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Airline On-Time Performance Improves in April

The largest U.S. airlines' rate of on-time flights this past April was higher than in both the same month last year and March 2008, according to the Air Travel Consumer Report released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The rates of flight cancellations and mishandled baggage also declined compared to the same periods, according to the report.

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 77.7 percent in April, higher than both April 2007's 75.7 percent and March 2008's 71.6 percent.

The monthly report also includes data on the causes of flight delays 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 April, the carriers canceled 1.7 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, lower than both the rates of 1.8 percent in April 2007 and 2.6 percent in March 2008.

Causes of Flight Delays

In April, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.70 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 8.56 percent in March; 6.51 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 8.87 percent in March; 5.63 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 7.11 percent in March; 0.55 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.93 percent in March; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.07 percent in 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.

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 April, 37.89 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 9.11 percent from April 2007, when 41.69 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 8.50 percent from March when 41.41 percent of late flights were delayed by weather.

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE

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 4.99 reports per 1,000 passengers in April, an improvement over both April 2007's rate of 6.34 and March 2008's 6.66 rate.

Incidents Involving Pets

In April, carriers reported three incidents involving pets while traveling by air, down from five incidents in March. All three incidents in April involved pet deaths.

Complaints About Airline Service

In April, the department received 1,113 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 10.8 percent from the 1,248 complaints filed in April 2007, but 9.9 percent more than the total of 1,013 received in March 2008.

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, down 18.2 percent from the 44 filed in April 2007 and 16.3 percent fewer than the 43 complaints received in March 2008.

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 – down from the 13 complaints received in April 2007 but more than the total of six received in March 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
April 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

77.7 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 90.5 percent
2. SkyWest Airlines – 84.0 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 83.3 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. American Airlines – 65.3 percent
2. United Airlines – 72.8 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 73.2 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. American Airlines flight 1555 from Miami to San Juan, PR – late 96.67 percent of the time
2. SkyWest Airlines flight 3678 from Salt Lake City to Sun Valley, ID – late 95.00 percent of the time
2. SkyWest Airlines flight 3732 from Sun Valley, ID to Salt Lake City – late 95.00 percent of the time
4. American Airlines flight 1212 from Seattle to Dallas/Fort Worth – late 90.00 percent of the time
5. American Airlines flight 1147 from Dallas/Fort Worth to Seattle – late 87.50 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. American Airlines – 7.6 percent
2. Mesa Airlines – 3.7 percent
3. American Eagle Airlines – 2.4 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Continental Airlines – 0.3 percent
3. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 0.5 percent

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