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News

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Contact: Caitlin Harvey

Tel.: (202) 366-4570

caitlin.harvey@dot.gov

September Airline On-Time Performance Up From Previous Year and Month

WASHINGTON – The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 86.5 percent in September, up from both the 81.1 percent on-time rate in September 2014 and the 80.3 percent mark in August 2015, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Air Travel Consumer Report* released today. September 2015's on-time rate was the fourth highest of the 249 months with comparable records, the second highest for any September, and above the September average of 82.73 percent in the previous 20 years. September 2001 was not included in the averages.

The consumer report also includes data on consumer complaints, tarmac delays, 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 consumer report contains statistics on mishandled baggage reports filed by consumers with the carriers, passengers denied confirmed space (oversales/bumping) as filed with BTS by the carriers, and aviation service complaints filed with DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division by consumers regarding a range of issues such as flight problems, baggage, reservation and ticketing, refunds, consumer service, disability, and discrimination. The consumer report also includes reports of incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of animals traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

Consumer Complaints

Airline consumer complaints filed with DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division during the first nine months of this year were up from the first nine months of 2014. From January to September 2015, the Department received 15,770 consumer complaints, up from the total of 12,348 filed during the first nine months of 2014. In September, the Department received 1,857 complaints about airline service from consumers, up from the total of 1,158 filed in September 2014, but down from the 2,205 received in August 2015.

Tarmac Delays

In September, airlines reported no tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and no tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights.

Cancellations

The reporting carriers canceled 0.4 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in September, down from both the 1.4 percent cancellation rate posted in September 2014 and the 1.0 percent rate in August 2015. September 2015's cancellation rate was the lowest of the 249 months with comparable records and below the September average of 1.83 percent in the previous 20 years. September 2001 was not included in the averages.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of September, there was one regularly scheduled flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two consecutive months. There were no chronically delayed flights for three consecutive months or more. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is [available](#) from [BTS](#).

Causes of Flight Delays

In September, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported total delays of 12.92 percent – 4.16 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.21 percent in August; 4.20 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.81 percent in August; 4.10 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.69 percent in August; 0.43 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.68 percent in August; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.05 percent in August. In addition, 0.45 percent of flights were canceled and 0.15 percent were diverted.

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.

BTS uses the data collected from airlines to determine the percentage of late flights delayed by weather, which includes those reported in the categories of extreme weather, late-arriving aircraft, and National Aviation System delays. In September, 27.84 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down from 28.19 percent in September 2014 and 27.98 percent in August 2015.

Detailed information on flight delays and their causes is available from [BTS](#).

Mishandled Baggage

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.46 reports per 1,000 passengers in September, down from both September 2014's rate of 2.96, and August 2015's rate of 3.33. For the first nine months of this year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 3.31 reports per 1,000 passengers, down from the 3.70 rate recorded during the first nine months of 2014.

Bumping

The report also includes reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the third quarter and first nine months of this year from U.S. carriers who also report flight delay information. These carriers posted a bumping rate of 0.69 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, a slight improvement over the 0.70

rate for the third quarter of 2014. For the first nine months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 0.77 per 10,000 passengers, down from the rate of 1.04 posted during the first nine months of 2014.

Incidents Involving Animals

In September, carriers reported nine incidents involving the loss, injury, or death of animals while traveling by air, up from the five reports filed in August 2015. September's incidents involved the deaths of four animals and injuries to five other animals.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in September against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 115 disability-related complaints in September, up from both the 60 complaints received in September 2014 and the 82 complaints received in August 2015. For the first nine months of this year, the Department received 661 disability-related complaints, up 9.3 percent from the total of 605 filed during the first nine months of 2014.

Complaints About Discrimination

In September, the Department received eight complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin, or sex – up from both the total of six recorded in September 2014 and the five recorded in August 2015. For the first nine months of this year, the Department received 51 complaints about discrimination, down 1.9 percent from the total of 52 filed during the first nine months of 2014.

Consumers may file their complaints on the web at www.transportation.gov/airconsumer or by voice mail at (202) 366-2220 or by TTY at (202) 366-0511. They may also mail a complaint to the Aviation Consumer Protection Division, U.S. Department of Transportation, C-75, W96-432, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20590.

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 website at <http://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/air-travel-consumer-reports>.

Facts

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT November 2015

KEY SEPTEMBER 2015 ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS

**Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 13 Reporting Carriers and
Tarmac Data Filed by All Carriers**

Overall

86.5 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Delta Air Lines – 90.5 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 88.7 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 87.8 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Spirit Airlines – 76.7 percent
2. JetBlue Airways – 80.0 percent
3. Hawaiian Airlines – 84.2 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

* There were no domestic flights in September with tarmac delays exceeding three hours.

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

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

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Envoy Air – 1.7 percent
2. SkyWest Airlines – 0.7 percent
3. Spirit Airlines – 0.7 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Delta Air Lines – 0.0 percent*
2. Alaska Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. Virgin America – 0.2 percent

* Delta Air Lines canceled six flights in September.

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