

DOT 135-10

Thursday, July 8, 2010

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May Airline On-Time Performance Lower Than Last Year and April

The nation's largest airlines had a rate of on-time flights this past May that was lower than the same month last year and the rate posted in April 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 79.9 percent in May, down from the 80.5 percent on-time rate in May 2009 and April 2010's 85.3 percent.

Beginning this month, the report includes new data for consumers that are being used by the Department to monitor compliance with the new consumer protection rules that took effect in April. It lists chronically late flights – those that are more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two or more months – for each carrier reporting on-time performance. The list of flights late 80 percent of the time no longer appears. A new table shows how many flights are canceled by each of the reporting airlines at least 5 percent of the time. A complete list of the individual flights canceled at least 5 percent of the time can be found on the [BTS website](#). In addition, the report lists all flights by the reporting carriers with tarmac delays of more than three hours, and for each carrier shows how many flights had tarmac delays of more than two hours. Previously, the report showed flights with four-hour tarmac times and the carrier summary for three-hour tarmac times.

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 May, the carriers canceled 1.2 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, a higher rate than the 0.9 percent cancellation rate posted in May 2009 and the 0.7 percent rate posted in April 2010. In May, the carriers canceled 5.4 percent of their regularly scheduled flights at least 5 percent of the time, the first time this number is available in the Air Travel Consumer Report.

Tarmac Delays

In May, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that .067 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of two hours or more. There were five flights with tarmac delays of over three hours in May.

Causes of Flight Delays

In May, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.40 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.45 percent in April; 6.48 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 4.71 percent in April; 5.03 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.30 percent in April; 0.60 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.33 percent in April; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.04 percent in April. 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 May, 39.17 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 16.68 percent from May 2009, when 47.01 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 11.25 percent from April when 35.21 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 3.29 reports per 1,000 passengers in May, an improvement over May 2009's rate of 3.65, but down from April 2010's 2.89 rate.

Incidents Involving Pets

In May, carriers reported three incidents involving the loss, death or injury of a pet while traveling by air, equal to the three incidents in May 2009 but lower than the seven incidents posted in April 2010. May's incidents involved the death of one pet and the loss of two pets.

Complaints About Airline Service

In May, the Department received 801 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 22.3 percent from the 655 complaints filed in May 2009 and 8.8 percent less than the total of 878 complaints received in April 2010.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in April against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 41 disability-related complaints in May, up from the total of 38 complaints received in May 2009 and equal to the 41 complaints received in April 2010.

Complaints About Discrimination

In May, the Department received 10 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from the total of 13 discrimination complaints filed in May 2009 and in April 2010.

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. Beginning at the end of July, this information will also be available on the websites of those carriers required to file on-time performance reports with the Department.

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 May 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

79.9 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.3 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 91.5 percent
3. US Airways – 85.3 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Comair – 67.1 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 73.1 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 75.6 percent

Chronically Delayed Flights (30+ mins. late more than 50%) for Two Consecutive Months

1. American Eagle Airlines flight 3621 from Miami to Norfolk, VA – late 60.0 percent of the time in April.
2. American Eagle Airlines flight 3621 from Miami to Norfolk, VA – late 51.6 percent of the time in May.

Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

1. United Airlines flight 714 from San Francisco to Denver, 5/26/10 – delayed on tarmac 281 minutes
2. United Airlines flight 406 from Billings, MT to Denver, 5/26/10 – delayed on tarmac 219 minutes
3. United Airlines flight 876 from Seattle to Denver, 5/26/10 – delayed on tarmac 211 minutes
4. United Airlines flight 342 from San Diego to Denver, 5/26/10 – delayed on tarmac 190 minutes
5. Delta Air Lines flight 2011 from Atlanta to Dallas-Fort Worth, 5/28/10 – delayed on tarmac 182 minutes

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. American Eagle Airlines – 2.9 percent
2. Comair – 2.7 percent
3. ExpressJet – 1.8 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent *
2. Continental Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 0.4 percent

* Hawaiian Airlines had one canceled flight in May.

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