

DOT 103-13

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## **October Airline Service Improved from Previous Year in all Major Categories**

WASHINGTON – In October, airlines improved their on-time performance while posting a lower rate of canceled flights and mishandled baggage than the same period in 2012, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Air Travel Consumer Report released today. In addition, airlines reported no long tarmac delays or chronically late flights for two consecutive months or more, and consumers filed fewer complaints with DOT about airline service.

The consumer report also includes data on the causes of flight delays filed with the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers, as well as 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.

### **Tarmac Delays**

Airlines reported no tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and no tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights in October.

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.

### **On-Time Performance**

The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 84.1 percent in October, up from both October 2012's 80.2 percent mark and from September 2013's 83.8 percent.

### **Cancellations**

The reporting carriers canceled 0.6 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in October, down from both the 2.8 percent cancellation rate posted in October 2012 and the 0.9 percent rate posted in September 2013.

### **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of October, there were no regularly scheduled flights that were chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two 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 October, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 4.69 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.41 percent in September; 5.80 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.81 percent in September; 4.46 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.45 percent in September; 0.22 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.40 percent in September; and 0.02 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.03 percent in September.

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 October, 27.39 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down from 28.09 percent in October 2012 and from 32.75 percent in September.

Detailed information on flight delays and their causes is available on the BTS website at <http://www.bts.gov>.

### **Mishandled Baggage**

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.52 reports per 1,000 passengers in October, down from both October 2012's rate of 2.83 and September 2013's rate of 2.70.

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

In October, carriers reported four incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from both the three reports filed in October 2012 and the two reports filed in September 2013. October's incidents involved the death of one pet and three injured pets.

### **Complaints About Airline Service**

In October, the Department received 857 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 33.9 percent from the 1,296 complaints filed in October 2012, and down 15.0 percent from the 1,008 received in September 2013.

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in October against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 49 disability-related complaints in October, down from the total of 58 complaints filed in October 2012 and equal to the 49 complaints received in September 2013.

## **Complaints About Discrimination**

In October, the Department received eight 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 seven recorded in October 2012 and the five recorded in September 2013.

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](#) is available in PDF format.

## **Facts**

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### **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT December 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**

84.1 percent on-time arrivals

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 95.2 percent
2. Delta Air Lines – 91.4 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 89.7 percent

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

1. Southwest Airlines – 78.8 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 79.7 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 80.2 percent

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

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

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

\*There were no international flights in October with tarmac delays exceeding four hours.

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

1. Mesa Airlines – 2.0 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 1.7 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 1.3 percent

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

1. Delta Air Lines – 0.0 percent\*
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent

\*Delta Air Lines canceled 18 flights in October.

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