



DOT 1-06
Wednesday, January 4, 2006

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Airline On-Time Performance in November Shows Improvement Over Last Year

The on-time performance of the nation's largest airlines improved in November 2005 compared to the same month last year, although the carriers had a lower percentage of on-time flights than in October, 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 80.0 percent in November, an improvement over November 2004's 79.1 percent but below October 2005's 81.3 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 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 November, the carriers canceled 1.0 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, a smaller rate of cancellations than both November 2004's 1.2 percent and October 2005's 1.8 percent.

Causes of Flight Delays

The carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.48 percent of their November flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.37 percent in October 2005; 5.21 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.01 percent in October; 5.41 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.76 percent in October; 0.69 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.68 in October; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, the same percentage as October. 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 overall flights delayed by weather, including those reported in either the category of extreme weather or included in National Aviation System delays. In November, 4.67 percent of flights were delayed by weather, down 8.97 percent from November 2004, when 5.13 percent of flights were delayed by weather, and up 12.26 percent from October when 4.16 percent of flights were delayed by weather.

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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 5.00 reports per 1,000 passengers in November, higher than both November 2004's 4.53 rate and October 2005's 4.90 mark.

Incidents Involving Pets

In November, carriers reported two incidents involving pets while traveling by air – one injury and one death – down from the five incidents reported in October. Carriers first began reporting pet incidents in May 2005.

Complaints About Airline Service

In November, the Department received 524 complaints from consumers about airline service, up 21.8 percent from the total of 430 received in November 2004 but 20.1 percent fewer than the 656 filed in October 2005.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in November against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 28 disability-related complaints in November, up 12 percent from the 25 complaints received in November 2004 but 40.4 percent fewer than the 47 filed in October 2005.

Complaints About Discrimination

In November, the Department received four complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – fewer than both the five complaints received in November 2004 and seven in October 2005.

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

November 2005

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

80.0 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 95.2 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 85.3 percent
3. America West Airlines – 85.2 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. JetBlue Airways – 74.6 percent
2. Northwest Airlines – 74.9 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 75.4 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Southwest Airlines flight 2030 from New Orleans to Houston Hobby Airport – late 96.67 percent of the time
2. Southwest Airlines flight 3462 from Houston Hobby Airport to New Orleans – late 93.33 percent of the time
3. Continental Airlines flight 1197 from Boston to Newark, NJ – late 92.59 percent of the time
4. ExpressJet Airlines flight 3020 from Greenville/Spartanburg, SC to Newark, NJ – late 91.67 percent of the time
5. Southwest Airlines flight 3107 from New Orleans to Houston Hobby Airport – late 88.46 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Comair – 2.4 percent
2. SkyWest Airlines – 1.9 percent
3. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 1.9 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

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

*JetBlue canceled two flights in November