

DOT 2-13

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Airlines Improve On-Time Performance in November

The nation's largest airlines reported improved their on-time performance last November, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

The 15 reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 85.7 percent in November, up from both November 2011's 85.3 percent mark and October 2012's 80.2 percent.

In addition, airlines reported one tarmac delay of more than three hours on domestic flights and one tarmac delay of more than four hours on international flights in November. The two tarmac delays took place on November 7 and involved flights departing from New York area airports, where a snowstorm affected the area that day. Both of the reported tarmac delays are under investigation by the Department.

The larger U.S. airlines have been required to file complete reports on their long tarmac delays for domestic flights since October 2008. Under a rule that took effect Aug. 23, 2011, all U.S. and foreign airlines operating at least one aircraft with 30 or more passenger seats must report lengthy tarmac delays at U.S. airports.

Also beginning Aug. 23, 2011, carriers operating international flights may not allow tarmac delays at U.S. airports to last longer than four hours without giving passengers an opportunity to deplane. There is a separate three-hour limit on tarmac delays involving domestic flights, which went into effect in April 2010. Exceptions to the time limits for both domestic and international flights are allowed only for safety, security, or air traffic control-related reasons. Severe weather could cause or exacerbate such situations.

The consumer report also includes data on cancellations, chronically delayed flights, and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers. In addition, the consumer report contains information on mishandled baggage reports filed by consumers with the carriers, and consumer service, disability, and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. The consumer report also includes reports of incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

Cancellations

The reporting carriers canceled 1.0 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in November, up from the 0.7 percent cancellation rate posted in both November 2011, but down from the 2.8 percent rate posted in October 2012.

Chronically Delayed Flights

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

Causes of Flight Delays

In November, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 3.68 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.42 percent in October; 4.89 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.13 percent in October; 4.27 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.97 percent in October; 0.22 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.25 percent in October; and 0.02 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.03 percent in October. 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 shows 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, 25.35 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 32.20 percent from November 2011, when 37.39 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 9.75 percent from October when 28.09 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.rita.dot.gov/bts/>.

Mishandled Baggage

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.64 reports per 1,000 passengers in November, down from both November 2011's rate of 2.66 and October 2012's rate of 2.83.

Incidents Involving Pets

In November, carriers reported one incident involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from both the two reports filed in November 2011 and the three reports filed in October 2012. November's incident involved one pet death.

Complaints About Airline Service

In November, the Department received 987 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 12.8 percent from the 875 complaints filed in November 2011, but down 24.1 percent from the 1,300 received in October 2012.

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 55 disability-related

complaints in November, up from the total of 46 complaints filed in November 2011, but down from the total of 58 complaints received in October 2012.

Complaints About Discrimination

In November, the Department received seven complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from the total of nine recorded in November 2011, but equal to the seven recorded in October 2012.

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 www.dot.gov/airconsumer.

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://www.dot.gov/individuals/air-consumer/air-travel-consumer-reports>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

Facts

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT November 2012

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 15 Reporting Carriers and Tarmac Data Filed by All Carriers

Overall

85.7 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.1 percent
2. AirTran Airways – 91.3 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 90.6 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. American Airlines – 79.6 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 81.9 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 82.1 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. Delta Air Lines flight 95 from New York JFK to Atlanta, 11/7/12 – delayed on tarmac 185 minutes

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

1. British Airways flight 184 from Newark, N.J. to London Heathrow, 11/7/12 – delayed on tarmac 334 minutes

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. SkyWest Airlines – 2.2 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 1.6 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 1.6 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. AirTran Airways – 0.4 percent

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