

**DOT 77-12**  
**Tuesday, July 10, 2012**  
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## **Airline On-Time Performance in May Up from Previous Year, Down from April**

The nation's largest airlines posted an on-time arrival rate of 83.4 percent in May, up from the 77.1 percent on-time rate of May 2011, but slightly down from April 2012's 86.3 percent rate, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

Airlines also reported one tarmac delay of more than three hours on a domestic flight and one tarmac delay of more than four hours on an international flight in May.

The larger U.S. airlines have been required to file complete reports on their long tarmac delays for domestic flights since October 2008. Under a new rule that took effect Aug. 23, 2011, all U.S. and foreign airlines operating at least one aircraft with 30 or more passenger seats must report lengthy tarmac delays at U.S. airports.

Also beginning Aug. 23, carriers operating international flights may not allow tarmac delays at U.S. airports to last longer than four hours. There is a separate three-hour limit on tarmac delays involving domestic flights, which went into effect in April 2010. Exceptions to the time limits for both domestic and international flights are allowed only for safety, security or air traffic control-related reasons.

The report also includes data on cancellations, chronically delayed flights, and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers. In addition, the report contains information on consumer service, disability, and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. This report also includes reports of incidents involving pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

### **Cancellations**

During May, the carriers canceled 0.9 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, down from May 2011's 2.1 percent cancellation rate and April 2012's 1.0 percent.

### **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of May, there was one flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two consecutive months. No flights were chronically delayed for three consecutive months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is available from BTS ([www.bts.gov](http://www.bts.gov)).

### **Causes of Flight Delays**

In May, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 4.75 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 3.56 percent in April; 5.56 percent by late-arriving

aircraft, compared to 4.59 percent in April; 4.59 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.04 percent in April; 0.58 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.39 percent in April; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.02 percent in April. 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 May, 38.53 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 9.23 percent from May 2011, when 42.45 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 35.05 percent from April when 28.53 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**

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.77 reports per 1,000 passengers in May, better than May 2011's rate of 3.54 but up from April 2012's rate of 2.63.

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

In May, carriers reported four incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from both the two reports filed in May 2011 and three in April 2012. May's incidents involved three pet deaths and one pet injury.

### **Complaints About Airline Service**

In May, the Department received 1,260 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 18.3 percent from the 1,065 complaints received in May 2011, and up 18.0 percent from the 1,068 complaints filed in April 2012.

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in May against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 68 disability-related complaints in May 2012, up from the total of 58 filed in May 2011 and 65 filed in April 2012.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In May, the Department received five complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from both the 10 filed in May 2011 and the total of 14 received in April 2012.

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.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 information is also available on the appropriate carrier's website.

The Air Travel Consumer Report can be found on DOT's World Wide Web site at <http://airconsumer.dot.gov>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

## **Facts**

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### **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT May 2012**

#### **KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 15 Reporting Carriers**

##### **Overall**

83.4 percent on-time arrivals

##### **Highest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.7 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 91.5 percent
3. AirTran Airways – 88.0 percent

##### **Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates**

1. United Airlines – 77.8 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 78.8 percent
3. American Airlines – 80.3 percent

##### **Domestic Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours**

1. United Airlines flight 260 from Seattle to Washington Dulles, 5/27/12 – delayed on tarmac 188 minutes

##### **International Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours**

1. United Airlines flight 881 from Chicago O'Hare to Tokyo, 5/7/12 – delayed on tarmac 284 minutes

##### **Highest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. American Eagle Airlines – 2.9 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 1.4 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 1.1 percent

#### **Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights**

1. Virgin America – 0.0 percent\*
2. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent\*\*
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent

\*Virgin America canceled one flight in May.

\*\* Hawaiian Airlines canceled three flights in May.

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