

DOT 24-13

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

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Airlines Report Two Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights, None Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in January

Airlines reported two tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights, but no tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights in January, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

The long domestic tarmac delays took place on January 27 and are under investigation by the Department. One of the tarmac delays took place on a flight departing Chicago O'Hare Airport and the other on a flight diverted to Bowhead City, Ariz.

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 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.

On-Time Performance

The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 81.0 percent in January, down from January 2012's 83.7 percent mark, but up from December 2012's 76.6 percent.

Cancellations

The reporting carriers canceled 1.5 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in January, equal to the 1.5 percent cancellation rate posted in January 2012, and down from the 1.6 percent rate posted in December 2012.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of January, there were 12 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 (www.bts.gov).

Causes of Flight Delays

In January, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.73 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.19 percent in December; 6.02 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 8.55 percent in December; 4.98 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 6.21 percent in December; 0.55 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.59 percent in December; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.05 percent in December. 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 January, 34.12 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 3.78 percent from January 2012, when 35.46 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 3.99 percent from December when 32.81 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 3.41 reports per 1,000 passengers in January, up from January 2012's rate of 3.30, but down from December 2012's rate of 4.15.

Incidents Involving Pets

In January, carriers reported three incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from both the eight reports filed in January 2012 and the five reports filed in December 2012. January's incidents involved three pet deaths.

Complaints About Airline Service

In January, the Department received 1,368 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 46.3 percent from the 935 complaints filed in January 2012, and up 51.8 percent from the 901 received in December 2012.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in January against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 56 disability-related complaints in January, up from both the total of 41 complaints filed in January 2012 and the total of 35 complaints received in December 2012.

Complaints About Discrimination

In January, the Department received six complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from the total of 10 recorded in January 2012, but up from the three recorded in December 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 January 2013

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

81.0 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Virgin America – 93.1 percent
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 92.5 percent
3. AirTran Airways – 89.5 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Frontier Airlines – 71.3 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 71.6 percent
3. American Eagle Airlines – 75.4 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. Spirit Airlines flight 817 from Dallas-Fort Worth to Las Vegas, diverted to Bowhead City, Ariz., 1/27/13 – delayed on tarmac 216 minutes
2. Chautauqua Airlines flight 5070 from Chicago O’Hare to La Crosse, Wis., 1/27/13 – delayed on tarmac 184 minutes

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

*There were no international flights in January with tarmac delays exceeding four hours.

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Pinnacle Airlines – 3.9 percent
2. Mesa Airlines – 2.9 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 2.9 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Virgin America – 0.0 percent*
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent

*Virgin America canceled one flight in January.

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