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

The nation's largest airlines recorded a rate of on-time flights this past April that was higher than March's rate but down slightly from April 2005, 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 in April recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 78.4 percent for the month, down from April 2005's 83.4 percent but an improvement over March 2006's 76.1 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 information required to be filed by U.S. carriers of incidents involving pets traveling by air.

This report includes on-time and mishandled baggage data for Aloha Airlines, which voluntarily submitted reports starting in April. Aloha previously submitted voluntary on-time and mishandled baggage data from October 2000 through October 2001, but never has been required to file the reports.

Cancellations

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In April, the carriers canceled 1.1 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, down from both the 1.3 percent cancellation rate of April 2005 and the 1.2 percent rate recorded in March 2006.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.99 percent of their April flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 7.86 percent in March 2006; 6.83 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 7.42 percent in March; 5.69 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 6.27 percent in March; 0.70 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.81 in March; and 0.08 percent for security reasons, the same percentage as March. 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.

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 April, 42.45 percent of flights were delayed by weather, down 0.72 percent from April 2005, when 42.76 percent of flights were delayed by weather, and down 8.39 percent from March when 46.34 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 5.27 reports per 1,000 passengers in April, down from both April 2005's 5.28 rate and March 2006's 5.81 mark.

Incidents Involving Pets

In April, carriers reported six incidents involving pets while traveling by air, compared to two reports in March. In April three pets died during air travel, two were injured and one was lost. Carriers first began reporting pet incidents in May 2005.

Complaints About Airline Service

In April, the Department received 705 complaints from consumers about airline service, up 8.6 percent from the 649 complaints received in April 2005 but 0.6 percent fewer than the 709 filed in March 2006.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in April against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 36 disability-related complaints in April, 2.7 percent fewer than the 37 received in April 2005 but 20 percent more than the 30 filed in March 2006.

Complaints About Discrimination

In April, the Department received eight complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – compared to the totals of six complaints filed in April 2005 and 11 in March 2006.

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

April 2006

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

Overall

78.4 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.3 percent
2. Comair – 85.1 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 83.6 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. ATA Airlines – 65.2 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 72.2 percent
3. Continental Airlines – 72.7 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. ATA Airlines flight 4234 from Houston to New York LaGuardia – late 100 percent of the time
2. ATA Airlines flight 4233 from New York LaGuardia to Houston – late 100 percent of the time
3. ATA Airlines flight 4232 from Houston to New York LaGuardia – late 96.55 percent of the time
4. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2669 from Newark, NJ to Kansas City, MO – late 96 percent of the time
5. SkyWest Airlines flight 6174 from Monterey, CA to San Francisco – late 89.66 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Aloha Airlines – 10.8 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 2.7 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 2.7 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. JetBlue Airways – 0.0 percent*
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent

*JetBlue canceled two flights in April.

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