



M O V I N G T H E
AMERICAN
ECONOMY

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm

News

DOT 30-08
Tuesday, March 4, 2008

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Airline On-Time Performance in January Better Than December, Slips From Previous Year

The nation's largest airlines' rate of on-time flights this past January was higher than in December but lower than in January 2007, 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 20 carriers reporting on-time performance recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 72.4 percent in January, down from January 2007's 73.1 percent but an improvement over December 2007's 64.3 percent.

The monthly report also includes data on flight cancellations and causes of flight delays, 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 required to be filed by U.S. carriers of incidents involving pets traveling by air.

Cancellations

The consumer report includes BTS data on the number of domestic flights canceled by the reporting carriers. In January, the carriers canceled 2.9 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, up from the 2.5 percent cancellation rate posted in January 2007 but down from the 3.5 percent rate recorded in December 2007.

Causes of Flight Delays

In January, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 8.42 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 10.41 percent in December; 8.41 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 10.89 percent in December; 6.79 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 9.15 percent in December; 0.88 percent by extreme weather, compared to 1.38 percent in December; and 0.07 percent for security reasons, compared to 0.08 percent in December. 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.

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AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT ADD ONE

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 January, 43.56 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, up 4.51 percent from January 2007, when 41.68 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 0.02 percent from December when 43.57 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 7.37 reports per 1,000 passengers in January, an improvement over both January 2007's rate of 8.19 and December 2007's 9.01 rate.

Incidents Involving Pets

In January, carriers reported four incident involving pets while traveling by air, up from one incident in December. All of the January incidents involved the death of pets.

Complaints About Airline Service

In January, the department received 1,174 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 55.7 percent from the 754 complaints filed in January 2007 and up 38.3 percent from the total of 849 received in December 2007.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in January against specific airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 43 disability-related complaints in January, 48.3 percent above the 29 filed in January 2007 and more than double the total of 18 complaints filed in December 2007.

Complaints About Discrimination

In January, the Department received 11 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up from both the totals of 10 received in January 2007 and two filed in December 2007.

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 ticket offices or their travel agents. 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.ost.dot.gov>. It is available in "pdf" and Microsoft Word format.

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AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT
January 2008

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS
Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics
by the 20 Reporting Carriers

Overall

72.4 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.1 percent
2. Aloha Airlines – 93.1 percent
3. US Airways – 79.5 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. United Airlines – 62.1 percent
2. SkyWest Airlines – 65.3 percent
3. American Eagle Airlines – 65.9 percent

Most Frequently Delayed Flights

1. Mesa Airlines flight 7173 from Des Moines, IA to Chicago – late 94.12 percent of the time
2. United Airlines flight 334 from Chicago to Columbus, OH – late 92.86 percent of the time
3. SkyWest Airlines flight 6360 from Salt Lake City to San Francisco – late 92.00 percent of the time
4. Mesa Airlines flight 7177 from Chicago to Des Moines, IA – late 90.91 percent of the time
5. Mesa Airlines flight 7297 from Chicago to Allentown, PA – late 88.89 percent of the time

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Mesa Airlines – 6.5 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 5.6 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 5.2 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Frontier Airlines – 0.2 percent
2. Aloha Airlines – 0.6 percent
3. Continental Airlines – 0.8 percent

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