

DOT 45-13

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Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-4570

## **Airlines Report No Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights, One Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in March**

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

The long tarmac delay, involving a flight from Bogotá, Colombia to Orlando, Fla., that diverted to Miami on March 24 is 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 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.

### **On-Time Performance**

The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 79.8 percent in March, down from March 2012's 82.2 percent mark, but up from February 2013's 79.6 percent.

### **Cancellations**

The reporting carriers canceled 1.6 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in March, up from the 1.0 percent cancellation rate posted in March 2012, but down from the 2.4 percent rate posted in February 2013.

## **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of March, there were eight 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](#).

## **Causes of Flight Delays**

In March, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.91 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.85 percent in February; 6.95 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.40 percent in February; 5.05 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.96 percent in February; 0.47 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.56 percent in February; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.03 percent in February. 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 March, 34.12 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 3.53 percent from March 2012, when 35.37 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 7.68 percent from February when 36.96 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. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 3.05 reports per 1,000 passengers in March, down from March 2012's rate of 3.09, but up from February 2013's rate of 3.00. For the first quarter of this year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 3.15 reports per 1,000 passengers, up from the 3.01 rate for the first quarter of 2012.

## **Bumping**

The report also includes airline reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the first quarter of this year. The 16 U.S. carriers who report on-time performance and mishandled baggage data posted a bumping rate of 1.06 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, up from the 0.91 rate reported for the first quarter of 2012.

## **Incidents Involving Pets**

In March, carriers reported no incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from both the nine reports filed in March 2012 and the four reports filed in February 2013.

## **Complaints About Airline Service**

In March, the Department received 943 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 15.6 percent from the 1,117 complaints filed in March 2012, and up 4.9 percent from the 899 received in February 2013. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 3,213 complaints, up 17.1 percent from the 2,744 filed during the first quarter of 2012.

### **Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers**

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in March against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 42 disability-related complaints in March, down from the total of 48 complaints filed in March 2012, but up from the total of 38 complaints received in February 2013. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 136 disability-related complaints, up from the total of 129 filed during the first quarter of 2012.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In March, the Department received seven complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin, or sex – up from both the total of four recorded in March 2012 and the five recorded in February 2013. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 18 discrimination complaints, equal to the total of 18 filed during the first quarter of 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](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 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**

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### **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT March 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**

79.8 percent on-time arrivals

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 91.0 percent
2. Virgin America – 87.3 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 85.5 percent

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

1. ExpressJet Airlines – 71.6 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 72.3 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 74.0 percent

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

\*There were no domestic flights in March with tarmac delays exceeding three hours.

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

1. Avianca Airlines flight 28 from Bogotá, Colombia to Orlando, Fla., 3/24/13 – delayed on tarmac 301 minutes

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

1. ExpressJet Airlines – 3.3 percent
2. Mesa Airlines – 2.8 percent
3. Pinnacle Airlines – 2.5 percent

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Virgin America – 0.3 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 0.5 percent

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