

DOT 68-13

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Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-4570

Airlines Report Two Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights, One Tarmac Delay Longer Than Four Hours on an International Flight in June

WASHINGTON – Airlines reported two tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and one tarmac delay of more than four hours on an international flight in June, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Air Travel Consumer Report released today. All 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 16 airlines that file their on-time performance data with the Department reported that 71.9 percent of their flights arrived on time in June, down from both the 80.7 percent on-time rate from June 2012 and the 79.4 percent mark from May 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 airline bumping, 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 1.8 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in June, up from the 1.1 percent cancellation rate posted in both June 2012 and May 2013.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of June, there was one regularly scheduled flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for four consecutive months. There were an additional nine regularly scheduled flights that were chronically delayed for three consecutive months and an additional 34 regularly scheduled flights that were chronically delayed for two consecutive months. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is [available](#) from [BTS](#).

Causes of Flight Delays

In June, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.37 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.12 percent in May; 10.70 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 7.33 percent in May; 6.78 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.13 percent in May; 1.04 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.59 percent in May; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.03 percent in May.

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 June, 41.80 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up from 29.98 percent in June 2012 and 39.01 percent in May 2013.

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 3.83 reports per 1,000 passengers in June, up from both June 2012's rate of 3.35 and May 2013's rate of 2.96. For the first six months of the year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 3.23 per 1,000 passengers, up from the 2.97 rate for the first half of 2012.

Bumping

The report also includes reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the second quarter and first six months of this year. The 16 U.S. carriers who report denied boarding data posted a bumping rate of 1.00 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, down from both the 1.05 rate for the second quarter of 2012 and the 1.06 rate for the first quarter of 2013. For the first six months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 1.03 per 10,000 passengers, up from the rate of 0.98 posted during the first six months of 2012.

Incidents Involving Pets

In June, carriers reported one incident involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from both the three reports filed in June 2012 and the six reports filed in May 2013. June's incident involved the death of one pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In June, the Department received 1,228 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 25.7 percent from the 1,653 complaints filed in June 2012, but up 26.2 percent from the 973 received in May 2013. For the first six months of this year, passengers filed 6,501 complaints, down 3.3 percent from the total of 6,723 received during January-June 2012.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in June against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 53 disability-related complaints in June, down from the total of 81 complaints filed in June 2012, but up from the 51 complaints received in May 2013. For the first six months of the year, the Department received 305 disability-related complaints, down 11.6 percent from the 345 filed during January-June 2012.

Complaints About Discrimination

In June, 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 the total of 10 recorded in June 2012, and equal to the total of five recorded in May 2013. For the first six months of this year, the Department received 34 discrimination complaints, down from the 49 recorded in January-June 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 August 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

71.9 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.1 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 87.5 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 77.9 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. American Eagle Airlines – 61.8 percent
2. AirTran Airways – 65.9 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 66.0 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. SkyWest Airlines flight 5191 from Charlotte, N.C. to Washington Dulles, 6/13/13 – delayed on tarmac 231 minutes
2. ExpressJet Airlines flight 5679 from Houston to Lafayette, La., 6/6/13 – delayed on tarmac 181 minutes

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

1. Jazz Aviation flight 7652 from Montréal, Canada to Washington Reagan, 6/28/13 – delayed on tarmac 254 minutes

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. American Eagle Airlines – 4.2 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 3.7 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 3.4 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent
2. Virgin America – 0.2 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.3 percent

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