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Airlines Report One Tarmac Delay Longer than Three Hours On Domestic Flights, One Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in November

Airlines reported only one tarmac delay of more than three hours on domestic flights and one tarmac delay of more than four hours on international flights in November, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report.

The larger U.S. airlines have been required to report long tarmac delays on their domestic flights since October 2008. Under a new 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, carriers operating international flights may not allow tarmac delays at U.S. airports to last longer than four hours. 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.

The two long tarmac delays took place on Nov. 30 and involved flights bound for Los Angeles International Airport. Due to severe storms in the Los Angeles area that day, the flights were diverted from Los Angeles International Airport. Both reported tarmac delays are under investigation by the Department.

The monthly report also includes data on on-time performance, chronically delayed flights, flight cancellations, and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers. In addition, the report contains information on reports of mishandled baggage filed by consumers 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.

On-Time Performance

Information filed with BTS shows that the 16 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 85.3 percent in November, up from the 83.2 percent on-time rate of November 2010 but down slightly from October 2011's 85.5 percent rate.

Cancellations

During November, the carriers canceled 0.7 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, equal to November 2010's 0.7 percent cancellation rate and down from October 2011's 0.8 percent.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of November, there was one flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two consecutive months. No flights were chronically delayed for three consecutive months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is available from BTS (www.bts.gov).

Causes of Flight Delays

In November, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 4.90 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.60 percent in October; 4.72 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 4.60 percent in October; 3.97 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.03 percent in October; 0.26 percent by extreme weather, equal to 0.26 percent in October; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.03 percent in October. 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 November, 37.39 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 17.88 percent from November 2010, when 31.72 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 16.99 percent from October when 31.96 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 2.72 reports per 1,000 passengers in November, down from November 2010's rate of 2.91 but up from October 2011's rate of 2.71.

Incidents Involving Pets

In November, carriers reported two incidents involving the loss, death or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from both the six reports filed in November 2010 and October 2011's total of three. November's incidents involved two pet deaths.

Complaints About Airline Service

In November, the Department received 873 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 30.7 percent from the 668 complaints received in November 2010, and up 1.3 percent from the total of 862 filed in October 2011.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in November against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 45 disability-related complaints in November 2011, up from the 44 disability complaints received in November 2010, but down from the total of 60 filed in October 2011.

Complaints About Discrimination

In November, the Department received nine complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from both the total of 11 filed in November 2010, and the 15 discrimination complaints received in October 2011.

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 information is also available on the appropriate carrier's website.

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 November 2011

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 16 Reporting Carriers

Overall

85.3 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 92.0 percent
2. Delta Air Lines – 88.8 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 88.6 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. ExpressJet Airlines – 81.3 percent
2. SkyWest Airlines – 81.7 percent
3. American Airlines – 81.9 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

1. American Airlines flight 181 from New York JFK to Los Angeles, 11/30/11 – delayed on tarmac 187 minutes

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

1. China Airlines flight 8 from Taipei, Taiwan to Los Angeles, 11/30/11 – delayed on tarmac 271 minutes

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. SkyWest Airlines – 1.6 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 1.4 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 1.3 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. JetBlue Airways – 0.0 percent*
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent

*JetBlue Airways canceled eight flights in November.

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