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## News

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Contact: Caitlin Harvey

Tel.: (202) 366-4570

### **Airline Consumer Complaints Up From Previous Year**

WASHINGTON – Airline consumer complaints filed with DOT’s Aviation Consumer Protection Division during the first six months of this year were up 20.3 percent from the first six months of 2014, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

From January to June 2015, the Department received 9,542 consumer complaints, up from the total of 7,935 received during the first six months of 2014. In June 2015, the Department received 2,052 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 47.3 percent from the total of 1,393 filed in June 2014 and up 37.5 percent from the 1,492 received in May 2015.

In addition, in June 2015, airlines reported two tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and no tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights. The reported tarmac delays are under investigation by the Department.

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. 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.

#### **On-Time Performance**

The nation’s largest airlines posted an on-time arrival rate of 74.8 percent in June, up from the 71.8 percent on-time rate in June 2014, but down from the 80.5 percent mark in May 2015.

#### **Cancellations**

In June, the reporting carriers canceled 1.8 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, an improvement over the 2.0 percent cancellation rate posted in June 2014, but up from the 1.1 percent rate in May 2015.

## **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of June, there were 37 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 total delays of 22.97 percent – 6.29 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.34 percent in May; 8.81 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.62 percent in May; 6.97 percent by factors within the airline’s control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.31 percent in May; 0.87 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.73 percent in May; and 0.03 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.03 percent in May. In addition, 1.81 percent of flights were canceled and 0.38 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.

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 June, 35.57 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down from 37.05 percent in June 2014, but up from 35.21 percent in May 2015.

Detailed information on flight delays and their causes is available on the BTS site at <http://www.bts.gov>.

## **Mishandled Baggage**

The U.S. carriers reporting flight delays and mishandled baggage data posted a mishandled baggage rate of 3.63 reports per 1,000 passengers in June, down from June 2014’s rate of 3.77, but up from May 2015’s rate of 3.09. For the first six months of the year, the carriers posted a mishandled baggage rate of 3.52 per 1,000 passengers, down from the 3.84 rate for the first half of 2014.

## **Bumping**

The report also includes reports of involuntary denied boarding, or bumping, for the second quarter and first six months of this year. The 14 U.S. carriers who report denied boarding data posted a bumping rate of 0.79 per 10,000 passengers for the quarter, down from both the 1.05 rate for the second quarter of 2014 and the 0.85 rate for the first quarter of 2015. For the first six months of this year, the carriers had a bumping rate of 0.82 per 10,000 passengers, down from the rate of 1.20 posted during the first six months of 2014.

## **Incidents Involving Animals**

In June, carriers reported two incidents involving the loss, injury, or death of animals while traveling by air, down from the 13 reports filed in in May 2015. June’s incidents involved the death of one animal and one injured animal.

## **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 69 disability-related complaints in June, down from both the 83 complaints received in June 2014 and the 73 complaints received in May 2015. For the first six months of the year, the Department received 364 disability-related complaints, down 6.7 percent from the 390 filed during January-June 2014.

## **Complaints About Discrimination**

In June, the Department received five complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin, or sex – equal to the total of five recorded in June 2014, but up from the two recorded in May 2015. For the first six months of this year, the Department received 29 discrimination complaints, down from the 32 recorded in January-June 2014.

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

## **Facts**

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### **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT August 2015**

#### **KEY JUNE 2015 ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 14 Reporting Carriers and Tarmac Data Filed by All Carriers**

#### **Overall**

74.8 percent on-time arrivals

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 90.5 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 87.4 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 82.2 percent

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

1. Spirit Airlines – 49.9 percent
2. United Airlines – 66.3 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 67.6 percent

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

1. JetBlue Airways flight 2417 from Orlando to Austin, 6/17/15 – delayed on tarmac 228 minutes in San Antonio
2. Southwest Airlines flight 2230 from Salt Lake City to Baltimore/Washington, 6/23/15 – delayed on tarmac 181 minutes in Norfolk, Va.

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

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

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

1. Envoy Air – 5.2 percent
2. Spirit Airlines – 4.9 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 3.5 percent

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Delta Air Lines – 0.3 percent
3. Alaska Airlines – 0.4 percent

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