

DOT 137-12

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

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Airlines Report Two Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights, None Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in October

Airlines reported two tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights but no tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights in October, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

The long domestic tarmac delays took place on October 24 and involved flights departing from Denver, where a snowstorm affected the area that day. Both of the reported tarmac delays are under investigation by the Department.

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 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, 2011, carriers operating international flights may not allow tarmac delays at U.S. airports to last longer than four hours without giving passengers an opportunity to deplane. 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. Severe weather could cause or exacerbate such situations.

The consumer report also includes data on on-time performance, cancellations, chronically delayed flights, and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers. [Many flights along the East Coast were cancelled or delayed because of Hurricane Sandy at the end of October.](#) In addition, the consumer report contains information on mishandled baggage reports filed by consumers with the carriers, and consumer service, disability, and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. The consumer report also includes reports of incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

On-Time Performance

The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 80.2 percent in October, down from both October 2011's 85.5 percent mark and September 2012's 83.3 percent.

Cancellations

The reporting carriers canceled 2.8 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in October, up from the 0.8 percent cancellation rates posted in both October 2011 and September 2012.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of October, there were six flights that were chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for three consecutive months. There were an additional 16 flights that were chronically delayed for two consecutive months. There were no chronically delayed flights for four consecutive months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is [available](#) from BTS (www.bts.gov).

Causes of Flight Delays

In October, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.42 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.98 percent in September; 6.13 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.72 percent in September; 4.97 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.65 percent in September; 0.25 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.34 percent in September; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.03 percent in September. 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 October, 28.09 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 12.11 percent from October 2011, when 31.96 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 1.55 percent from September when 27.66 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 2.83 reports per 1,000 passengers in October, up from both October 2011's rate of 2.65 and September 2012's rate of 2.70.

Incidents Involving Pets

In October, carriers reported three incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, equal to the three reports filed in October 2011, but down from the five reports filed in September 2012. October's incidents involved one pet death and two pet injuries.

Complaints About Airline Service

In October, the Department received 1,300 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 50.5 percent from the 864 complaints filed in October 2011, and up 20.9 percent from the 1,075 received in September 2012.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in October against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 58 disability-related complaints in October, down from both the total of 61 complaints filed in October 2011 and the total of 73 complaints received in September 2012.

Complaints About Discrimination

In October, the Department received seven complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from the total of 15 recorded in October 2011, but equal to the seven recorded in September 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 www.dot.gov/airconsumer.

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://www.dot.gov/individuals/air-consumer/air-travel-consumer-reports>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

Facts

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT October 2012

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

Overall

80.2 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.8 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 86.8 percent
3. AirTran Airways – 85.9 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. American Airlines – 67.7 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 74.0 percent
3. United Airlines – 76.7 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. Shuttle America flight 3471 from Denver to Columbus, Ohio, 10/24/12 – delayed on tarmac 186 minutes
2. Frontier Airlines flight 667 from Denver to San Francisco, 10/24/12 – delayed on tarmac 184 minutes

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

*There were no international flights in October with tarmac delays exceeding four hours.

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. JetBlue Airways – 7.1 percent
2. United Airlines – 4.6 percent
3. US Airways – 4.2 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.2 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 1.0 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 1.2 percent

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