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Airlines On-Time Performance in May Better Than April But Slips From Previous Year

The nation's largest airlines recorded a rate of on-time flights this past May that was higher than in April but down from the rate posted in May 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 77.9 percent in May, down from May 2006's 78.3 record but an improvement over April 2007's 75.7 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. 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 May, the carriers canceled 1.1 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, down from both the 1.2 percent cancellation rate of May 2006 and April 2007's 1.8 percent.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.49 percent of their May flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 7.72 percent in April 2007; 6.71 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 7.44 percent in April; 5.76 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 6.37 percent in April; 0.76 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.70 in April; and 0.06 percent for security reasons, the same percentage as in April. 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 May, 39.18 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 11.84 percent from May 2006, when 44.44 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 6.09 percent from April 2007 when 41.72 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 5.93 reports per 1,000 passengers in May, higher than May 2006's 4.94 rate but below April 2007's 6.32 mark.

Incidents Involving Pets

In May, carriers reported five incidents involving pets while traveling by air, up from four incidents in April. The May incidents involved four deaths and one lost pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In May, the Department received 929 complaints from consumers about airline service, up 49.0 percent from the 624 complaints received in May 2006 but 25.4 percent fewer than the 1,246 filed in April 2007.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in May against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 34 disability-related complaints in May, 12.8 percent fewer than the 39 received in May 2006 and down 17.1 percent from the total of 41 filed in April 2007.

Complaints About Discrimination

In May, the Department received four complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from both the 12 complaints filed in May 2006 and the total of 13 received in April 2007.

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

May 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

77.9 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 92.8 percent
2. Aloha Airlines – 88.4 percent
3. AirTran Airways – 85.5 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. US Airways – 67.9 percent
2. American Airlines – 71.0 percent
3. American Eagle Airlines – 73.4 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. US Airways flight 1569 from Boston to Philadelphia – late 95.65 percent of the time
2. US Airways flight 1582 from Charlotte, NC to Newark, NJ – late 92.59 percent of the time
3. Comair flight 5521 from Boston to New York JFK – late 92.31 percent of the time
4. Northwest Airlines flight 656 from Detroit to Newark, NJ – late 92.31 percent of the time
5. Delta Air Lines flight 1893 from Seattle to New York JFK – late 90.91 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. American Eagle Airlines – 2.2 percent
2. American Airlines – 2.2 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 2.1 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

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

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