



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

News

DOT 117-07
Monday, November 5, 2007

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

Airline On-Time Performance Improves in September with Fewer Cancellations, Mishandled Bags

This past September, the nation's largest airlines recorded a higher rate of on-time flights and lower rates of cancellations and mishandled baggage than in both the previous month and September 2006, 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 recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 81.7 percent in September, better than both September 2006's 76.2 percent and August 2007's 71.7 percent.

The report also shows that these carriers canceled 1.1 percent of their scheduled flights in September, down from both September 2006's cancellation rate of 1.7 percent and August 2007's 1.9 percent. In addition, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 5.45 reports per 1,000 passengers in September, lower than both September 2006's 8.26 rate and August 2007's 7.55 rate.

The monthly report also includes data on causes of flight delays; airline bumping; 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.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.89 percent of their September flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 8.06 percent in August; 5.32 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 9.27 percent in August; 5.25 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 7.67 percent in August; 0.56 percent by extreme weather, compared to 1.02 percent in August; and 0.05 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.08 percent in August. 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.

-more-

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE

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 September, 34.16 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 15.21 percent from September 2006, when 40.29 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 11.04 percent from August when 38.40 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 for January-September

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delay and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 7.25 reports per 1,000 passengers for the first nine months of this year, up from the 6.45 rate posted during January-September 2006.

Bumping

The report also includes airline reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the third quarter of 2007. Of the 20 U.S. carriers who report on-time performance and mishandled baggage data, 18 are also required to report their bumping records to DOT. These 18 carriers posted a bumping rate of 0.99 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, up from the 0.70 rate for the third quarter of 2006. For the first nine months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 1.21 per 10,000 passengers, up from the 1.04 rate for January-September 2006.

Incidents Involving Pets

In September, carriers reported two incidents involving pets while traveling by air, down from seven incidents in August. Both September incidents involved the death of a pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In September 2007, the Department received 895 complaints from consumers about airline service, 42.7 percent more than the 627 complaints received in September 2006 but 45.2 percent fewer than the total of 1,634 filed in August 2007. For the first nine months of this year, the Department received 10,404 complaints, up 60.1 percent from the total of 6,500 filed during January-September 2006.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in September and the first nine months of this year against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 46 disability-related complaints in September, up 53.3 percent from the 30 complaints received in September 2006 but down 22.0 percent from the total of 59 filed in July 2007. For the first nine months of the year, the Department received 360 disability-related complaints, up 6.5 percent from the total of 338 filed during January-September 2006.

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD TWO

Complaints About Discrimination

In September, the Department received 10 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up from the eight complaints filed in September 2006 and identical to the total received in August 2007. For the first nine months of this year, the Department received 82 discrimination complaints, down 4.7 percent from the total of 86 filed during January-September 2006.

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 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.

-END-



M O V I N G T H E
AMERICAN
ECONOMY

Facts

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT
September 2007

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS

Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 20 Reporting Carriers

Overall

81.7 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Aloha Airlines – 95.4 percent
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 93.7 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 88.4 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 63.4 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 73.3 percent
3. Northwest Airlines – 77.8 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Comair flight 5042 from Philadelphia to New York JFK – late 90.91 percent of the time
2. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4822 from Atlanta to Myrtle Beach, SC – late 89.66 percent of the time
3. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4377 from Lafayette, LA to Atlanta – late 87.50 percent of the time
4. Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 4423 from Atlanta to Lafayette, LA – late 87.50 percent of the time
5. Alaska Airlines flight 688 from San Francisco to Los Angeles – late 86.36 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 2.4 percent
2. Pinnacle Airlines – 2.4 percent
3. American Eagle Airlines – 1.9 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Continental Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. Northwest Airlines – 0.3 percent

-END-