



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

**U.S. Department of Transportation**  
**Office of Public Affairs**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
[www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm)

**News**

DOT 68-08  
Wednesday, May 7, 2008

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**Airline On-Time Performance in March Better Than in February**

The largest U.S. airlines' rate of on-time flights this past March was lower than in the same month last year but higher than the rate recorded in February, 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 19 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 71.6 percent in March, below March 2007's 73.3 percent but better than February 2008's 68.6 percent. Aloha Airlines, which reported on-time performance voluntarily, recently ceased operations, reducing the number of reporting carriers from 20 to 19.

The monthly report also includes data on flight cancellations and the causes of flight delays, as well as information on 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 March, the carriers canceled 2.6 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, the same rate recorded in March 2007 but down from February 2008's 3.6 percent.

**Causes of Flight Delays**

In March, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 8.56 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 9.36 percent in February; 8.87 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 9.74 percent in February; 7.11 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, the same percentage as in February; 0.93 percent by extreme weather, compared to 1.19 percent in February; and 0.07 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.05 percent in February. 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 TWO**

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 March, 41.41 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 9.55 percent from March 2007, when 37.80 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 11.74 percent from February when 46.92 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 6.66 reports per 1,000 passengers in March, an improvement over March 2007's rate of 7.74 but above February 2008's 6.39 rate. For the first three months of this year, the carriers posted a 6.81 mishandled baggage rate, down from the 8.05 rate for January-March 2007.

### **Bumping**

The report also includes airline reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the first quarter of this year. Of the 19 U.S. carriers who report on-time performance and mishandled baggage data, 18 are also required to report their bumping records to DOT. These 18 carriers posted a bumping rate of 1.36 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, down from the 1.46 rate for the first quarter of 2007.

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

In March, carriers reported five incidents involving pets while traveling by air, up from one incident in February. The March incidents involved three deaths and two injured pets.

### **Complaints About Airline Service**

In March, the department received 1,013 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 22.5 percent from the 1,307 complaints filed in March 2007 but 8.2 percent more than the total of 936 received in February 2008. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 3,121 air service complaints, up 8.1 percent from the 2,887 complaints filed during the first three months of 2007.

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## **ADD TWO**

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in March against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 43 disability-related complaints in March, 16.2 percent above the 37 filed in March 2007 and 22.9 percent more than the 35 complaints received in February 2008. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 122 disability complaints, up 41.9 percent from the 86 complaints filed during the first three months of 2007.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In March, the Department received six complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from both the eight complaints received in March 2007 and the nine complaints filed in February 2008. For the first quarter of this year, the Department received 26 discrimination complaints, up 8.3 percent from the 24 complaints filed during the first three months of 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's reservation number or their travel agent. 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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**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT  
March 2008**

**KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS  
Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics  
by the 19 Reporting Carriers**

**Overall**

71.6 percent on-time arrivals

**Highest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.5 percent
2. US Airways – 79.1 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 78.0 percent

**Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. American Airlines – 62.0 percent
2. Comair – 66.0 percent
3. American Eagle Airlines – 66.4 percent

**Most Frequently Delayed Flights**

1. American Airlines flight 791 from New York LaGuardia to Dallas-Fort Worth – late 92.31 percent of the time
1. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2286 from Newark, NJ to Dayton, OH – late 92.31 percent of the time
3. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2429 from Newark, NJ to Burlington, VT – late 90.32 percent of the time
4. Southwest Airlines flight 274 from Las Vegas to Reno, NV – late 90.00 percent of the time
4. Southwest Airlines flight 50 from Dallas Love Field to Kansas City, MO – late 90.00 percent of the time

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### **Highest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. American Eagle Airlines – 5.9 percent
2. American Airlines – 5.6 percent
3. Pinnacle Airlines – 5.2 percent

### **Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. Frontier Airlines – 0.5 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 0.7 percent
3. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.8 percent

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