



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

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News

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Airlines On-Time Performance Falls in March 2005

The nation's largest airlines experienced a higher rate of flight delays in March 2005 than in either the previous month or in March of last year, 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 19 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 76.9 percent in March, down from both March 2004's 81.3 percent and February 2005's 77.6 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 data on airline reports of oversales, or "bumping," during the first quarter of 2005.

Cancellations

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In March, the carriers canceled 1.6 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, more than March 2004's 1.3 percent but less than February 2005's 1.7 percent.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.99 percent of their March flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 8.34 percent in February 2005; 6.46 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.86 percent in February; 5.88 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.40 percent in February; 0.88 percent by extreme weather, the same percentage as February; and 0.07 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.04 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. Airlines first began reporting causes of delays in June 2003.

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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 March, 5.00 percent of flights were delayed by weather, up 8.93 percent from March 2004, when 4.59 percent of flights were delayed by weather, and down 5.30 percent from February when 5.28 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 6.30 reports per 1,000 passengers in March, higher than both March 2004's 4.29 rate and February 2005's 6.07 mark. For the first three months of this year, the carriers reported a rate of mishandled baggage of 6.72 per 1,000 passengers, up from the 4.92 rate posted for the first quarter of 2004.

Bumping

The report also includes airline reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the first quarter of this year. During January through March, the carriers recorded a bumping rate of 1.11 per 10,000 passengers, up slightly from the 1.07 rate recorded during the first quarter of 2004.

Complaints About Airline Service

In March, the Department received 690 complaints from consumers about airline service, up 7.3 percent from the total of 643 received in March 2004 and 17.9 percent more than the 585 filed in February 2005. For the first three months of this year, consumers filed 2,650 complaints, up 33.4 percent from the total of 1,987 filed during the first three months of 2004.

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 41 disability-related complaints in March, 8.9 percent fewer than the 45 complaints received in March 2004 and 16.3 percent below the 49 complaints filed in February 2005. For the first three months of this year, the Department received 139 disability-related complaints, 1.4 percent fewer than the 141 received during the first three months of 2004.

Complaints About Discrimination

In March, the Department received 11 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – identical to the total received in March 2004 and up from the total of eight filed in February 2005.

**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT
ADD TWO**

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
March 2005

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

Overall

76.9 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 90.5 percent
2. Skywest Airlines – 82.6 percent
3. America West Airlines – 81.8 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. JetBlue Airways – 63.3 percent
2. AirTran Airways – 67.4 percent
3. US Airways – 68.5 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Independence Air flight 27 from Fort Myers, FL to Washington Dulles – late 100 percent of the time
1. Independence Air flight 23 from Washington Dulles to Fort Myers, FL – late 100 percent of the time
1. Comair flight 5322 from New York JFK to Charlotte, NC – late 100 percent of the time
4. US Airways flight 706 from Fort Lauderdale, FL to Newark, NJ – late 96.77 percent of the time
5. US Airways flight 34 from Fort Lauderdale, FL to Philadelphia – late 93.55 percent of the time
5. Independence Air flight 26 from Fort Myers, FL to Washington Dulles – late 93.55 percent of the time
5. Independence Air flight 22 from Washington Dulles to Fort Myers, FL – late 93.55 percent of the time
5. Southwest Airlines flight 1958 from Fort Lauderdale, FL to Orlando, FL – late 93.55 percent of the time

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

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 4.6 percent
2. Comair – 3.8 percent
3. American Eagle Airlines – 3.0 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.2 percent
2. United Airlines – 0.5 percent
3. Continental Airlines – 0.5 percent

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