



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

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm)

**News**

DOT 16-07

Wednesday, February 7, 2006

Contact: Bill Adams  
Bill Mosley  
Tel.: (202) 366-4570

## **Flight Delays and Mishandled Bags Up, Consumer Complaints Down in 2006 From Previous Year**

U.S. airlines experienced a lower rate of on-time flights and more reports of mishandled baggage last year than in 2005, but passengers filed fewer complaints with the government about airline service than they did the previous year, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Air Travel Consumer Report which was issued today.

According to information filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), the 20 airlines reporting on-time performance with DOT recorded an on-time arrival rate of 75.4 percent in 2006, down from their 77.4 percent mark in 2005. These carriers also recorded a rate of 6.73 reports of mishandled baggage per 1,000 passengers last year, up from 2005's rate of 6.64. However, the total of 8,321 complaints about airline service the Department received from consumers was 4.8 percent below 2005's complaint total of 8,741.

The monthly report also includes data on the causes of flight delays, as well as information on flight cancellations and on consumer disability and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. This report also includes data on airline reports of oversales ("bumping") during the fourth quarter and January-December 2006, as well as reports required to be filed by U.S. carriers of incidents involving pets traveling by air.

### **December Flight Delays**

According to information filed with BTS, the carriers reporting on-time performance posted a 70.8 percent on-time arrival record in December, down from both December 2005's 71.0 and November 2006's 76.5 percent marks.

-more-

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

### **Causes of Flight Delays**

In December, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 8.15 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 8.22 percent in November; 8.96 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.77 percent in November; 7.80 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.83 percent in November; 0.97 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.79 percent in November; and 0.10 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.05 percent in November. 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 show 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 December, 42.09 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 3.71 percent from December 2005, when 43.71 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 8.38 percent from November when 45.94 percent of late flights were delayed by weather.

### **December Flight Cancellations**

The consumer report also includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In December, the carriers canceled 3.0 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, up from both December 2005's 1.9 percent rate and November 2006's 1.6 percent mark.

### **Mishandled Baggage in December**

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 8.93 reports per 1,000 passengers in December, up from both December 2005's rate of 7.80 and November 2006's 6.32 rate.

### **Bumping**

The report also includes airline reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for 2006 and the fourth quarter of last year. In 2006, the U.S. carriers that report on-time performance, mishandled baggage data and bumping totals had a bumping rate of 1.01 per 10,000 passengers, up from the 0.88 rate for 2005. For the fourth quarter of 2006, the carriers recorded a bumping rate of 0.89 per 10,000 passengers, up from the 0.83 rate recorded during the fourth quarter of 2005.

-more-

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

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

In December, carriers reported seven incidents involving pets while traveling by air, up from one incident in November. The December incidents involved one death, two injuries and four lost pets.

### **December Complaints About Airline Service**

In December, the department received 604 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 6.2 percent from the 644 complaints filed in December 2005 but up 2.7 percent from the total of 588 received in November 2006.

### **Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers**

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in December and January-December 2006 against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 27 disability-related complaints in December, down 15.6 percent from the total of 32 filed in December 2005 and 18.2 percent fewer than the 33 complaints filed in November 2005. For all of last year, the Department received 427 disability-related complaints, a decrease of 16.4 percent from the total of 511 received in 2005.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In December, the Department received nine complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from the total of 13 received in December 2005 and identical to the total of nine filed in November 2006. For all of last year, the department received 114 discrimination complaints, down 11.6 percent from the 129 complaints received in 2005.

Consumers may file their complaints in writing with the Aviation Consumer Protection Division, U.S. Department of Transportation, C-75, Room 4107, 400 7<sup>th</sup> St., S.W., Washington, DC 20590; by e-mail at [airconsumer@ost.dot.gov](mailto:airconsumer@ost.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. Detailed flight delay information is also available on the BTS site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.bts.gov>.

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.

**-END**



---

**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT  
December 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**

70.8 percent on-time arrivals

**Highest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Aloha Airlines – 93.7 percent
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 90.1 percent
3. Delta Airlines – 80.8 percent

**Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. SkyWest Airlines – 63.9 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 64.3 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 64.8 percent

**Most Frequently Delayed Flights**

1. SkyWest Airlines flight 4047 from Aspen, CO to Salt Lake City – late 100 percent of the time
1. SkyWest Airlines flight 4055 from Dallas/Fort Worth to Salt Lake City – late 100 percent of the time
1. SkyWest Airlines flight 4022 from Salt Lake City to Steamboat Springs, CO – late 100 percent of the time
1. SkyWest Airlines flight 4053 from New Orleans to Salt Lake City – late 100 percent of the time
5. SkyWest Airlines flight 5800 from Aspen, CO to Chicago O’Hare – late 94.44 percent of the time

**Highest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. Frontier Airlines – 9.2 percent
2. SkyWest Airlines – 6.2 percent
3. United Airlines – 5.3 percent

**Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. JetBlue Airways – 0.4 percent
2. Aloha Airlines – 0.5 percent
3. Continental Airlines – 0.7 percent

**-END-**