



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

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**News**

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## **Airline On-Time Performance Improves in October**

Flights operated by the nation's largest airlines arrived on time at a higher rate this past October than in either October of last year or in September 2008, 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 86.0 percent in October, higher than both October 2007's 78.2 percent and September 2008's 84.9 percent.

The monthly report also includes, for the first time, data on lengthy tarmac delays by the reporting carriers. It also provides data on flight cancellations and the 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 of incidents involving pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

### **Cancellations**

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In October, the carriers canceled 0.6 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, a lower rate than both the 1.2 percent cancellation rate of October 2007 and the 1.8 percent rate posted in September 2008.

### **Tarmac Delays**

In October, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 0.0001 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of three hours or more.

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## **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE**

### **Causes of Flight Delays**

In October, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.17 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.10 percent in September; 3.93 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 3.62 percent in September; 3.86 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.02 percent in September; 0.26 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.40 percent in September; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.02 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.

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 October, 34.49 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 13.41 percent from October 2007, when 39.83 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 6.96 percent from September when 37.07 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 3.55 reports per 1,000 passengers in October, an improvement over both October 2007's rate of 5.37 and September 2008's 3.86 rate.

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

In October, carriers reported three incidents involving pets while traveling by air, compared to zero incidents in September. October's incidents involved two deaths and one injury.

### **Complaints About Airline Service**

In October, the Department received 627 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 42.3 percent from the 1,099 complaints filed in October 2007 and 8.3 percent fewer than the total of 684 received in September 2008.

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## **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD TWO**

### **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 40 disability-related complaints in October, 31.0 percent fewer than the 58 complaints received in October 2007 and identical to the total of 40 filed in September 2008.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In October, the Department received 10 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from the 11 complaints recorded in October 2007 and identical to the total of 10 filed in September 2008.

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  
October 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**

86.0 percent on-time arrivals

**Highest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Pinnacle Airlines – 90.7 percent
2. Northwest Airlines – 90.0 percent
3. Hawaiian Airlines – 89.9 percent

**Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 80.3 percent
2. Mesa Airlines – 80.5 percent
3. Continental Airlines – 81.4 percent

**Most Frequently Delayed Flights**

1. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2396 from Newark, NJ to Detroit – late 85.19 percent of the time
2. American Airlines flight 933 from New York JFK to Miami – late 80.65 percent of the time
3. SkyWest Airlines flight 5727 from Portland, OR to North Bend, OR – late 80.00 percent of the time

(There were only three flights in October that were late 80 percent of the time or more)

**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT FACT SHEET  
ADD ONE**

**Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays**

1. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2356 from Birmingham, AL to Houston, 10/15/08 – delayed on tarmac 308 minutes
2. Alaska Airlines flight 75 from Seattle to Juneau, AK, 10/23/08 – delayed on tarmac 269 minutes
2. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2406 from Dallas Love Field to Houston, 10/22/08 – delayed on tarmac 269 minutes
3. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2497 from Houston to Wichita, KS, 10/15/08 – delayed on tarmac 256 minutes
4. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2335 from Kansas City, MO to Houston, 10/22/08 – delayed on tarmac 249 minutes
6. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2207 from Wichita, KS to Houston, 10/15/08 – delayed on tarmac 244 minutes

**Highest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. Mesa Airlines – 1.1 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 0.8 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 0.8 percent

**Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. Northwest Airlines – 0.2 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. Continental Airlines – 0.3 percent

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