 or by TTY at (202) 366-0511; or on the web at <http://airconsumer.dot.gov>.

Consumers who want on-time performance data for specific flights should call their airline's reservation number or their travel agent. This information is available on the computerized reservation systems used by these agents. The information is also available on the appropriate carrier's website.

The Air Travel Consumer Report can be found on DOT's World Wide Web site at <http://airconsumer.dot.gov>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

Facts

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT

November 2010

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS

Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics

by the 18 Reporting Carriers

Overall

83.2 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.1 percent
2. United Airlines – 91.4 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 89.2 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. SkyWest Airlines – 78.0 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 79.1 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 79.3 percent

Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

There were no flights with tarmac delays of more than three hours in November.

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. SkyWest Airlines – 1.8 percent
2. Comair – 1.5 percent
3. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 1.2 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Frontier Airlines – 0.0 percent*
2. Continental Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent

*Frontier Airlines had two canceled flights in November.

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