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News

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Airline Consumer Complaints Down From Previous Year

WASHINGTON – Airline consumer complaints filed with DOT’s Aviation Consumer Protection Division during the first six months of this year were down 12.2 percent from the first six months of 2015, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s *Air Travel Consumer Report* released today.

From January to June 2016, the Department received 8,376 consumer complaints, down from the total of 9,542 received during the first six months of 2015. In June 2016, the Department received 1,492 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 27.1 percent from the total of 2,048 filed in June 2015, but up 31.6 percent from the 1,134 received in May 2016.

The reporting carriers canceled 1.0 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in June 2016, an improvement over the 1.8 percent cancellation rate posted in June 2015, but up from the 0.5 percent rate in May 2016.

The reporting carriers posted an on-time arrival rate of 78.0 percent in June 2016, up from the 74.8 percent on-time rate in June 2015, but down from the 83.4 percent mark in May 2016.

The consumer report also includes data on tarmac delays, chronically delayed flights, and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department’s Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) by the reporting carriers. The report also includes statistics on mishandled baggage reports filed by consumers with the reporting carriers, data on oversales, and information about the total number of animals that died, were injured, or were lost during air transport in June, as filed by the air carriers with the Aviation Consumer Protection Division.

Tarmac Delays

In June, airlines reported five tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and four tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights. Three of the domestic tarmac delays involved flights that were diverted from Denver to Colorado Springs on June 28 related to a thunderstorm in the area. All reported extended tarmac delays are investigated by the Department.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of June, there were two flights that were 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 June, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 21.96 percent of their flights were delayed – 5.85 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.89 percent in May; 7.91 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 5.69 percent in May; 6.10 percent by factors within the airline’s control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.62 percent in May; 0.68 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.52 percent in May; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.04 percent in May. In addition, 1.02 percent of flights were canceled and 0.36 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 June, 31.93 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down from 35.57 percent in June 2015 and from 34.60 percent in May 2016.

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

Mishandled Baggage

The U.S. carriers reporting mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.82 reports per 1,000 passengers in June, an improvement over June 2015’s rate of 3.47, but up from May 2016’s rate of 2.40. For the first six months of the year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 2.65 per 1,000 passengers, an improvement over the 3.32 rate for the first half of 2015.

Bumping

The report also includes reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the second quarter and first six months of this year. The 12 U.S. carriers who report denied boarding data posted a bumping rate of 0.63 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, down from the 0.75 rate for the second quarter of 2015, but up from the 0.60 rate for the first quarter of 2016. For the first six months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 0.62 per 10,000 passengers, down from the rate of 0.78 posted during the first six months of 2015.

Incidents Involving Animals

In June, carriers reported six incidents involving the death, injury, or loss of an animal while traveling by air, up from both the two reports filed in June 2015 and the four reports filed in May 2016. June’s incidents involved the deaths of two animals and injuries to four other animals.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in June against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 83 disability-related complaints in June, up from both the 68 complaints received in June 2015 and the 66 complaints received in May 2016. For the first six months of the year, the Department received 426 disability-related complaints, up from the 364 filed during January-June 2015.

Complaints About Discrimination

In June, the Department received six complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin, or sex – up from the total of five recorded in June 2015, but down from the seven recorded in May 2016. For the first six months of this year, the Department received 38 discrimination complaints, up from the 28 recorded in January-June 2015.

Consumers may file air travel service 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 Avenue, 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 August 2016

KEY JUNE 2016 ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 12 Reporting Carriers and Tarmac Data Filed by All Carriers

Overall

78.0 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 91.1 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 86.4 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 84.6 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. American Airlines – 72.4 percent
2. Virgin America – 72.6 percent
3. Spirit Airlines – 73.0 percent

Domestic Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

1. Spirit Airlines flight 719 from Dallas-Fort Worth to Denver, 6/28/16 – delayed 278 minutes on the tarmac in Colorado Springs, Colo. after being diverted
2. SkyWest Airlines flight 5931 from Fresno, Calif. to Denver, 6/28/16 – delayed 243 minutes on the tarmac in Colorado Springs, Colo. after being diverted
3. Mesa Airlines flight 6080 from Raleigh-Durham, N.C. to Houston, 6/2/16 – delayed 225 minutes on the tarmac in San Antonio, Texas after being diverted
4. United Airlines flight 536 from Billings, Mont. to Denver, 6/13/16 – delayed 208 minutes on the tarmac in Scottsbluff, Neb. after being diverted
5. GoJet Airlines flight 4884 from Kansas City, Mo. to Denver, 6/28/16 – delayed 196 minutes on the tarmac in Colorado Springs, Colo. after being diverted

International Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

1. Mesa Airlines flight 5781 from San Luis Potosí, Mexico to Dallas-Fort Worth, 6/12/16 – delayed 318 minutes on the tarmac in Austin after being diverted
2. ExpressJet Airlines flight 4443 from Ciudad del Carmen, Mexico to Houston, 6/12/16 – delayed 276 minutes on the tarmac in Lake Charles, La. after being diverted
3. British Airways flight 212 from Boston to London Heathrow, 6/29/16 – delayed 275 minutes on the tarmac in Boston
4. ExpressJet Airlines flight 4493 from Veracruz, Mexico to Houston, 6/28/16 – delayed 254 minutes on the tarmac in Austin after being diverted

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. ExpressJet Airlines – 2.9 percent
2. Spirit Airlines – 2.3 percent
3. Southwest Airlines – 1.3 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Delta Air Lines – 0.0 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.2 percent

* Delta Air Lines canceled 13 flights in June.

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