

DOT 62-13

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Airlines Report Five Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights, No Tarmac Delay Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in May

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

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 16 airlines that file their on-time performance data with the Department reported that 79.4 percent of their flights arrived on time in May, down from the 83.4 percent on-time rate from May 2012 but up from the 77.3 percent mark from April 2013.

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 1.1 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in May, up from the 0.9 percent cancellation rate posted in May 2012 but down from the 1.8 percent rate of April 2013.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of May, there were four flights that were chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for three consecutive months. There were an additional 39 flights that were

chronically delayed for two consecutive months. There were no chronically delayed flights for four months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is [available](#) from [BTS](#).

Causes of Flight Delays

In May, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.12 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.76 percent in April; 7.33 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 8.11 percent in April; 5.13 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.29 percent in April; 0.59 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.47 percent in April; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.04 percent in April. 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 May, 39.01 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 1.25 percent from May 2012, when 38.53 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 13.60 percent from April when 34.34 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. airlines reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.96 reports per 1,000 passengers in May, up from a rate of 2.77 in May 2012 but down from the April 2013 rate of 3.08.

Incidents Involving Pets

In May, airlines reported six incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from both the four incidents reported in May 2012 and three incidents in April 2013. May's incidents involved three pet deaths, one injury and two lost pets.

Complaints About Airline Service

In May, the Department received 973 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 22.7 percent from the 1,259 complaints filed in May 2012 and 10.4 percent fewer than the total of 1,086 received in April 2013.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in May against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 51 disability-related complaints in May, down from both the 70 complaints filed in May 2012 and the 61 complaints received in April 2013.

Complaints About Discrimination

In May, 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 May 2012 and six in April 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.

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 May 2013

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

79.4 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 92.4 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 89.6 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 86.2 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. American Eagle Airlines – 69.9 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 73.2 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 73.8 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. American Airlines flight 2255 from Miami to Dallas/Fort Worth., 5/15/13 – delayed on tarmac 210 minutes
2. ExpressJet Airlines flight 4652 from Chicago O’Hare to Cleveland, 5/28/13 – delayed on tarmac 204 minutes
3. American Airlines flight 252 from Los Angeles to Miami, 5/20/13 – delayed on tarmac 185 minutes
3. Shuttle America flight 3560 from Chicago O’Hare to Newark, N.J., 5/28/13 – delayed on tarmac 185 minutes
5. Alaska Airlines flight 33 from Philadelphia to Seattle, 5/22/13 – delayed on tarmac 184 minutes

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

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

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Mesa Airlines – 3.3 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 2.8 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 2.6 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Virgin America – 0.0 percent*
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent*
3. Delta Air Lines – 0.1 percent

*In May, Virgin America canceled one flight and Hawaiian canceled two flights.

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