

DOT 79-13

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## **Airlines Report 13 Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights, Three Tarmac Delays Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights in July**

WASHINGTON – Airlines reported 13 tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights and three tarmac delays of more than four hours on international flights in July, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

Of the 13 domestic delays, 12 involved flights departing New York’s LaGuardia Airport on July 22, the day the front landing gear of a Southwest Airlines plane collapsed upon landing at the airport, causing the airport to be closed temporarily. All of the reported tarmac delays, domestic and international, 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 16 airlines that file their on-time performance data with the Department reported that 73.1 percent of their flights arrived on time in July, down from the 76.0 percent on-time rate from July 2012, but up from the 71.9 percent mark from June 2013.

The consumer 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 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.

### **Cancellations**

The reporting carriers canceled 1.7 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in July, up from the 1.4 percent cancellation rate posted in July 2012, but down from the 1.8 percent rate posted in June 2013.

## **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of July, there were three regularly scheduled flights that were chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for four consecutive months. There were an additional 11 regularly scheduled flights that were chronically delayed for three consecutive months and an additional 184 regularly scheduled flights that were chronically delayed for two consecutive months. A list of flights that were chronically delayed for a single month is [available](#) from [BTS](#).

## **Causes of Flight Delays**

In July, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 7.40 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 7.37 percent in June; 9.98 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 10.70 percent in June; 6.77 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 6.78 percent in June; 0.76 percent by extreme weather, compared to 1.04 percent in June; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.04 percent in June.

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 July, 37.91 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down from 40.71 percent in July 2012 and 41.80 percent in June 2013.

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 3.68 reports per 1,000 passengers in July, up from July 2012's rate of 3.52, but down from June 2013's rate of 3.83.

## **Incidents Involving Pets**

In July, carriers reported six incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, up from both the four reports filed in July 2012 and the one report filed in June 2013. July's incident involved the deaths of five pets and the injury of one pet.

## **Complaints About Airline Service**

In July, the Department received 1,607 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 34.8 percent from the 2,466 complaints filed in July 2012, but up 30.9 percent from the 1,228 received in June 2013.

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in July against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 88 disability-related complaints in July, down from the total of 101 complaints filed in July 2012, but up from the 53 complaints received in June 2013.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In July, the Department received 12 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin, or sex – down from the total of 16 recorded in July 2012, but up from the total of five recorded in June 2013.

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](http://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**

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### **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT September 2013**

#### **KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 16 Reporting Carriers and Tarmac Data Filed by All Carriers**

#### **Overall**

73.1 percent on-time arrivals

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.6 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 84.5 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 77.0 percent

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

1. JetBlue Airways – 63.9 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 64.4 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 68.3 percent

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

1. US Airways flight 2179 from New York LaGuardia to Washington Reagan, 7/22/13 – delayed on tarmac 241 minutes
2. Air Wisconsin flight 3996 from New York LaGuardia to Pittsburgh, 7/22/13 – delayed on tarmac 234 minutes
3. United Airlines flight 745 from New York LaGuardia to Denver, 7/22/13 – delayed on tarmac 226 minutes
4. Compass Airlines flight 5845 from New York LaGuardia to Indianapolis, 7/22/13 – delayed on tarmac 217 minutes
5. US Airways flight 1899 from New York LaGuardia to Charlotte, N.C., 7/22/13 – delayed on tarmac 210 minutes

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

1. Singapore Airlines flight 16 from Seoul, South Korea to San Francisco, 7/6/13 – delayed on tarmac 255 minutes
1. Lufthansa flight 401 from New York JFK to Frankfurt, Germany, 7/24/13 – delayed on tarmac 255 minutes
3. Air China flight 982 from New York JFK to Beijing, China, 7/23/13 – delayed on tarmac 253 minutes

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

1. Pinnacle Airlines – 4.2 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 3.0 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 2.9 percent

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.4 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 0.5 percent

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