

DOT 113-12

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## **Airlines Report No Tarmac Delays Over Three Hours on Domestic Flights in August; One Tarmac Delay Longer Than Four Hours on International Flights**

Airlines reported no tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights in August and one tarmac delay of more than four hours on international flights, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today. The reported tarmac delay, an Aug. 15 flight by Caribbean Airlines from New York's JFK Airport to Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago that was delayed on the tarmac for four hours and 28 minutes prior to takeoff, is 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 new 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. In addition, it contains information on mishandled baggage 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 79.1 percent in August, down from August 2011's 79.3 percent mark, but up from July 2012's 76.0 percent.

### **Cancellations**

The reporting carriers canceled 1.3 percent of their scheduled domestic flights in August, down from both the 2.5 percent cancellation rate posted in August 2011 and July 2012's cancellation rate of 1.4 percent.

### **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of August, there were 56 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 ([www.bts.gov](http://www.bts.gov)).

### **Causes of Flight Delays**

In August, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 5.26 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.07 percent in July; 7.68 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 9.03 percent in July; 5.79 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 6.32 percent in July; 0.53 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.82 percent in July; and 0.04 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.04 percent in July. 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 August, 32.95 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 16.52 percent from August 2011, when 39.47 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 19.06 percent from July when 40.71 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 3.38 reports per 1,000 passengers in August, down from both August 2011's rate of 3.45 and July 2012's rate of 3.52.

### **Incidents Involving Pets**

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

### **Complaints About Airline Service**

In August, the Department received 1,886 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 33.2 percent from the 1,416 complaints filed in August 2011, but down 23.5 percent from the 2,466 received in July 2012.

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in August against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 73 disability-related

complaints in August, up from the total of 48 complaints filed in August 2011, but down from the total of 97 complaints received in July 2012.

## **Complaints About Discrimination**

In August, the Department received nine complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – down from both the total of 12 recorded in August 2011 and the 16 recorded in July 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 <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/airconsumer>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

## **Facts**

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

79.1 percent on-time arrivals

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 92.8 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 89.3 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 83.9 percent

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

1. United Airlines – 72.2 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 73.7 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 74.0 percent

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

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

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

1. Caribbean Airlines flight 421 from New York JFK to Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 8/15/12  
– delayed on tarmac 268 minutes\*

\*There was only one international flight in August with a tarmac delay exceeding four hours.

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

1. ExpressJet Airlines – 2.5 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 2.2 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 2.1 percent

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent\*
2. Frontier Airlines – 0.1 percent
3. Virgin America – 0.2 percent

\*Hawaiian Airlines canceled two flights in August.

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