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Airline On-Time Performance Decreases in February

The nation's largest airlines had a lower on-time performance rate this past February than in both February 2009 and January 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 74.6 percent in February, worse than both February 2009's 82.6 percent and January 2010's 78.7 percent. Northwest Airlines is no longer a ranked carrier, having merged in January with Delta Air Lines. Major East Coast snowstorms likely affected some of the data in the report.

The monthly report also includes data on lengthy tarmac delays, flight cancellations and the causes of flight delays by the reporting carriers, mishandled baggage, 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 U.S. carriers are required to file.

Cancellations

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In February, the carriers canceled 5.5 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, higher than both the 1.2 percent rate recorded in February 2009 and January 2010's rate of 2.5. See BTS' [February cancellations](#) for more detailed information.

Tarmac Delays

In February, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that .013 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of three hours or more, a higher rate than both February 2009's .0088 percent and January 2010's .004 percent. There were 12 flights with tarmac delays of four hours or more in February.

Causes of Flight Delays

In February, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.88 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.50 percent in January; 6.66 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.06 percent in January; 5.30 percent by factors

within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.28 percent in January; 0.75 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.65 percent in January; and 0.07 percent for security reasons, compared by 0.08 percent in January. 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 February, 42.28 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 2.38 percent from February 2009, when 43.31 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 7.56 percent from January when 39.31 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

U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 4.01 reports per 1,000 passengers in February, higher than February 2009's 3.63 rate, but lower than January 2010's 4.62 mark.

Incidents Involving Pets

In February, carriers reported three incidents involving the loss, death or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from the total of two incidents in February 2009 and the two recorded in January 2010. February's incidents involved three deaths.

Complaints About Airline Service

In February, the Department received 769 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 33.3 percent from the 577 complaints received in February 2009 and down 17.0 percent from the total of 927 received in January 2010.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 29 disability-related complaints in February, down from the 33 received in February 2009 and the total of 45 complaints received in January 2010.

Complaints About Discrimination

In February, the Department received five complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up from the total of four recorded in February 2009 but down from the seven complaints filed in January 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.

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 February 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

74.6 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 88.2 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 86.2 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 79.8 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Comair – 62.2 percent
2. Pinnacle Airlines – 64.0 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 67.9 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Delta Air Lines flight 503 from New York JFK to Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands – late 89.47 percent of the time
2. SkyWest Airlines flight 5770 from North Bend, OR to San Francisco – late 89.29 percent of the time
3. Comair flight 6767 from Philadelphia to Detroit – late 88.24 percent of the time
3. Delta Air Lines flight 1320 from Daytona Beach, FL to Atlanta – late 88.24 percent of the time
5. Southwest Airlines flight 3399 from Phoenix to San Francisco – late 86.67 percent of the time

5. Southwest Airlines flight 778 from Los Angeles to San Francisco – late 86.67 percent of the time
5. Southwest Airlines flight 491 from Chicago Midway to Detroit – late 86.67 percent of the time

Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

1. US Airways flight 1118 from Dallas/Fort Worth to Charlotte, NC, 2/11/10 – delayed on tarmac 298 minutes
2. US Airways flight 541 from Dallas/Fort Worth to Las Vegas, 2/11/10 – delayed on tarmac 287 minutes
3. American Airlines flight 1816 from Dallas/Fort Worth to Memphis, TN, 2/11/10 – delayed on tarmac 278 minutes
4. US Airways flight 1015 from Dallas/Fort Worth to Charlotte, NC, 2/11/10 – delayed on tarmac 270 minutes
5. US Airways flight 1950 from Dallas/Fort Worth to Charlotte, NC, 2/11/10 – delayed on tarmac 264 minutes

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Comair – 13.3 percent
2. ExpressJet – 7.2 percent
3. US Airways – 7.1 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.3 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 1.1 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 1.2 percent

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