

DOT 32-12
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Airline On-Time Performance, Cancellation Rate in January Improve from Last Year

No Tarmac Delays Longer than Three Hours On Domestic Flights Or Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in December

The nation's largest airlines posted an on-time arrival rate of 83.7 percent in January, up from the 76.3 percent on-time rate of January 2011, but down slightly from December 2011's 84.4 percent rate, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today. On-time arrival performance during January 2012 was the highest January on-time arrival percentage in the 18 years with comparable numbers.

Cancellations were also down in January from a year ago, as carriers canceled 1.5 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, down from January 2011's 3.9 percent cancellation rate, but up from December 2011's 0.8 percent.

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

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 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 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.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of January, there was one flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for three consecutive months. There was one additional flight that was chronically delayed for two consecutive months. No flights were chronically delayed for four

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 January, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.02 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.69 percent in December; 4.93 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.19 percent in December; 4.06 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.46 percent in December; 0.55 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.33 percent in December; and 0.02 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.03 percent in December. 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 January, 35.46 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 7.26 percent from January 2011, when 33.06 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 2.49 percent from December when 34.60 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 3.30 reports per 1,000 passengers in January, down from both January 2011's rate of 4.29 and December 2011's rate of 3.37.

Incidents Involving Pets

In January, carriers reported eight incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from both the two reports filed in January 2011 and December 2011's total of five. January's incidents involved two pet deaths and six pet injuries.

Complaints About Airline Service

In January, the Department received 935 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 9.1 percent from the 857 complaints received in January 2011, and up 31.7 percent from the total of 710 filed in December 2011.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in January against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 39 disability-related complaints in January 2012, down from both the 40 disability complaints received in January 2011 and the total of 58 filed in December 2011.

Complaints About Discrimination

In January, 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 12 filed in January 2011, but up from the seven discrimination complaints received in December 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 January 2012

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 15 Reporting Carriers

Overall

83.7 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.1 percent
2. AirTran Airways – 87.8 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 87.6 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Frontier Airlines – 77.6 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 79.0 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 79.0 percent

Domestic Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

There were no domestic flights with tarmac delays of more than three hours in January.

International Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

There were no international flights with tarmac delays of more than four hours in January.

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Alaska Airlines – 3.5 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 2.9 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 2.6 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 0.3 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.4 percent

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