

DOT 113-09

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June Airline On-Time Performance Better Than Last Year But Down From May

The nation's largest airlines had a rate of on-time flights this past June that was higher than the same month last year but down from the mark reported in May 2009, according to the Air Travel Consumer Report released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

According to information filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), the 19 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 76.1 percent in June, better than the 70.8 percent on-time rate of June 2008 but down from May 2009's 80.5 percent.

The monthly report also includes data on lengthy tarmac delays, flight cancellations and the causes of flight delays by the reporting carriers, as well as information on airline bumping, reports of mishandled baggage filed with the carriers, and consumer service, disability and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. This report also includes reports of incidents involving pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

Cancellations

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In June, the carriers canceled 1.5 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, lower than the 1.8 percent cancellation rate of June 2008 but higher than the 0.9 percent rate posted in May 2009.

Tarmac Delays

In June, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that .0499 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of three hours or more, up from .0064 percent in May. There were 42 flights with tarmac delays of four hours or more in June.

Causes of Flight Delays

In June, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.69 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 7.36 percent in May; 7.54 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.84 percent in May; 5.94 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.56 percent in May; 0.83 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.62 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, 43.48 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 7.90 percent from June 2008, when 47.21 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 7.51 percent from May when 47.01 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 4.17 reports per 1,000 passengers in June, an improvement over June 2008's rate of 5.15 but up from May 2009's 3.56 rate. For the first six months of the year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 4.05 per 1,000 passengers, down from the 5.82 rate for the first half of 2008.

Bumping

The report also includes reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the second quarter and first six months of this year. The 19 U.S. carriers who report denied boarding data posted a bumping rate of 1.39 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, up from the 1.00 rate for the second quarter of 2008. For the first six months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 1.35 per 10,000 passengers, up from the rate of 1.17 rate posted during the first six months of 2008.

Incidents Involving Pets

In June, carriers reported five incidents involving the loss, death or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from both the four incidents reported in June 2008 and three in May 2009. June's incidents involved four deaths and one injured pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In June, the Department received 747 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 15.4 percent from the 883 complaints filed in June 2008 but 13.9 percent above the 656 complaints received in May 2009. For the first six months of this year, passengers filed 4,354 complaints, down 27.5 percent from the total of 6,002 received during January-June 2008.

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 54 disability-related complaints in June, higher than both the total of 29 complaints filed in June 2008 and the 39 received in May 2009. For the first six months of the year, the Department received 254 disability-related complaints, up 11.9 percent from the 227 filed during January-June 2008.

Complaints About Discrimination

In June, the Department received 10 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up from the total of eight recorded in

June 2008 but down from the total of 13 received in May 2009. For the first six months of this year the Department received 55 discrimination complaints, the same total recorded during January-June 2008.

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 <http://airconsumer.dot.gov>.

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 Air Travel Consumer Report can be found on DOT's World Wide Web site at <http://airconsumer.dot.gov>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

Facts

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT June 2009

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 19 Reporting Carriers

Overall

76.1 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.3 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 84.5 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 82.0 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Comair – 59.8 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 68.0 percent
3. American Airlines – 69.2 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Pinnacle Airlines flight 2330 from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Fort Wayne, IN – late 100 percent of the time
2. Comair flight 6662 from Charlotte, NC to New York JFK – late 96.67 percent of the time
3. Comair flight 6655 from Washington Dulles to New York JFK – late 96.67 percent of the time
4. Northwest Airlines flight 1554 from West Palm Beach, FL to Boston – late 96.30 percent of the time

5. JetBlue Airways flight 707 from Boston to New York JFK – late 93.75 percent of the time

Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

1. JetBlue Airways flight 12 from New York JFK to Syracuse, NY, 6/26/09 – delayed on tarmac 328 minutes
2. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2173 from New York LaGuardia to Cleveland, 6/30/09 – delayed on tarmac 310 minutes
3. Mesa Airlines flight 7323 from Grand Rapids, MI to Chicago O’Hare, 6/19/09 – delayed on tarmac 299 minutes
4. Mesa Airlines flight 7343 from Washington Dulles to Huntsville/Decatur, AL, 6/3/09 – delayed on tarmac 291 minutes
5. United Airlines flight 140 from Washington Dulles to Las Vegas, 6/3/09 – delayed on tarmac 290 minutes

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Comair – 5.3 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 3.1 percent
3. American Airlines – 2.8 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Continental Airlines – 0.2 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 0.3 percent
3. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.4 percent

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