

**DOT 138-09**

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## **Airline On-Time Performance Improved in July**

The nation's largest airlines had a rate of on-time flights this past July that was higher than both the same month last year and the mark posted in June 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 77.6 percent in July, better than both the 75.7 percent on-time rate of July 2008 and June 2009's 76.1 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 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 July, the carriers canceled 1.2 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, lower than both the 1.7 percent cancellation rate of July 2008 and the 1.5 percent rate posted in June 2009.

### **Tarmac Delays**

In July, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that .028 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of three hours or more, down from .0499 percent in June. There were 29 flights with tarmac delays of four hours or more in July.

### **Causes of Flight Delays**

In July, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.89 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 7.69 percent in June; 7.33 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 7.54 percent in June; 5.93 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.94 percent in June; 0.74 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.83 percent in June; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, the same percentage as June. 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 July, 39.42 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 11.16 percent from July 2008, when 44.37 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 9.34 percent from June when 43.48 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 3.98 reports per 1,000 passengers in July, an improvement over both July 2008's rate of 4.87 and June 2009's 4.17 rate.

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

In July, carriers reported six incidents involving the loss, death or injury of pets while traveling by air, identical to the total reported in July 2008 and up from June 2009's five reports. July's incidents involved three deaths, two injuries and one lost pet.

### **Complaints About Airline Service**

In July, the Department received 827 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 24.3 percent from the 1,093 complaints filed in July 2008 but up 10.7 percent from the 747 complaints received in June 2009.

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in July against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 53 disability-related complaints in July, lower than both the total of 65 complaints filed in July 2008 and the 54 received in June 2009.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In July, the Department received 17 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 nine recorded in July 2008 and 10 received in June 2009.

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

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### AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT July 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

77.6 percent on-time arrivals

##### Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.6 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 87.2 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 83.6 percent

##### Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Comair – 63.6 percent
2. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 68.3 percent
3. AirTran Airways – 69.8 percent

##### Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Northwest Airlines flight 1266 from Boston to Tampa, FL – late 96.77 percent of the time
2. Northwest Airlines flight 1554 from West Palm Beach, FL to Boston – late 96.77 percent of the time
3. Pinnacle Airlines flight 896 from Knoxville, TN to Atlanta – late 93.10 percent of the time
4. Comair flight 6511 from Omaha, NE to Atlanta – late 89.47 percent of the time
5. Pinnacle Airlines flight 2923 from Detroit to La Crosse, WI/Winona, MN – late 85.71 percent of the time

##### Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

1. Delta Air Lines flight 745 from New York JFK to Portland, OR, 7/26/09 – delayed on tarmac 392 minutes
2. Continental Airlines flight 432 from Houston to New York LaGuardia, 7/29/09 – delayed on tarmac 310 minutes
3. Continental Airlines flight 1176 from Chicago O'Hare to Newark, NJ, 7/29/09 – delayed on tarmac 299 minutes
4. US Airways flight 17 from New York JFK to Phoenix, 7/26/09 – delayed on tarmac 276 minutes
5. JetBlue Airways flight 34 from New York JFK to Rochester, NY, 7/26/09 – delayed on tarmac 268 minutes

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

1. Comair – 5.4 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 2.2 percent
3. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 2.0 percent

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 0.4 percent
3. Continental Airlines – 0.4 percent

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