

DOT 93-10

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March Airline On-Time Performance Higher Than Last Year and February

The nation's largest airlines had a rate of on-time flights this past March that was higher than the same month last year and the rate posted in February 2010, 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 18 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 80.0 percent in March, better than the 78.4 percent on-time rate of March 2009 and February 2010's 74.6 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 March, the carriers canceled 1.5 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, a lower rate than the 2.1 percent cancellation rate of March 2009 and the 5.5 percent rate posted in February 2010.

Tarmac Delays

In March, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that .005 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of three hours or more, down from .013 percent in February. There were four flights with tarmac delays of four hours or more in March.

Causes of Flight Delays

In March, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.03 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.88 percent in February; 6.44 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.66 percent in February; 5.24 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.30 percent in February; 0.54 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.62 percent in February; and 0.06 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.07 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, 40.68 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 10.55 percent from March 2009, when 45.48 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 3.78 percent from February when 42.28 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 3.72 reports per 1,000 passengers in March, an improvement over March 2009's rate of 4.23 and February 2010's 4.01 rate. For the first quarter of this year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 4.10, down from the 4.39 rate for first quarter of 2009.

Bumping

The report also includes airline reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the first quarter of this year. The 18 U.S. carriers who report on-time performance and mishandled baggage data posted a bumping rate of 1.73 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, up from the 1.35 rate for the first quarter of 2009 and the 1.09 rate posted during the fourth quarter of 2009.

Incidents Involving Pets

In March, carriers reported one incident involving the loss, death or injury of a pet while traveling by air, identical to one incident in March 2009 and less than the total of three posted in February 2010. March's incident involved one injured pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In March, the Department received 961 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 35.7 percent from the 708 complaints filed in March 2009 and 24.9 percent more than the total of 769 complaints received in February 2010. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 2,659 air service complaints, up 22.5 percent from the 2,170 complaints received during the first quarter of 2009.

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 44 disability-related complaints in March, up from the total of 37 complaints received in March 2009 and up from the 29 complaints received in February 2010. For the first quarter of this year, the

Department received 120 disability-related complaints, up 4.3 percent from the 115 filed during the first quarter of 2009.

Complaints About Discrimination

In March, the Department received 15 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up from the total of seven discrimination complaints filed in March 2009 and up from the total of five received in February 2010. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 27 discrimination complaints, up from the total of 17 received during the first quarter of 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

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT March 2010

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 18 Reporting Carriers

Overall

80.0 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 90.2 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 87.3 percent
3. Pinnacle Airlines – 84.2 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. JetBlue Airways – 72.1 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 75.1 percent
3. American Airlines – 76.1 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Southwest Airlines flight 1142 from Baltimore to New York LaGuardia – late 100.0 percent of the time
2. Southwest Airlines flight 1229 from New York LaGuardia to Chicago Midway – late 93.75 percent of the time
2. Southwest Airlines flight 1138 from Denver to Kansas City, MO – late 93.75 percent of the time
4. Southwest Airlines flight 1599 from Baltimore to New York LaGuardia – late 87.50 percent of the time
4. Southwest Airlines flight 1925 from Baltimore to Hartford, CT – late 87.50 percent of the time
4. Southwest Airlines flight 2585 from Houston Hobby to Albuquerque, NM – late 87.50 percent of the time
4. Southwest Airlines flight 3922 from Houston Hobby to Austin, TX – late 87.50 percent of the time

Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

1. American Airlines flight 160 from San Diego to New York JFK, 3/13/10 – delayed on tarmac 300 minutes
2. SkyWest Airlines flight 6530 from Denver to Birmingham, AL, 3/23/10 – delayed on tarmac 272 minutes
3. American Airlines flight 24 from San Francisco to New York JFK, 3/13/10 – delayed on tarmac 261 minutes
4. SkyWest Airlines flight 6136 from Denver to Appleton, WI, 3/23/10 – delayed on tarmac 241 minutes

(There were only four flights with tarmac delays of four hours or more in March)

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Comair – 3.4 percent
2. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 2.9 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 2.8 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent
2. Continental Airlines – 0.2 percent

3. Alaska Airlines – 0.5 percent

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