

**DOT 43-11**  
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## **No Tarmac Delays Longer Than Three Hours in February**

The nation's largest airlines reported no flights in February with tarmac delays of more than three hours, down from 60 flights in February 2010, according to the Air Travel Consumer Report released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

Data filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, showed there have been only 16 total tarmac delays of more than three hours reported from May 2010 through February 2011 by the airlines that file on-time performance data with DOT, compared to 664 reported from May 2009 through February 2010. In February, the carriers also reported that .0400 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of two hours or more, down from the .0600 percent reported in January 2011.

February was the 10th full month of data since the new aviation consumer rule went into effect on April 29, 2010. The new rule prohibits U.S. airlines operating domestic flights from permitting an aircraft to remain on the tarmac for more than three hours without deplaning passengers, with exceptions allowed only for safety or security or if air traffic control advises the pilot in command that returning to the terminal would disrupt airport operations. The Department will investigate tarmac delays that exceed this limit.

The monthly report also includes data on on-time performance, chronically delayed flights, flight cancellations, and the causes of flight delays filed with the Department by the reporting carriers. In addition, the report contains information on reports of mishandled baggage filed by consumers with the carriers, and consumer service, disability and discrimination complaints received by DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection Division. This report also includes reports of incidents involving pets traveling by air, as required to be filed by U.S. carriers.

### **On-Time Performance**

Information filed with BTS shows that the 16 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 74.5 percent in February, down from both the 74.7 percent on-time rate of February 2010, and January 2011's 76.3 percent rate.

### **Cancellations**

During February, when large parts of the country experienced severe winter weather, the carriers canceled 4.9 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, compared to 5.4 percent in February 2010 and 3.9 percent in January 2011. The number of canceled flights with tarmac delays of more than two hours increased only slightly, from 289 between May 2009 and February 2010 to 331 between May 2010 and February 2011. There were 19 canceled flights with tarmac delays of more than two hours in February 2011, down from 21 in February 2010.

## **Chronically Delayed Flights**

At the end of February, there was only one flight that was chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for three consecutive months. There were an additional three flights that were chronically delayed for two consecutive months. There were no chronically delayed flights for four 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 February, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.73 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 6.12 percent in January; 7.44 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 7.20 percent in January; 5.44 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 5.65 percent in January; 0.69 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.60 percent in January; and 0.05 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.07 percent in January. 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 February, 36.38 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 13.89 percent from February 2010, when 42.25 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 10.04 percent from January when 33.06 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 3.59 reports per 1,000 passengers in February, down from both February 2010's rate of 3.93 and January 2011's rate of 4.20.

## **Incidents Involving Pets**

In February, carriers reported two incidents involving the loss, death or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from the three reports filed in February 2010 and equal to the two reports filed in January 2011. February's incidents involved the death of two pets.

## **Complaints About Airline Service**

In February, the Department received 687 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 10.8 percent from the 770 complaints filed in February 2010, and down 19.6 percent from the 855 received in January 2011.

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

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in February against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 40 disability-related complaints in February, up from both the total of 30 complaints filed in February 2010 and the 39 complaints received in January 2011.

### **Complaints About Discrimination**

In February, the Department received 10 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 February 2010, but down from the total of 11 recorded in January 2011.

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://airconsumer.dot.gov>.

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://airconsumer.dot.gov>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

## **Facts**

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### **AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT February 2011**

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

#### **Overall**

74.5 percent on-time arrivals

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 91.8 percent
2. AirTran Airways – 82.6 percent
3. Mesa Airlines – 82.6 percent

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

1. American Eagle Airlines – 62.7 percent

2. ExpressJet Airlines – 65.5 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 65.5 percent

### **Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays**

\*There were no flights with tarmac delays of more than three hours in February.

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

1. American Eagle Airlines – 11.8 percent
2. ExpressJet Airlines – 10.8 percent
3. American Airlines – 6.5 percent

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

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Alaska Airlines – 1.6 percent
3. US Airways – 2.1 percent

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