

DOT 05-14

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## **November Airline Consumer Complaints Down From Previous Year, October**

WASHINGTON – Airline consumer complaints filed with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)'s Aviation Consumer Protection Division during November were down 23.6 percent from November 2012 and down 11.9 percent from October 2013, according to the DOT's Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

The Department received 755 complaints in November 2013, down from both the 988 complaints filed in November 2012 and the 857 received in October 2013.

Airlines also reported 11 tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and four tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights in November. All of the reported tarmac delays involved flights that arrived at Los Angeles International Airport on Nov. 1 that were delayed due to a shooting at the airport. All of the 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 on-time performance, 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 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.

### **On-Time Performance**

The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 83.5 percent in November, down from both November 2012's 85.7 percent mark and October 2013's 84.1 percent.

## **Cancellations**

The reporting carriers canceled 1.0 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in November, equal to the 1.0 percent cancellation rate posted in November 2012, but up from the 0.6 percent rate posted in October 2013.

## **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of November, there were no regularly scheduled flights that were chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two consecutive months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is [available](#) from [BTS](#).

## **Causes of Flight Delays**

In November, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 4.59 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.69 percent in October; 5.78 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.80 percent in October; 4.63 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.46 percent in October; 0.31 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.22 percent in October; and 0.05 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.02 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, 27.11 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up from 25.35 in November 2012 and down from 27.39 percent in October.

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

## **Mishandled Baggage**

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.62 reports per 1,000 passengers in November, down from November 2012's rate of 2.64, but up from October 2013's rate of 2.52.

## **Incidents Involving Pets**

In November, carriers reported six incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from both the one report filed in November 2012 and the four reports filed in October 2013. November's incidents involved five injured pets and one lost pet.

## **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 52 disability-related complaints in November, down from the total of 56 complaints filed in November 2012, but up from the 49 complaints received in October 2013.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In November, the Department received five complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin, or sex – down from both the total of seven recorded in November 2012 and the eight recorded in October 2013.

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](http://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](#) is available in PDF format.

## **Facts**

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### **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT January 2014**

#### **KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 16 Reporting Carriers and Tarmac Data Filed by All Carriers**

#### **Overall**

83.5 percent on-time arrivals

#### **Highest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.9 percent
2. Endeavor Air – 88.3 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 88.3 percent

#### **Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Frontier Airlines – 78.6 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 79.0 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 79.5 percent

#### **Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours**

1. Frontier Airlines flight 403 from Denver to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 346 minutes
2. US Airways flight 797 from Philadelphia to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 296 minutes
3. US Airways flight 1993 from Charlotte to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 287 minutes
4. Southwest Airlines flight 559 from Houston Hobby Airport to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 277 minutes
5. Southwest Airlines flight 427 from Las Vegas to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 261 minutes

### **International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours**

1. TACA Airlines flight 522 from San Salvador, El Salvador to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 299 minutes
2. Air Canada flight 550 from Vancouver, Canada to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 281 minutes
3. TACA Airlines flight 526 from San Salvador, El Salvador International Airport to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 260 minutes
4. Aeromexico flight 782 from Guadalajara, Mexico to Los Angeles, 11/1/13 – delayed on tarmac 243 minutes

### **Highest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. American Eagle Airlines – 3.1 percent
2. Mesa Airlines – 2.1 percent
3. Virgin America – 1.7 percent

### **Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. Delta Air Lines – 0.0 percent\*
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.3 percent

\*Delta Air Lines canceled 20 flights in November.

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