

DOT 65-12
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Contact: Bill Mosley
Tel: (202) 366-4570

Airline On-Time Performance Improves in April; Mishandled Baggage at All-Time Low

The nation's largest airlines posted an on-time arrival rate of 86.3 percent in April, up from both the 75.5 percent on-time rate of April 2011 and from March 2012's 82.2 percent rate, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report released today.

In addition, the reporting airlines compiled a mishandled baggage rate of 2.63 reports per 1,000 passengers, the lowest rate for any month since carriers first reported this data in September 1987. April's mishandled baggage rate was down from both April 2011's rate of 3.30 and March 2012's of 3.09.

Airlines also reported no tarmac delays of more than three hours on domestic flights or more than four hours on international flights in April. 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, carriers operating international flights may not allow tarmac delays at U.S. airports to last longer than four hours. 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.

The report also includes data on 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 report contains information on 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

During April, the carriers canceled 1.0 percent of their scheduled domestic flights, down from April 2011's 2.0 percent cancellation rate and equal to March 2012's 1.0 percent.

Chronically Delayed Flights

At the end of April, there were six flights that were chronically delayed – more than 30 minutes late more than 50 percent of the time – for two consecutive months. No flights were chronically delayed 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).

Causes of Flight Delays

In April, the carriers filing on-time performance data reported that 3.56 percent of their flights were delayed by aviation system delays, compared to 4.99 percent in March; 4.59 percent by late-arriving aircraft, compared to 6.16 percent in March; 4.04 percent by factors within the airline's control, such as maintenance or crew problems, compared to 4.90 percent in March; 0.39 percent by extreme weather, compared to 0.51 percent in March; and 0.02 percent for security reasons, equal to 0.02 percent in March. 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 April, 28.53 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, down 28.44 percent from April 2011, when 39.87 percent of late flights were delayed by weather, and down 19.34 percent from March when 35.37 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>.

Incidents Involving Pets

In April, carriers reported three incidents involving the loss, death, or injury of pets while traveling by air, down from both the four reports filed in April 2011 and nine in March 2012. April's incidents involved three pet deaths.

Complaints About Airline Service

In April, the Department received 1,068 complaints about airline service from consumers, up 21.4 percent from the 880 complaints received in April 2011, but down 4.4 percent from the 1,117 complaints filed in March 2012.

Complaints About Treatment of Disabled Passengers

The report also contains a tabulation of complaints filed with DOT in April against airlines regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities. The Department received a total of 65 disability-related complaints in April 2012, up from the total of 48 filed in both April 2011 and in March 2012.

Complaints About Discrimination

In April, the Department received 14 complaints alleging discrimination by airlines due to factors other than disability – such as race, religion, national origin or sex – up from both the 10 filed in April 2011 and the total of four received in March 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://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

AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT April 2012

KEY ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND FLIGHT CANCELLATION STATISTICS Based on Data Filed with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the 15 Reporting Carriers

Overall

86.3 percent on-time arrivals

Highest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 94.4 percent
2. AirTran Airways – 94.0 percent
3. Delta Air Lines – 90.9 percent

Lowest On-Time Arrival Rates

1. American Airlines – 81.4 percent
2. United Airlines – 81.6 percent
3. ExpressJet Airlines – 82.6 percent

Domestic Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Three Hours

There were no domestic flights with tarmac delays of more than three hours in April.

International Flights with Tarmac Delays Exceeding Four Hours

There were no international flights with tarmac delays of more than four hours in April.

Highest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. American Airlines – 3.7 percent
2. American Eagle Airlines – 2.4 percent
3. SkyWest Airlines – 1.3 percent

Lowest Rates of Canceled Flights

1. Hawaiian Airlines – 0.0 percent
2. AirTran Airways – 0.1 percent
3. JetBlue Airways – 0.1 percent

*Hawaiian Airlines canceled two flights in April.

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