

DOT 32-13
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Airlines Report 34 Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights, None Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in February

Airlines reported 34 tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights, but no tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights in February, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

All of the long tarmac delays took place on February 16 and involved flights departing from or arriving at Charlotte International Airport in North Carolina, where a snowstorm affected the area that day. All of the reported tarmac delays involve US Airways or its code share partners and 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 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 79.6 percent in February, down from both February 2012's 86.2 percent mark and from January 2013's 81.0 percent.

Cancellations

The reporting carriers canceled 2.4 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in February, up from both the 1.0 percent cancellation rate posted in February 2012 and the 1.5 percent rate posted in January 2013.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of February, there were nine 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 February, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.85 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.73 percent in January; 6.40 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.02 percent in January; 4.96 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.98 percent in January; 0.56 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.55 percent in January; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.04 percent in January. 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 February, 36.96 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 13.20 percent from February 2012, when 32.65 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 8.32 percent from January when 34.12 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 3.00 reports per 1,000 passengers in February, up from February 2012's rate of 2.64, but down from January 2013's rate of 3.41.

Incidents Involving Pets

In February, carriers reported four incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from the five reports filed in February 2012, but up from the three reports filed in January 2013. February's incidents involved two pet deaths and two pet injuries.

Complaints About Airline Service

In February, the Department received 899 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 29.7 percent from the 693 complaints filed in February 2012, and down 34.3 percent from the 1,368 received in January 2013.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in February against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 38 disability-related complaints in February, down from both the total of 41 complaints filed in February 2012 and the total of 56 complaints received in January 2013.

Complaints About Discrimination

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

February 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

79.6 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 91.8 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 90.6 percent
3. Virgin America – 88.5 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Frontier Airlines – 68.4 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 68.8 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 69.2 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. Chautauqua Airlines flight 3093 from Indianapolis to Charlotte, N.C., 2/16/13 – delayed on tarmac 291 minutes
2. Piedmont Airlines flight 4160 from Charleston, W.Va. to Charlotte, N.C., 2/16/13 – delayed on tarmac 281 minutes
3. US Airways flight 1203 from Charlotte, N.C. to Houston Bush, 2/16/13 – delayed on tarmac 270 minutes
4. Mesa Airlines flight 2604 from Sarasota, Fla. to Charlotte, N.C., 2/16/13 – delayed on tarmac 269 minutes
5. Air Wisconsin Airlines flight 3877 from Cleveland to Charlotte, N.C., 2/16/13 – delayed on tarmac 265 minutes

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

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

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. American Eagle Airlines – 4.8 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 4.0 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 3.9 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 0.4 percent
3. Virgin America – 0.9 percent

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