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Airline On-Time Performance in October Shows Improvement Over Last Year

The on-time performance of the nation's largest airlines improved in October 2005 compared to the same month last year, although the carriers had a lower percentage of on-time flights than in 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, the 20 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 81.3 percent in October, an improvement over October 2004's 81.0 percent but below September 2005's 82.7 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. The 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 October, the carriers canceled 1.8 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, up from October 2004's 1.1 percent but below September 2005's 2.0 percent cancellation rate.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.37 percent of their October flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.64 percent in September 2005; 5.01 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 4.30 percent in September; 4.76 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.67 percent in September; 0.68 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.55 percent in September; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.04 percent in 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.

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AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE

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 October, 4.16 percent of flights were delayed by weather, down 6.94 percent from October 2004, when 4.47 percent of flights were delayed by weather, and up 29.60 percent from September when 3.21 percent of 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 4.90 reports per 1,000 passengers in October, higher than both October 2004's 4.02 rate and September 2005's 4.49 mark.

Incidents Involving Pets

In October, carriers reported five incidents involving pets while traveling by air, up from the single incident reported in September. All five October incidents involved the deaths of pets. Carriers first began reporting pet incidents in May 2005.

Complaints About Airline Service

In October, the Department received 656 complaints from consumers about airline service, up 36.7 percent from the total of 480 received in October 2004 but 2.1 percent fewer than the 670 filed in September 2005.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in October against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 47 disability-related complaints in October, up 20.5 percent from the 39 complaints received in October 2004 and 67.9 percent above the 28 filed in September 2005.

Complaints About Discrimination

In October, the Department received seven complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – compared to the totals of eight received in October 2004 and six filed in 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 7th St. SW, Washington, DC 20590; by e-mail at 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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AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT
October 2005

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

Overall

81.3 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 96.8 percent
2. SkyWest Airlines – 86.3 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 86.2 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Airtran Airways – 74.6 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 75.1 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 76.8 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. ExpressJet Airlines flight 3007 from Newark, NJ to Manchester, NH – late 96.15 percent of the time
2. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2782 from Grand Rapids, MI to Newark, NJ – late 92.31 percent of the time
3. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2355 from Milwaukee to Newark, NJ – late 88.46 percent of the time
3. Continental Airlines flight 1430 from Detroit to Newark, NJ – late 88.46 percent of the time
3. ExpressJet Airlines flight 3138 from Baltimore/Washington International Airport to Newark, NJ – late 88.46 percent of the time
3. ExpressJet Airlines flight 3060 from Newark, NJ to Charlotte, NC – late 88.46 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. JetBlue Airways – 3.1 percent
2. Delta Air Lines – 3.1 percent
3. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 2.5 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.9 percent
3. United Airlines – 1.0 percent

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