



**M O V I N G T H E**  
**AMERICAN**  
**ECONOMY**

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**News**

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## **September's Airline On-Time Performance Better Than in August But Declines from Last Year**

In September, the nation's largest airlines recorded a rate of on-time flights better than August's performance but below the on-time rate posted the previous September, 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 20 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 76.2 percent in September, down from September 2005's 82.7 percent mark but an improvement over August 2006's 75.8 percent.

The monthly report also includes data on the causes of flight delays and cancellations, as well as reports of mishandled baggage filed with the carriers, airline bumping, and consumer service, disability and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. This report also includes reports required to be filed by U.S. carriers of incidents involving pets traveling by air.

### **Cancellations**

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In September, the carriers canceled 1.7 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, down from September 2005's 2.0 percent and but more than August 2006's 1.6 percent cancellation mark.

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## **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE**

### **Causes of Flight Delays**

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 8.37 percent of their September flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 7.04 percent in August 2006; 6.77 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 7.51 percent in August; 5.74 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 6.58 percent in August; 0.92 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.99 percent in August; and 0.06 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.27 percent in August. 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 show the percentage of overall flights delayed by weather, including those reported in either the category of extreme weather or included in National Aviation System delays. In September, 45.44 percent of delayed flights were delayed by weather, up 17.11 percent from September 2005, when 38.80 percent of delayed flights were delayed by weather, and up 10.94 percent from August when 40.96 percent of delayed 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 delay and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 8.25 reports per 1,000 passengers in September, up from both September 2005's 4.56 rate and August 2006's 8.08 mark. For the first nine months of the year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 6.44 per 1,000 passengers, up from the 6.19 mark recorded during January-September 2005.

### **Bumping**

The report also includes airline reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the third quarter of 2006. Of the 20 U.S. carriers who report on-time performance and mishandled baggage data, 19 are also required to report their bumping records to DOT. These 19 carriers posted a bumping rate of 0.70 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, down from the 0.74 rate for the third quarter of 2005. For the first nine months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 1.04 per 10,000 passengers, up from the 0.89 rate for January-September 2005.

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## **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD TWO**

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

In September, carriers reported four incidents involving pets while traveling by air, down from the total of seven reported in August. The September incidents involved one pet death, two injuries and one lost pet.

### **Complaints About Airline Service**

In September, the Department received 626 complaints from consumers about airline service, down 6.8 percent from the 672 complaints filed in September 2005 and 27.2 percent fewer than the total of 860 recorded in August 2006. For the first nine months of this year, the Department received 6,502 complaints, down 6.0 percent from the 6,914 filed during January-September 2005.

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in September against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 28 disability-related complaints in September, same as the total recorded in September 2005 and 17.6 percent fewer than the 34 complaints received in August 2006. For the first nine months of this year, the Department received 334 disability-related complaints, down 17.1 percent from the 403 received during January-September 2005.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In September, the Department received eight complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – the same total received in September 2005 and one fewer than the total of nine received in August 2006. For the first nine months of this year, the Department received 86 discrimination complaints, down 16.5 percent from the total of 103 filed during January-September 2005.

Consumers may file their complaints in writing with the Aviation Consumer Protection Division, U.S. Department of Transportation, C-75, Room 4107, 400 7<sup>th</sup> St. SW, Washington, DC 20590; by e-mail at [airconsumer@dot.gov](mailto:airconsumer@dot.gov); by voice mail at (202) 366-2220 or by TTY at (202) 366-0511.

Consumers who want on-time performance data for specific flights should call their airline ticket offices or their travel agents. 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.ost.dot.gov>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

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**Facts**

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**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT**  
**September 2006**

**KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS**  
**Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 20 Reporting**  
**Carriers**

**Overall**

76.2 percent on-time arrivals

**Highest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 96.0 percent
2. Aloha Airlines – 95.8 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 86.2 percent

**Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 55.5 percent
2. Comair – 68.6 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 68.6 percent

**Most Frequently Delayed Flights**

1. Comair flight 5283 from New York JFK to Washington Reagan National – late 100.00 percent of the time
2. Comair flight 5073 from New York JFK to Atlanta – late 95.45 percent of the time
2. Comair flight 5458 from New York JFK to Buffalo, NY – late 95.45 percent of the time
4. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4585 from Akron/Canton, OH to Atlanta – late 95.24 percent of the time
4. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4311 from Chattanooga, TN to Atlanta – late 95.24 percent of the time
4. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4638 from Atlanta to Chattanooga, TN – late 95.24 percent of the time
4. Comair flight 4954 from Washington Reagan National to New York JFK – late 95.24 percent of the time
4. Comair flight 5093 from New York JFK to Washington Reagan National – late 95.24 percent of the time
4. Comair flight 5072 from New York JFK to Columbus, OH – late 95.24 percent of the time
4. Delta Air Lines flight 1658 from Atlanta to Las Vegas – late 95.24 percent of the time

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**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT FACTS  
ADD ONE**

**Highest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. American Eagle Airlines – 4.3 percent
2. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 3.1 percent
3. Comair – 2.8 percent

**Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. Continental Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 0.3 percent

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