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News

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Contact: Bill Mosley
Tel.: (202) 366-4570

November Airline On-Time Performance Improves from Last Year

The nation's largest airlines had a higher rate of on-time flights this past November than in the same month last year, although the rate of delays was higher than in October 2008, according to the Air Travel Consumer Report released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

According to information filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), the 19 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 83.3 percent in November, an improvement over November 2007's 80.0 percent but below October 2008's 86.0 percent.

The monthly report also includes data on lengthy tarmac delays, flight cancellations and the causes of flight delays by the reporting carriers, as well as information on reports of mishandled baggage filed 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.

Cancellations

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In November, the carriers canceled 0.8 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, lower than the 1.0 percent cancellation rate of November 2007 but higher than the 0.6 percent rate posted in October 2008.

Tarmac Delays

In November, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that .00002 percent of their scheduled flights had tarmac delays of three hours or more, down from .0001 percent in October, the first month carriers reported this data. BTS is reviewing other parts of the tarmac data reported by carriers for October and the following months. Data will be released when the review is completed.

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AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE

Causes of Flight Delays

In November, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 6.58 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 5.17 percent in October; 4.79 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 3.93 percent in October; 3.89 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 3.86 percent in October; 0.37 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.26 percent in October; and 0.02 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.03 percent in October. 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 November, 42.08 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 11.26 percent from November 2007, when 37.82 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and up 22.01 percent from October when 34.49 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 3.75 reports per 1,000 passengers in November, an improvement over November 2007's rate of 4.90 but up from October 2008's 3.55 rate.

Incidents Involving Pets

In November, carriers reported six incidents involving pets while traveling by air, compared to three incidents in October. November's incidents involved three deaths, two injuries and one lost pet.

Complaints About Airline Service

In November, the Department received 532 complaints about airline service from consumers, down 34.3 percent from the 810 complaints filed in November 2007 and 15.2 percent fewer than the total of 627 received in October 2008.

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AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD TWO

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in November against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 28 disability-related complaints in November, 31.7 percent fewer than the 41 complaints received in November 2007 and 30.0 percent fewer than the total of 40 filed in October 2008.

Complaints About Discrimination

In November, the Department received seven complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up from the three complaints recorded in November 2007 but down from the total of 10 filed in October 2008.

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.ost.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 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.

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**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT
November 2008**

**KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS
Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics
by the 19 Reporting Carriers**

Overall

83.3 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 89.6 percent
2. Southwest Airlines – 87.2 percent
3. Northwest Airlines – 86.7 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Atlantic Southeast Airlines – 75.3 percent
2. Comair – 77.1 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 77.4 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. ExpressJet Airlines flight 2396 from Newark, NJ to Detroit – late 83.33 percent of the time
2. Comair flight 6517 from Atlanta to Austin, TX – late 82.76 percent of the time
2. SkyWest Airlines flight 4393 from Atlanta to San Antonio, TX – late 82.76 percent of the time
4. Southwest Airlines flight 3091 from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia – late 81.82 percent of the time
5. Mesa Airlines flight 2697 from Washington Dulles to Charlotte, NC – late 80.95 percent of the time

**AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT FACT SHEET
ADD ONE**

Flights with Longest Tarmac Delays

ExpressJet Airlines flight 2534 from Nashville, TN to Newark, NJ, 11/30/08 – delayed on tarmac 269 minutes

(This was the only flight with a reported tarmac delay of four hours or more in November)

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Mesa Airlines – 1.3 percent
2. Pinnacle Airlines – 1.3 percent
3. Comair – 1.2 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Continental Airlines – 0.1 percent
2. Northwest Airlines – 0.2 percent
3. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent

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