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Airline Quality Rating 2021

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Airline Quality Rating 2021

The 31st Year Reporting Airline Performance



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The Airline Quality Rating Report is a product of academic research from co-authors Dr. Dean Headley and Dr. Brent Bowen. The research originated at the W. Frank Barton School of Business, Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas.

Dr. Bowen and Dr. Headley's research on the development of the national Airline Quality Rating (AQR) is viewed by more than 75 million people each year and is annually featured by national news outlets such as ABC's Good Morning America, CNN, NBC's Today Show, C-SPAN, USA Today, The Associated Press, The Wall Street Journal, Aviation Week and Space Technology, the network evening news shows and in numerous other national and international print and electronic media. Bowen and Headley have served as invited expert witnesses before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Government Operations and as invited speakers and panelists for such groups as the National Academy of Sciences/Transportation Research Board, Department of Transportation, and other congressional and executive panels.

Their body of research has been recognized with awards from the American Marketing Association, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, the Travel and Transportation Research Association and others.

AIRLINE QUALITY RATING 2021

Abstract

The Airline Quality Rating (AQR) was developed and first announced in early 1991 as an objective method for assessing airline quality on combined multiple performance criteria. This current report, the Airline Quality Rating 2021, reflects monthly Airline Quality Rating scores for calendar year 2020. AQR scores for 2021 are based on 15 elements in four major areas that focus on airline performance aspects important to air travel consumers over the calendar year of 2020.

The Airline Quality Rating 2021 is a summary of month-by-month quality ratings for U.S. airlines that are required to report performance by virtue of having at least 0.05% of domestic scheduled-service passenger revenue during 2020. Using the Airline Quality Rating system of weighted averages and monthly performance data in the areas of on-time arrivals, involuntary denied boardings, mishandled baggage, and a combination of 12 customer complaint categories, the AQR reports airlines' comparative performance for the calendar year of 2020. This research monograph contains a summary of the AQR methodology and detailed data that track comparative performance quality for domestic airline operations for the 12-month period of 2020 and the industry. Also, comparative Airline Quality Rating data for 2019 are included, where available, to provide historical perspective regarding performance quality in the industry.

The Airline Quality Rating System

Many quality ratings available in the past have relied on subjective surveys of consumer opinion that were infrequently collected. This subjective approach yields a quality rating that is essentially non-comparable from survey to survey for any specific airline. Timeliness of survey-based results can be a problem in the fast-paced airline industry as well. Before the Airline Quality Rating, there was effectively no consistent method for monitoring the quality of airlines on a timely, objective, and comparable basis. With the introduction of the AQR, a multi-factor, weighted average approach became available that had not been used previously in the airline industry. The method relies on utilizing published, publicly available data that reports actual airline performance on critical quality criteria important to consumers and combines them into a rating system. The result is a rating for individual airlines with interval scale properties that is comparable across airlines. The Airline Quality Rating is a weighted average of multiple elements (see Table 1) important to consumers when judging the quality of airline services. Elements considered for inclusion in the rating scale were screened to meet two basic criteria: 1) An element must be obtainable from published data sources for each airline; and 2) An element must have relevance to consumer concerns regarding airline performance quality. Data for the elements used in calculating the ratings represent performance aspects (on-time arrival, mishandled baggage, involuntary denied boardings and 12 customer complaint areas) of airlines that are important to consumers. All the elements are reported in the *Air Travel Consumer Report* maintained by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Weights were originally established by surveying 65 airline

industry experts regarding their opinion as to what consumers would rate as important (on a scale of 0 to 10) in judging airline quality. Each weight and element were assigned a plus or minus sign to reflect the nature of impact for that criterion on a consumer's perception of quality. For instance, the criterion of on-time arrival performance is included as a positive element because it is reported in terms of on-time successes, suggesting that a higher number is favorable to consumers. The weight for this criterion is high due to the importance most consumers place on this aspect of airline service. Conversely, the criterion that includes mishandled baggage is included as a negative element and is reported in terms of mishandled bags per 1000 checked bags (new metric for 2019 data), suggesting that a higher number is unfavorable to consumers. Because having baggage arrive with passengers is important to consumers, the weight for this criterion is also high. Weights and positive/negative signs are independent of one another. Weights reflect importance of the criteria in consumer decision-making, while signs reflect the direction of impact that the criteria should have on the consumer's rating of airline performance quality. When all criteria, weights and impacts are combined for an airline over the year, a single interval scaled value is obtained. This value is comparable across airlines. In the spring of 2002, a nationwide survey of frequent flyers was conducted that allowed a revisiting of the weighting for the AQR elements. Analysis of the sample of 766 opinions showed no appreciable difference in the relative weights for the AQR elements. To maintain comparability across the years, the weights have been held constant.

The Airline Quality Rating criteria and the weighted average methodology allow a focused comparison of domestic airline performance. Unlike other consumer opinion approaches that have relied on consumer surveys and subjective opinion, the AQR continues to use a mathematical formula that considers multiple weighted objective criteria to arrive at a single comparable rating for airline industry performance. The Airline Quality Rating provides both consumers and industry watchers a means for monitoring comparative quality for each airline on a timely basis, using objective, performance-based data. Over its 31-year history, the Airline Quality Rating has often been cited as an industry standard for comparing airline performance. Currently, the AQR stands as the longest regularly published rating available for airline performance. With the continued global trend in airline operations alliances, the argument becomes even stronger for the Airline Quality Rating to be used as a standard method for comparing the quality of airline performance for international operations as well.

Table 1

AIRLINE QUALITY RATING CRITERIA, WEIGHTS AND IMPACT

CRITERIA	WEIGHT	IMPACT (+/-)
OT On-Time		8.63 +
DB Denied Boardings		8.03 -
MB Mishandled Baggage		7.92 -
CC Customer Complaints		7.17 -
Flight Problems		
Oversales		
Reservations, Ticketing, and Boarding		
Fares		
Refunds		
Baggage		
Customer Service		
Disability		
Advertising		
Discrimination		
Animals		
Other		

Data for all criteria is drawn from the U.S. Department of Transportation's monthly *Air Travel Consumer Report*. (<http://dot.gov/airconsumer/>)

The formula for calculating the AQR score is:

$$\text{AQR} = \frac{(+8.63 \times \text{OT}) + (-8.03 \times \text{DB}) + (-7.92 \times \text{MB}) + (-7.17 \times \text{CC})}{(8.63 + 8.03 + 7.92 + 7.17)}$$

Observations and comments related to AQR criteria performance for 2020:

The impact of the novel coronavirus on the U.S. domestic air travel system in 2020 was profound and will have lingering effects for years to come. Each airline was challenged to handle an uncertain situation and adapt its respective offerings to fast-changing circumstances. Some airlines adapted quicker than others and the AQR numbers give some insight into this adaptive timeline. The criterion that most affected the AQR performance scores for all airlines is a dramatic increase in customer complaints in the early months of the pandemic. While some system wide increase in customer complaints is seen in March 2020 the largest impact for most airlines appears in the April and May numbers. Most early customer complaints were for issues involving refunds for unused travel. As the months passed, most airlines were able to better address passenger concerns regarding refunds and this is reflected in the monthly AQR scores for the later months of 2020.

Other AQR criteria, on-time performance, involuntary denied boardings and mishandled baggage, did not see such dramatic impact from the coronavirus. Airlines were able to improve performance in these three areas. With the flying public curtailing its use of the air travel system, outcomes for those who did choose to fly were generally good. The drastic reduction in the number of enplaned passengers for all airlines has some correlation to these improved outcomes. As more was known about the coronavirus and how to travel more safely, passenger volumes began to return. While it will certainly take several months if not years, the air travel system is returning to better volumes and continuing to provide safe travel for the flying public.

Some observations regarding the AQR criteria are shown below.

- Hawaiian Airlines had the best on-time performance (88.0%) for 2020.
- Allegiant had the worst on-time performance (71.3%) for 2020.
- Eight airlines improved their on-time arrival performance in 2020. Nine of the ten airlines rated had an on-time arrival percentage over 80%. On-time for 2020 by the industry was 83.6% compared to 79.4% in 2019.
- Frontier had the highest involuntary denied boardings rate at 0.24 per 10,000 passengers.
- Allegiant, Delta, Hawaiian and JetBlue had the lowest involuntary denied boardings rates at 0.00 per 10,000 passengers.
- Seven airlines improved their denied boardings rate in 2020 and three airlines had the same rate as in 2019. Allegiant recorded the largest improvement in denied boardings. Allegiant (0.00), Delta (0.00), Hawaiian (0.00), JetBlue (0.00) and United (0.01) are clearly the industry leaders in avoiding denied boarding incidents. Industry performance was noticeably better in 2020 (0.08 per 10,000 passengers) than it was in 2019 (0.19).

- Allegiant had the best baggage handling performance under the new measurement approach (1.48 mishandled bags per 1,000 checked bags).
- American had the worst baggage handling performance (6.38 mishandled bags per 1,000 checked bags).
- The mishandled baggage rate for the industry changed from 5.57 per 1,000 checked bags in 2019 to 3.96 per 1000 checked bags in 2020.
- Southwest had the lowest consumer complaint rate (2.64 per 100,000 passengers).
- Frontier had the highest consumer complaint rate (49.30 per 100,000 passengers).
- The industry rate for customer complaints per 100,000 passengers increased from 1.06 in 2019 to 11.75 in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all airlines received record numbers of customer complaints. Most complaints (82.8%) to U.S. Department of Transportation were regarding refunds. In 2019 refunds were only 6.6% of complaints filed. In 2020 flight problems accounted for 40.0% (2.7% in 2019) of complaints, while customer service (12.6% in 2019 and 3.1% in 2020), baggage (12.0% in 2019 and 1.4% in 2020), and reservations, ticketing, and boarding (9.4% in 2019 and 2.4% in 2020) all were of less concern to the flying public.
- The pandemic had a dramatic impact on the number of people choosing to fly for most of 2020. Enplaned passengers started to drop off in March for all airlines as the scope of the coronavirus became clearer. Total enplaned domestic passengers for 2020 were only 38.9% of the number of enplaned passengers for 2019. The over 60% reduction in travelers across the year certainly helped the on-time, baggage handling and denied boardings performance for most airlines. As mentioned before, the rise in customer complaints was the primary performance issue for airlines. How quickly each airline addressed customer complaints helps tell the story of how each airline 's AQR score was achieved.

Previous Airline Quality Reports

Bowen, Brent D., Headley, Dean E. and Luedtke, Jacqueline R. (1991), Airline Quality Rating, National Institute for Aviation Research Report 91-11, Wichita, Kansas.

Bowen, Brent D. and Headley, Dean E. (1992,1993,1994,1995), Airline Quality Rating Report, National Institute for Aviation Research Report Series, Wichita, Kansas.

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Detail of Airline Performance

Since the Airline Quality Rating is comparable across airlines, monthly and annual rating results can be examined both individually and collectively. The following pages outline the AQR scores for the industry and for each airline rated for 2020 and 2019.

A change in reporting guidelines used by the *Air Travel Consumer Report* required that changes be made to the number of airlines included in this report. To provide the most comparable data picture, only the main airline data is reported. Branded carriers that are associated with main carriers are not included in the data used in this AQR report. The result is a consistent group of 10 carriers that have all data points reported and calculated in the AQR scores for 2020 and 2019.

A new metric for mishandled baggage was implemented with the January 2019 ATRC. In previous reports mishandled baggage was reported as a ratio of mishandled bags per 1000 passengers enplaned. Starting with the January 2019 reporting the ratio was changed to reflect the number of mishandled bags per 1000 checked bags (enplaned bags).

This new metric prevents accurate year-to-year comparisons of the mishandled baggage element for data years prior to 2019. Year-over-year comparison of monthly and yearly AQR scores is also impacted using this new mishandled baggage metric.

Airline Quality Rating Scores 2020 - 2013

	2020 AQR		2019 AQR		2018 AQR		2017 AQR		2016 AQR		2015 AQR		2014 AQR		2013 AQR	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Alaska	-2.82	4	-1.21	5	-0.63	4	-0.437	1	-0.39	1	-0.80	5	-0.65	5	-0.69	5
Allegiant	-1.61	2	-0.68	1	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
American	-3.46	7	-2.45	10	-1.10	8	-1.03	9	-1.35	9	-1.73	10	-1.35	7	-1.10	9
Delta	-2.26	3	-1.09	4	-0.36	1	-0.442	2	-0.40	2	-0.49	3	-0.60	3	-0.59	4
Frontier	-11.77	10	-1.53	7	-1.53	9	-1.23	11	-2.24	12	-2.60	11	-1.48	8	-1.35	11
Hawaiian	-9.05	9	-1.00	2	-0.65	5	-0.68	4	-0.69	5	-0.67	4	-0.53	2	-0.59	3
JetBlue	-3.28	6	-1.40	6	-0.48	2	-0.58	3	-0.60	4	-0.44	2	-0.61	4	-0.42	2
Southwest	-1.05	1	-1.00	3	-0.62	3	-0.73	5	-0.88	6	-1.00	6	-1.22	6	-1.06	8
Spirit	-2.95	5	-1.65	8	-1.00	7	-1.66	12	-2.01	11	-3.18	13	N/A	-	N/A	-
United	-7.62	8	-1.78	9	-0.72	6	-0.86	8	-1.05	8	-1.43	8	-1.62	9	-1.43	12
Industry	-3.43		-1.46		-0.66		-0.79		-0.95		-1.21		-1.24		-1.07	

NOTES:

Scores and rankings for 2019 reflect the addition of Allegiant to the airlines tracked. Also, the new metric for mishandled baggage is used.

Scores for Alaska Airlines reflect the merger with Virgin America for the full year of 2018.

Scores and rankings for 2015 reflect the addition of Spirit to the airlines tracked.

As of January 2014, data of the merged operations of American Airlines and USAirways are combined and appear only as American Airlines.

As of January 2014, data of the merged operations of Southwest Airlines and AirTran Airlines are combined and appear only as Southwest Airlines

Monthly Airline Quality Rating Scores by Airline for 2020 and 2019

	Alaska		Allegiant		American		Delta		Frontier		Hawaiian	
	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019
Jan	-1.43	-1.23	-0.52	-0.99	-2.16	-2.18	-1.00	-1.04	-1.42	-1.54	-0.88	-1.24
Feb	-1.11	-1.75	-0.43	-1.17	-2.23	-2.15	-1.09	-1.20	-1.16	-1.42	-0.83	-0.94
Mar	-1.77	-1.30	-2.17	-0.71	-2.62	-2.15	-1.37	-1.02	-3.74	-1.37	-2.21	-0.99
Apr	-64.06	-0.99	-92.62	-0.63	-45.07	-2.66	-36.57	-1.00	-482.70	-1.26	-229.93	-0.77
May	-25.21	-0.91	-3.36	-0.62	-15.98	-2.95	-26.48	-1.14	-88.43	-1.38	-187.04	-0.89
Jun	-6.06	-1.15	-1.87	-0.69	-6.12	-3.38	-11.15	-1.27	-49.04	-1.83	-63.73	-1.41
Jul	-3.11	-0.99	-1.21	-0.58	-4.23	-2.92	-4.29	-1.26	-22.51	-1.65	-16.05	-0.97
Aug	-2.24	-1.23	-1.09	-0.68	-3.13	-2.82	-1.79	-1.12	-11.77	-1.65	-15.65	-0.77
Sep	-1.82	-1.18	-0.84	-0.61	-2.29	-1.93	-1.26	-0.84	-12.94	-1.63	-14.87	-0.89
Oct	-1.66	-0.92	-0.68	-0.59	-2.50	-1.84	-0.87	-0.93	-6.85	-1.57	-7.16	-1.36
Nov	-1.58	-1.03	-0.65	-0.42	-1.91	-1.86	-0.78	-0.77	-3.33	-1.50	-1.63	-0.75
Dec	-1.56	-2.05	-0.53	-0.64	-2.48	-2.36	-0.90	-1.44	-2.58	-1.57	-1.69	-1.01
Annual	-2.82	-1.21	-1.61	-0.68	-3.46	-2.45	-2.26	-1.09	-11.77	-1.53	-9.05	-1.00

Monthly Airline Quality Rating Scores by Airline for 2020 and 2019

	JetBlue		Southwest		Spirit		United		Industry	
	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019
Jan	-1.01	-1.36	-0.80	-1.17	-1.76	-1.18	-1.62	-1.74	-1.32	-1.44
Feb	-0.92	-1.29	-0.61	-1.29	-1.51	-1.40	-1.48	-1.94	-1.25	-1.48
Mar	-2.63	-1.29	-1.15	-1.15	-2.52	-1.25	-5.03	-1.75	-2.33	-1.31
Apr	-123.95	-1.38	-24.69	-1.04	-67.29	-1.61	-281.28	-1.54	-77.47	-1.43
May	-50.77	-1.36	-4.18	-1.11	-34.76	-1.75	-165.76	-1.65	-28.67	-1.56
Jun	-10.59	-1.54	-1.20	-1.20	-5.54	-2.00	-46.18	-2.31	-9.40	-1.82
Jul	-4.28	-1.73	-0.95	-1.04	-2.79	-2.02	-14.29	-2.12	-4.61	-1.65
Aug	-3.61	-1.69	-0.64	-0.90	-2.33	-2.15	-6.69	-1.96	-2.88	-1.57
Sep	-2.56	-1.44	-0.65	-0.64	-2.95	-1.79	-4.37	-1.48	-2.40	-1.18
Oct	-1.85	-1.24	-0.51	-0.75	-2.09	-1.42	-2.81	-1.33	-1.85	-1.16
Nov	-1.82	-1.22	-0.48	-0.72	-1.66	-1.35	-2.33	-1.27	-1.45	-0.46
Dec	-1.94	-1.30	-0.75	-1.08	-1.98	-1.70	-2.22	-2.09	-1.56	-0.81
Annual	-3.28	-1.40	-1.05	-1.00	-2.95	-1.65	-7.62	-1.78	-3.43	-1.46

Detail of Frequently Cited Airline Performance Criteria

Consumer interest remains high regarding such issues as on-time performance, mishandled baggage, involuntary denied boardings (bumping or oversales) and treatment of customers. Since these criteria are central to the AQR calculations, it is important to provide more complete data for individual airlines in these areas. The following data tables provide a detailed look at the performance of each of the 10 U.S. branded airlines required to report performance in the specific areas of on-time arrivals, mishandled baggage, involuntary denied boardings and consumer complaints to the Department of Transportation in 2020. The requirement is based on the criteria that an airline handled at least 0.05% or more of the total domestic scheduled-service passenger revenues for 2020. Data were drawn from the U.S. Department of Transportation monthly *Air Travel Consumer Report*. The final pages of this report outline the Airline Quality Rating criteria definitions for reference and clarity in more fully understanding the nature of the data reported. For comparison purposes, 2019 performance data on these 10 airlines is also presented.

2020 On-Time Arrival Percentage by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Alaska (AS)	.776	.842	.741	.737	.955	.914	.924	.900	.929	.924	.886	.907	.849
Allegiant (G4)	.788	.755	.624	.104	.374	.863	.855	.836	.856	.811	.867	.829	.713
American (AA)	.841	.832	.712	.573	.953	.932	.895	.901	.904	.880	.906	.881	.834
Delta (DL)	.893	.868	.710	.676	.949	.945	.892	.910	.951	.935	.902	.858	.863
Frontier (F9)	.844	.808	.678	.496	.939	.935	.870	.878	.934	.877	.933	.889	.839
Hawaiian (HA)	.899	.907	.822	.781	.960	.949	.914	.876	.959	.705	.939	.911	.880
JetBlue (B6)	.848	.834	.727	.613	.864	.901	.854	.874	.931	.887	.892	.783	.821
Southwest (WN)	.887	.893	.771	.470	.913	.937	.945	.939	.947	.952	.951	.887	.860
Spirit (NK)	.858	.828	.816	.746	.968	.944	.901	.913	.922	.904	.902	.839	.866
United (UA)	.863	.856	.691	.484	.936	.936	.925	.919	.942	.923	.924	.878	.836
Industry by Month	.850	.842	.792	.568	.881	.926	.898	.895	.928	.880	.910	.866	.836

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2019 On-Time Arrival Percentage by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Alaska (AS)	.805	.680	.812	.837	.826	.818	.834	.777	.815	.843	.835	.742	.803
Allegiant (G4)	.734	.752	.853	.816	.795	.729	.786	.768	.841	.834	.816	.736	.787
American (AA)	.800	.758	.783	.756	.704	.671	.737	.746	.829	.805	.847	.783	.770
Delta (DL)	.867	.816	.883	.862	.867	.799	.808	.832	.886	.866	.896	.830	.852
Frontier (F9)	.739	.743	.783	.776	.670	.640	.660	.712	.788	.745	.785	.753	.731
Hawaiian (HA)	.873	.821	.873	.894	.900	.897	.895	.904	.908	.839	.900	.876	.883
JetBlue (B6)	.694	.700	.738	.734	.776	.701	.702	.678	.820	.807	.804	.667	.735
Southwest (WN)	.819	.735	.800	.787	.758	.751	.803	.822	.881	.840	.853	.779	.802
Spirit (NK)	.829	.777	.864	.802	.760	.716	.741	.709	.838	.845	.869	.869	.795
United (UA)	.788	.770	.788	.797	.755	.702	.736	.754	.802	.820	.839	.759	.777
Industry by Month	.795	.755	.818	.806	.781	.742	.770	.770	.841	.824	.844	.774	.794

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2020 Involuntary Denied Boardings by Quarter for 10 U.S. Airlines (per 10,000 passengers)

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Annual
Alaska (AS)	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03
Allegiant (G4)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
American (AA)	0.17	0.16	0.47	0.02	0.20
Delta (DL)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Frontier (F9)	0.20	0.65	0.26	0.19	0.24
Hawaiian (HA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
JetBlue (B6)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Southwest (WN)	0.04	0.16	0.10	0.02	0.06
Spirit (NK)	0.09	0.02	0.00	0.20	0.09
United (UA)	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01
Industry by Quarter	0.06	0.11	0.15	0.03	0.08

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2019 Involuntary Denied Boardings by Quarter for 10 U.S. Airlines (per 10,000 passengers)

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Annual
Alaska (AS)	0.21	0.17	0.10	0.13	0.15
Allegiant (G4)	1.47	0.29	0.01	0.01	0.42
American (AA)	0.52	0.91	0.52	0.30	0.57
Delta (DL)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Frontier (F9)	0.33	0.36	0.40	0.43	0.38
Hawaiian (HA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
JetBlue (B6)	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01
Southwest (WN)	0.43	0.22	0.08	0.07	0.19
Spirit (NK)	0.06	0.18	0.08	0.15	0.12
United (UA)	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01
Industry by Quarter	0.26	0.27	0.14	0.09	0.19

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2020 Mishandled Baggage by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines (per 1,000 bags enplaned)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Alaska (AS)	5.98	4.71	5.44	4.59	2.44	2.52	2.43	2.24	2.35	2.51	3.06	2.58	3.95
Allegiant (G4)	1.69	1.44	1.79	2.11	1.50	1.64	1.54	1.36	1.34	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.48
American (AA)	7.81	7.50	6.44	6.74	4.26	4.44	5.43	4.80	4.60	6.77	5.37	7.43	6.38
Delta (DL)	4.44	4.90	4.24	3.49	2.54	2.52	2.86	2.69	2.42	2.54	2.52	3.31	3.71
Frontier (F9)	4.09	3.29	4.11	7.37	4.12	3.11	3.01	3.37	2.44	2.45	2.13	2.50	3.23
Hawaiian (HA)	4.12	3.56	3.78	2.69	1.81	1.85	2.16	1.91	1.77	2.06	1.87	2.02	3.19
JetBlue (B6)	3.93	3.78	3.90	6.43	3.83	3.27	3.90	3.82	3.91	3.22	2.98	4.30	3.81
Southwest (WN)	3.88	3.24	3.04	2.59	1.68	2.06	2.01	2.02	2.09	1.83	1.91	2.87	2.68
Spirit (NK)	5.28	4.80	4.80	5.22	2.45	2.58	3.92	3.49	2.77	2.66	3.05	3.29	3.79
United (UA)	6.05	5.64	4.74	4.40	3.19	2.92	3.21	3.37	3.05	3.56	3.03	4.27	4.55
Industry by Month	5.15	4.81	4.34	4.38	2.70	2.73	3.16	2.98	2.89	3.38	2.95	3.92	3.96

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2019 Mishandled Baggage by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines (per 1,000 bags enplaned)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Alaska (AS)	5.04	6.75	5.39	4.19	4.04	5.01	4.32	5.36	5.07	4.15	4.06	7.72	5.02
Allegiant (G4)	1.94	1.71	1.70	1.59	1.64	1.98	2.00	1.90	1.43	1.68	1.53	1.84	1.75
American (AA)	7.85	7.73	7.64	8.85	10.06	11.30	9.71	9.67	6.72	6.94	7.20	8.94	8.60
Delta (DL)	4.74	5.23	4.78	4.54	5.06	5.42	5.36	4.83	3.87	4.27	3.80	6.00	4.82
Frontier (F9)	4.52	3.93	4.01	3.70	4.35	4.43	3.91	4.02	4.94	4.56	4.06	4.42	4.20
Hawaiian (HA)	4.97	3.60	4.25	3.39	3.55	6.08	4.18	3.47	3.94	5.81	3.79	4.53	4.30
JetBlue (B6)	5.59	5.25	5.30	5.59	5.60	5.92	6.36	6.33	5.46	4.99	4.94	5.19	5.53
Southwest (WN)	4.91	5.08	4.70	4.42	4.73	5.05	4.69	4.14	3.24	3.57	3.59	4.88	4.40
Spirit (NK)	4.64	4.44	4.33	3.99	5.17	5.54	5.53	5.52	4.45	4.08	4.36	5.02	4.76
United (UA)	7.03	7.41	6.99	5.95	6.24	8.39	7.37	6.96	5.56	5.18	5.13	7.70	6.68
Industry by Month	5.67	5.87	5.13	5.37	5.89	6.63	6.01	5.78	4.56	4.66	4.57	6.28	5.57

Effective January 2019, Mishandled Baggage ratio is reported as per 1000 bags enplaned not per 1000 passengers.
 Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2020 Total Complaints to the Department of Transportation by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines (per 100,000 passengers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Alaska (AS)	0.59	0.66	2.65	279.48	110.09	25.14	12.20	8.52	6.58	5.70	4.81	5.13	9.13
Allegiant (G4)	1.39	1.23	8.40	407.91	13.67	7.53	4.67	4.35	3.27	2.64	2.58	2.04	6.34
American (AA)	1.78	2.41	5.15	192.64	67.01	23.16	13.27	9.11	5.60	4.63	4.15	3.82	9.05
Delta (DL)	0.59	0.48	2.24	158.89	115.61	47.73	16.93	6.07	4.06	2.18	1.86	1.35	6.96
Frontier (F9)	2.54	2.23	12.62	2129.20	387.44	214.11	97.09	49.16	55.43	28.49	13.29	9.50	49.30
Hawaiian (HA)	0.42	0.83	6.58	1016.16	827.40	281.32	69.78	68.24	65.05	30.26	6.32	6.36	37.63
JetBlue (B6)	1.15	0.90	8.22	542.49	221.63	44.35	15.66	12.83	8.13	5.70	5.82	4.78	11.29
Southwest (WN)	0.30	0.17	2.62	106.84	17.59	3.97	3.03	1.62	1.59	1.34	1.13	1.21	2.64
Spirit (NK)	2.91	2.28	6.74	293.07	152.36	22.81	9.10	7.55	11.13	7.17	4.83	5.91	9.60
United (UA)	1.53	1.36	17.89	1241.26	731.60	202.39	60.82	26.97	17.09	9.61	8.21	6.15	29.73
Industry by Month	1.14	1.15	6.41	338.77	124.89	40.83	17.85	10.35	8.38	5.47	4.14	3.57	11.75

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2019 Total Complaints to the Department of Transportation by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines (per 100,000 passengers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Alaska (AS)	0.63	0.89	0.54	0.59	0.36	0.37	0.50	0.36	0.49	0.34	0.93	1.30	0.60
Allegiant (G4)	1.49	2.53	0.66	1.71	1.55	1.42	1.30	1.82	2.11	1.74	1.14	1.66	1.55
American (AA)	1.36	1.33	1.46	1.88	1.76	2.27	2.49	2.10	1.52	1.10	0.96	1.17	1.64
Delta (DL)	0.41	0.53	0.31	0.46	0.52	0.60	0.65	0.61	0.49	0.44	0.28	0.76	0.51
Frontier (F9)	2.34	2.47	2.19	2.03	1.73	3.58	3.32	3.29	2.25	2.32	2.60	2.49	2.57
Hawaiian (HA)	1.06	1.17	0.72	0.75	1.11	0.61	0.76	0.67	0.66	0.62	0.22	0.51	0.74
JetBlue (B6)	0.64	0.70	0.71	0.79	0.78	1.11	1.46	1.28	1.31	0.95	0.91	0.80	0.96
Southwest (WN)	0.26	0.51	0.38	0.44	0.37	0.40	0.30	0.30	0.21	0.31	0.18	0.27	0.33
Spirit (NK)	1.01	2.16	1.74	3.47	2.73	3.38	3.64	4.19	3.91	2.63	2.05	2.81	2.85
United (UA)	0.88	1.32	0.97	1.19	1.29	1.81	2.12	1.92	1.39	1.13	0.96	1.64	1.41
Industry by Month	0.79	0.67	0.82	1.08	1.03	1.33	1.45	1.35	1.05	0.86	0.74	1.07	1.06

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

**Monthly Count of Complaints Received by the Department of Transportation
Regarding U.S. Airlines for 2019 and 2020**

	Complaints for All U.S. Airlines		Complaints for 10 AQR Rated Airlines		Top Four Categories ¹ of Complaints for All U.S. Airlines			
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2020			
					1	2	3	4
Jan	505	743	435	659	FP	CS	BG	TB
Feb	618	709	531	636	FP	CS	BG	DS
Mar	589	2093	542	2036	RF	TB	FA	CS
Apr	765	8146	677	7890	RF	FA	TB	FP
May	730	8152	687	8070	RF	FA	CS	TB
Jun	1,114	5354	915	5224	RF	FA	TB	CS
Jul	1,275	3468	1033	3387	RF	FA	TB	CS
Aug	1,096	2133	924	2060	RF	FA	TB	FP
Sep	722	1674	619	1627	RF	FA	TB	CS
Oct	637	1327	548	1277	RF	FA	TB	CS
Nov	534	995	445	937	RF	FA	TB	CS
Dec	<u>742</u>	<u>903</u>	<u>694</u>	<u>860</u>	RF	FA	TB	FP
	9,327	35,697	8,050	34,663				

¹ FP = Flight Problems; CS = Customer Service; BG = Baggage; TB = Reservations, Ticketing, and Boarding; RF = Refunds; FA= Fares; DS=Disability.
Details of categories are at the back of this report.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

**Overview of Complaints Received by the Department of Transportation for All U.S. Domestic Airlines
by Complaint Category for 2019 and 2020**

	% of all Complaints Received		Number of Complaints Received	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Flight Problems	40.0%	2.7%	3,822	956
Customer Service	12.6%	3.1%	1,203	1,095
Baggage	12.0%	1.4%	1,146	512
Reservations, Ticketing, and Boarding	9.4%	2.4%	894	856
Disability	8.1%	1.3%	773	464
Refunds	6.6%	82.8%	628	29,687
Fares	5.1%	4.8%	489	1,737
Other	2.6%	1.2%	245	430
Oversales	2.3%	0.2%	218	85
Discrimination	1.0%	0.1%	96	34
Advertising	0.4%	0.0%	36	17
Animals	0.0%	0.0%	1	0
Total	100%	100%	9,551	35,873

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2020 Enplaned Passengers by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines

	January	February	March	April	May	June	
Alaska (AS)	2,712,022	2,565,350	1,397,642	110,561	253,440	540,938	
Allegiant (G4)	1,077,257	1,215,461	904,422	39,224	760,512	877,062	
American (AA)	12,209,035	11,597,499	6,546,233	658,217	1,705,639	3,096,249	
Delta (DL)	12,346,211	11,746,285	6,485,159	490,892	872,796	1,602,797	
Frontier (F9)	1,965,063	1,837,258	1,157,181	42,880	252,424	564,668	
Hawaiian (HA)	946,904	840,583	532,287	21,158	49,190	105,930	
JetBlue (B6)	3,228,305	3,123,289	1,813,379	87,559	137,164	392,352	
Southwest (WN)	11,878,890	11,483,838	6,418,211	515,728	1,836,192	4,637,817	
Spirit (NK)	2,783,550	2,812,460	1,958,771	135,464	141,769	609,433	
United (UA)	8,704,225	7,953,170	4,533,957	227,350	452,023	758,917	
Total	57,851,462	55,175,193	31,747,242	2,329,033	6,461,149	13,186,163	
	July	August	September	October	November	December	Jan-Dec Total
Alaska (AS)	671,892	739,254	744,612	894,055	831,218	819,456	12,280,440
Allegiant (G4)	899,935	643,162	489,062	795,168	698,621	685,825	9,085,711
American (AA)	4,633,511	4,687,254	4,896,138	5,634,467	5,007,254	5,084,216	65,755,712
Delta (DL)	2,575,876	3,428,190	3,571,119	4,078,516	3,918,659	4,082,914	55,199,414
Frontier (F9)	818,833	838,128	862,395	1,025,050	902,869	936,569	11,203,318
Hawaiian (HA)	167,667	93,788	59,955	99,149	173,924	204,541	3,295,076
JetBlue (B6)	766,180	717,144	676,552	965,172	1,081,897	1,318,717	14,307,710
Southwest (WN)	5,119,621	5,113,245	4,833,341	5,223,568	5,046,051	5,685,793	67,792,295
Spirit (NK)	1,922,485	1,536,475	1,150,073	1,519,759	1,844,212	1,896,164	18,310,615
United (UA)	1,397,476	2,102,508	2,141,468	3,112,795	3,142,892	3,397,419	37,927,200
Total	18,973,476	19,899,148	19,424,715	23,347,699	22,647,597	24,111,614	295,154,491

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2019 Enplaned Passengers by Month for 10 U.S. Airlines

	January	February	March	April	May	June	
Alaska (AS)	2,541,764	2,369,743	2,952,297	2,894,680	3,075,711	3,235,957	
Allegiant (G4)	937,311	1,027,215	1,508,864	1,290,043	1,290,973	1,617,960	
American (AA)	11,871,332	11,268,288	13,406,350	12,553,976	13,610,876	13,842,520	
Delta (DL)	11,226,754	10,611,083	13,984,963	13,415,603	14,388,281	15,093,152	
Frontier (F9)	1,626,546	1,498,614	1,736,974	1,674,524	1,969,355	2,011,777	
Hawaiian (HA)	940,772	854,122	973,523	927,964	987,151	985,638	
JetBlue (B6)	3,266,256	3,129,927	3,791,828	3,674,780	3,701,517	3,684,403	
Southwest (WN)	11,994,975	11,384,835	14,441,320	13,739,868	14,421,796	14,412,735	
Spirit (NK)	2,378,825	2,272,700	2,995,478	2,740,724	2,999,480	3,019,855	
United (UA)	8,263,621	7,699,334	9,972,583	9,674,663	10,220,448	10,877,280	
Total	55,048,156	52,115,861	65,764,180	62,586,825	66,665,588	68,781,277	
	July	August	September	October	November	December	Jan-Dec Total
Alaska (AS)	3,416,143	3,354,616	2,883,985	2,943,357	2,790,271	3,071,384	35,529,908
Allegiant (G4)	1,762,534	1,266,694	806,917	1,146,846	1,137,787	1,328,793	15,121,937
American (AA)	14,361,485	13,935,700	12,214,200	13,084,742	12,268,623	13,403,138	155,821,230
Delta (DL)	15,627,773	15,356,577	13,134,002	13,955,877	12,556,264	13,358,126	162,708,455
Frontier (F9)	2,106,656	2,066,244	1,824,674	2,027,887	1,964,630	2,085,813	22,593,694
Hawaiian (HA)	1,057,379	1,043,787	913,805	963,317	896,592	986,628	11,530,675
JetBlue (B6)	3,969,124	3,910,097	3,211,595	3,456,081	3,405,973	3,635,582	42,837,163
Southwest (WN)	14,683,808	13,817,523	12,601,885	14,011,724	13,056,920	14,141,163	162,708,552
Spirit (NK)	3,218,163	3,103,645	2,505,860	2,809,570	2,830,399	2,993,308	33,868,007
United (UA)	11,269,942	10,751,708	9,060,664	9,751,112	8,962,590	9,868,435	116,372,380
Total	74,473,007	68,606,591	59,157,587	64,150,513	59,870,049	64,872,370	759,092,001

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

Airline Quality Rating Criteria Overview

The individual criteria used to calculate AQR scores are summed up in four basic areas that reflect customer-oriented areas of airline performance. Definitions of the four areas used in this AQR 2020 (2019 data) are outlined below:

OT ON-TIME PERFORMANCE (+8.63)

Regularly published data regarding on-time arrival performance is obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation's monthly *Air Travel Consumer Report*. According to the DOT, a flight is counted "on time" if it is operated within 15 minutes of the scheduled time displayed in the carriers' Computerized Reservations System. Delays caused by mechanical problems are included as of January 1, 1995. Canceled and diverted operations are not considered on-time arrivals. The AQR calculations use the percentage of flights arriving on-time for each airline for each month.

DB INVOLUNTARY DENIED BOARDINGS (-8.03)

This criterion includes involuntary denied boardings. Data regarding denied boardings is obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Air Travel Consumer Report*. Data include the number of passengers who hold confirmed reservations and are involuntarily denied boarding on a flight that is oversold. These figures include only passengers whose oversold flight departs without them on board. The AQR uses the ratio of involuntary denied boardings per 10,000 passengers boarded by month.

MB MISHANDLED BAGGAGE REPORTS (-7.92)

Regularly published data regarding consumer reports to the carriers of mishandled baggage is obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Air Travel Consumer Report*. According to the DOT, mishandled baggage includes checked bags that are lost, damaged, delayed and pilfered, as reported by or on behalf of the passenger, that were in the airline's custody for its reportable domestic nonstop scheduled passenger flights. The number of bags enplaned represent the total number of checked bags enplaned, including wheelchairs and scooters that were placed into the aircraft cargo compartment for any reportable domestic nonstop scheduled passenger flight. Data are reported by carriers regarding the rate of mishandled baggage reports per 1,000 checked bags (enplaned bags) and for the industry. The AQR ratio is based on the total number of reports each carrier received concerning lost, damaged, delayed or pilfered baggage per 1,000 checked bags.

CC CONSUMER COMPLAINTS (-7.17)

The criteria of consumer complaints are made up of 12 specific complaint categories (outlined below) monitored by the U. S. Department of Transportation and reported monthly in the *Air Travel Consumer Report*. Consumers can file complaints with the DOT in writing, by telephone, via e-mail or in person. The AQR uses complaints about the various categories as part of the larger customer complaint criteria and calculates the consumer complaint ratio on the number of complaints received per 100,000 passengers flown for each airline.

CONSUMER COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

Flight Problems

Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to cancellations, delays, or any other deviations from schedule, whether planned or unplanned for each airline each month.

Oversales

This complaint category includes all bumping problems, whether the airline complied with DOT oversale regulations. Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to oversales for each airline each month.

Reservations, Ticketing, and Boarding

This category includes airline or travel agent mistakes in reservations and ticketing; problems in making reservations and obtaining tickets due to busy telephone lines or waiting in line or delays in mailing tickets; and problems boarding the aircraft (except oversales). Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to ticketing and boarding for each airline each month.

Fares

As defined by the DOT, consumer complaints regarding fares include incorrect or incomplete information about fares, discount fare conditions and availability, overcharges, fare increases and level of fares in general. Data are available for the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to fares for each airline each month.

Refunds

This category includes customer complaints about problems in obtaining refunds for unused or lost tickets, fare adjustments, or bankruptcies. Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to refunds for each airline each month.

Baggage

Claims for lost, damaged, or delayed baggage; charges for excess baggage; carry-on problems; and difficulties with airline claim procedure are included in this category. Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to baggage for each airline each month.

Customer Service

This category includes complaints about rude or unhelpful employees, inadequate meals or cabin service and treatment of delayed passengers. Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to customer service for each airline each month.

Disability

This category includes complaints about civil rights by air travelers with disabilities. Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to disabilities for each airline each month.

Advertising

These are complaints concerning advertising that is unfair, misleading, or offensive to consumers. Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints regarding advertising for each airline each month.

Discrimination

This category covers civil rights complaints by air travelers (other than disabilities); for example: complaints based on race, national origin, religion, etc. (This category was first reported in May 2002).

Animals

This category tracks customer complaints about loss, injury, or death of an animal during air transport by an air carrier. Data are available by the total number of customer complaints regarding animals for each airline each month.

Other

Data regarding consumer complaints about frequent flyer programs, tours credit, cargo problems, security, airport facilities, claims for bodily injury, and other problems not classified above are included in this category. Data are available by the total number of consumer complaints regarding other problems for each airline each month.