

DOT 89-12

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Airlines Set Records for First Half of 2012 in On-Time Performance, Fewest Cancellations and Tarmac Delays, Lowest Mishandled Baggage Rate

The nation's largest airlines set record marks during the first half of this year for on-time performance, the fewest long tarmac delays, and the lowest rates of canceled flights and mishandled baggage.

According to the Air Travel Consumer Report issued today by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the 15 largest U.S. airlines posted an 83.7 percent on-time arrival rate during the first six months of 2012, the highest mark for any January-June period in the 18 years the Department has collected comparable data. The previous high was 82.8 percent in January-June 2003. The 1.1 percent cancellation rate for the six-month period also was the lowest rate for the past 18 years, with the previous low being the 1.3 percent mark set in January-June 2002.

In addition, there were only four tarmac delays longer than three hours on U.S. domestic flights between January and June this year. This follows the Department's rule, which took effect in April 2010, setting a three-hour limit for aircraft carrying passengers on domestic flights to sit on the tarmac. Exceptions to the time limits are allowed only for safety, security or air traffic control-related reasons.

There were a total of 35 tarmac delays for domestic flights between January and June in 2011, the first full year the domestic tarmac delay limit was in effect. In contrast, there were 586 tarmac delays of more than three hours between January and June of 2009, the year before the tarmac delay rule went into effect. Since August 2011, U.S. and foreign airlines operating international flights at U.S. airports have been subject to a four-hour tarmac delay limit.

The reporting carriers also posted their lowest rate of mishandled baggage for a January-June period since this data was first reported in September 1987. The record of 2.97 reports of mishandled baggage per 1,000 passengers improved on the previous January-June record low of 3.60 set last year.

See the DOT [press release](#) for Secretary Ray LaHood's statement.

The report also includes data filed with the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers on chronically delayed flights and the causes of flight delays. In addition, the report contains information on airline bumping, and consumer service, disability, and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. In addition, the report includes reports of incidents involving pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

On-Time Performance in June

The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate in June of 80.7 percent, an improvement over June 2011's 76.9 percent mark but down from May 2012's 83.4 percent.

Cancellations in June

The reporting carriers canceled 1.1 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in June, down from the 1.8 percent cancellation rate posted in June 2011 but up from May 2012's cancellation rate of 0.9 percent.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of June, there were 10 flights that were chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two consecutive months. There were no chronically delayed flights 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 June, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 4.83 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.75 percent in May; 6.98 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.56 percent in May; 5.62 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.59 percent in May; 0.50 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.58 percent in May; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.03 percent in May. 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 June, 29.98 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 18.31 percent from June 2011, when 36.70 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 22.19 percent from May when 38.53 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>.

Tarmac Delays in June

There were no domestic flights with tarmac delays over the three-hour limit in June, and one international flight with a tarmac delay of more than four hours.

Mishandled Baggage in June

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 3.35 reports per 1,000 passengers in June, down from June 2011's rate of 3.59 but higher than May 2012's rate of 2.77.

Bumping

The report also includes reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the second quarter and first six months of this year. The 15 U.S. carriers who report denied boarding data posted a bumping rate of 1.05 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, up from the 0.77 rate for the second quarter of 2011. For the first six months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 0.98 per 10,000 passengers, up from the rate of 0.80 rate posted during the first six months of 2011.

Incidents Involving Pets

In June, carriers reported two incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from both the five reports filed in June 2011 and the four reports filed in May 2012. June's incidents involved the deaths of two pets.

Complaints About Airline Service

In June, the Department received 1,653 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 46.5 percent from the 1,128 complaints filed in June 2011, and up 31.2 percent from the 1,260 received in May 2012. For the first six months of this year, passengers filed 6,721 complaints, up 24.0 percent from the total of 5,421 received during January-June 2011.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in June against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 81 disability-related complaints in June, up from both the total of 49 complaints filed in June 2011 and the 68 complaints received in May 2012. For the first six months of the year, the Department received 344 disability-related complaints, up 20.7 percent from the 285 filed during January-June 2011.

Complaints About Discrimination

In June, 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 recorded in June 2011, but up from the total of five recorded in May 2012. For the first six months of this year, the Department received 47 discrimination complaints, down from the 64 recorded in January-June 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 June 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

80.7 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.9 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 88.4 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 87.0 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. United Airlines – 70.1 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 74.3 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 76.3 percent

Domestic Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

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

International Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

1. Air Canada flight 711 from New York LaGuardia to Toronto, 6/25/12 – delayed on tarmac 248 minutes

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. American Eagle Airlines – 2.0 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 1.6 percent
3. United Airlines – 1.6 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Virgin America – 0.1 percent
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent

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