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October's Airline On-Time Performance Better Than Previous Year But Down From September

The nation's largest airlines recorded lower rates of flight delays and cancellations this past October than during the same month last year but higher than those posted in September 2007, 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 78.2 percent in October, better than October 2006's 72.9 percent but below September 2007's 81.7 percent.

The report also shows that these carriers canceled 1.2 percent of their scheduled flights in October, down from October 2006's cancellation rate of 1.9 percent but slightly higher than September 2007's 1.1 percent.

The monthly report also includes data on causes of flight delays, as well as mishandled baggage 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.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.54 percent of their October flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.89 percent in September; 6.62 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.32 percent in September; 5.63 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.25 percent in September; 0.64 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.56 percent in September; and 0.05 percent for security reasons, the same percentage as September. 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 late flights delayed by weather, including those reported in either the category of extreme weather or included in National Aviation System delays. In October, 39.83 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 1.44 percent from October 2006, when 40.41 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 16.60 percent from September when 34.16 percent of late flights were delayed by weather.

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE

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 5.36 reports per 1,000 passengers in October, lower than both the 7.49 rate of October 2006 and the 5.45 rate for September 2007.

Incidents Involving Pets

In October, carriers reported four incidents involving pets while traveling by air, up from two incidents in September. The October incidents involved two deaths, one injury and one lost pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In October, the Department received 1,096 complaints from consumers about airline service, 74.2 percent more than the 629 complaints received in October 2006 and 22.5 percent more than the total of 895 filed in September 2007.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in October against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 56 disability-related complaints in October, nearly double the 29 complaints received in October 2006 and up 21.7 percent from the 46 complaints received in September 2007.

Complaints About Discrimination

In October, the Department received 11 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up slightly from both the totals of 10 discrimination complaints filed in both October 2006 and September 2007.

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.ost.dot.gov>.

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

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT

October 2007

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS

Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 20 Reporting Carriers

Overall

78.2 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.6 percent
2. Aloha Airlines – 91.5 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 84.4 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 63.6 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 70.1 percent
3. Comair – 74.4 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Comair flight 4949 from New York JFK to Philadelphia– late 92.59 percent of the time
2. Comair flight 5674 from Little Rock, AR to Atlanta – late 92.31 percent of the time
3. Comair flight 5418 from New York JFK to Manchester, NH – late 90.32 percent of the time
4. Comair flight 5123 from Syracuse, NY to New York JFK – late 88.89 percent of the time
4. Continental Airlines flight 540 from Pittsburgh to Newark, NJ – late 88.89 percent of the time
4. Continental Airlines flight 537 from Newark, NJ to Pittsburgh – late 88.89 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Pinnacle Airlines – 2.8 percent
2. Mesa Airlines – 2.3 percent
3. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 2.1 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Frontier Airlines – 0.0 percent*
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. AirTran Airways – 0.4 percent

*Frontier canceled three flights in October

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