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Airline On-Time Performance in August Better Than July, Slips From Previous Year

The nation's largest airlines recorded a rate of on-time flights this past August that was higher than in July but down from the rate posted in August 2006, 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 71.1 percent in August, down from August 2006's 75.8 record but an improvement over July 2007's 69.8 percent.

The monthly report also includes data on flight cancellations and causes of flight delays, as well as information on reports of mishandled baggage filed with the carriers, 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 August, the carriers canceled 1.9 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, up from the 1.6 percent cancellation rate posted in August 2006 but down from the 2.1 percent rate recorded in July 2007.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 8.06 percent of their August flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 8.45 percent in July 2007; 9.27 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 9.87 percent in July; 7.67 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 8.05 percent in July; 1.02 percent by extreme weather, compared to 1.31 in July; and 0.08 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.10 percent in July. 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.

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AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE

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 August, 38.40 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 1.75 percent from August 2006, when 37.74 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 11.03 percent from July when 43.16 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 delay and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 7.55 reports per 1,000 passengers in August, lower than both August 2006's 8.10 rate and July 2007's 7.93 mark.

Incidents Involving Pets

In August, carriers reported seven incidents involving pets while traveling by air, up from six incidents in July. The August incidents involved six deaths and one lost pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In August, the Department received 1,634 complaints from consumers about airline service, 89.1 percent more than the 864 complaints received in August 2006 but 4.8 percent fewer than the total of 1,717 filed in July 2007.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in August against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 59 disability-related complaints in August, more than both the 38 complaints received in August 2006 and the total of 45 filed in July 2007.

Complaints About Discrimination

In August, the Department received 10 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – more than the nine complaints filed in August 2006 but fewer than the total of 15 received in July 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

August 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

71.1 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Aloha Airlines – 97.0 percent
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.6 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 77.7 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 55.0 percent
2. United Airlines – 66.2 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 67.1 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4361 from Alexandria, LA to Atlanta – late 100 percent of the time
2. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4530 from Atlanta to Hilton Head, SC – late 100 percent of the time
3. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2185 from Nantucket, MA to Newark, NJ – late 96.77 percent of the time
4. SkyWest Airlines flight 4020 from Salt Lake City to Memphis, TN – late 96.43 percent of the time
5. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4178 from Atlanta to Bristol/Johnson City/Kingsport, TN – late 96.30 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 4.0 percent
2. Mesa Airlines – 3.9 percent
3. Pinnacle Airlines – 3.8 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent
2. Aloha Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 0.5 percent

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