

ITandT Business Travel Solutions

Business Travel News Bulletin

May 2008

BRIEFING/AMERICA

Airlines Increase Change Fees

Due to the rising cost of fuel, most airlines have increased the change fee on non-refundable fares by as much as \$100.00. Listed below are the domestic and international policies for the major airlines:

Airtran Airways	\$75.00 per ticket
American Airlines	\$100.00 per ticket/\$250.00 for transatlantic/transpacific flights
Continental Airlines	\$150.00 per ticket/\$250.00 for transatlantic/transpacific flights
Delta Airlines	\$100.00 per ticket/\$250.00 for transatlantic/transpacific flights
Frontier Airlines	\$100.00 per ticket
JetBlue Airways	\$50.00 per ticket
Midwest Airlines	\$100.00 per ticket
Northwest Airlines	\$100.00 per ticket
Southwest Airlines	FREE
Spirit Airlines	\$70.00 per ticket
United Airlines	\$150.00 per ticket/\$250.00 for transatlantic/transpacific flights
US Airways	\$150.00 per ticket/\$250.00 for transatlantic/transpacific flights

Identity Plan To Ease Air Travel

Air travelers who can prove they don't belong on terrorist watch lists could be spared extra scrutiny under a new program that addresses the public's biggest complaint about aviation safety. The program is aimed at the tens of thousands of travelers who are pulled aside for questions at airports because their names match those on government watch lists. Under this program, innocent travelers would have a new option: to allow the airline to add their names and dates of birth to the names that are on the watch list coincidentally. After that, they will secure their boarding passes just like everyone else does.

Bumped Flyers To Get More Money

The Transportation Department published a final rule updating its denied-boarding regulations to boost compensation for bumped passengers. The new rule on oversales doubles the cap on compensation and extends coverage to smaller aircraft, i.e., those with 30 or more seats. Previously, operations using aircraft with fewer than 60 seats were exempt. The basic features of the rule are unchanged. Airlines must ask for volunteers in an oversale situation before bumping anyone involuntarily. The compensation for involuntary bumping is twice the one-way fare, including tax, to a maximum of \$800, plus alternate transportation. If the passenger can be rerouted to arrive at his or her destination within two hours of the original schedule, or four hours on international flights, the compensation is halved to a \$400 maximum. The previous caps were \$400 and \$200, respectively, and had not been changed since 1978.

Know Your Rights If Flight Gets Cancelled

Here's what some airlines say they will do for you in their contract:

American Airlines - Will put you on its next flight with available seats. If it doesn't get you to your destination the same day, it will provide lodging "subject to availability"

Delta Airlines – Will fly you on the next flight that has a same-class seat available; flights on other carriers are booked at its discretion. If you paid for business class but only a coach seat is available, you can get a partial refund. If the next seat available is in business class, and you paid for coach, Delta can put you in coach and upgrade a frequent flier. If your flight is delayed for more than four hours, Delta will give you vouchers for meals. If you're stuck between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., Delta will give you vouchers for a hotel – if there's room at ones they work with – and ground transportation.

Continental Airlines – Will fly you in premium class, if that's all that's available on the next flight out and it gets you there earlier than the next flight with a coach seat. If you're delayed more than two hours, it will switch you to another airline – if you request it. If you're stuck for more than four hours, between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., Continental will provide a hotel and a second meal. It will provide food if the delay "will extend beyond Norman meal hours".

United Airlines – Will fly you on the next flight in the same class of service. If it can't arrange transportation "that's acceptable to the passenger", it will fly you out on another airline in the same class of service. If you paid premium class and the only seat available is in coach, United will refund you the difference. If you're stuck more than four hours between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., United ways, it will provide lodging.

Northwest Airlines – Will fly you on the next flight in the same class of service or higher if that's all that's available; if it can't, it will put you on another airline in the same class. If you paid for a premium seat and there's room only in economy, you're entitled to a partial refund. If you're stranded overnight, Northwest "will make every effort" to provide lodging and a voucher for meals.

US Airways – Will fly you out on another of its flights; if it can't, it may fly you out on another airline. If you're stranded overnight, UD Airways says it will put you up in a hotel, provide ground transportation and give you breakfast. If you're delayed for four hours or more during meal times, you can get food vouchers.

Fees Rising for Extra Checked Bags And Overweight Luggage

The following is a list of airlines that now charge for a second checked bag:

American Airlines – First bag checked in is free as long as it weighs less than 50lbs; a \$25 charge applies for a second bag.

Continental Airlines - First bag checked in is free as long as it weighs less than 50lbs; a \$25 charge applies for a second bag.

Delta Airlines - First bag checked in is free as long as it weighs less than 50lbs; a \$25 charge applies for a second bag.

Northwest Airlines - First bag checked in is free as long as it weighs less than 50lbs; a \$25 charge applies for a second bag.

United Airlines – First bag checked in is free as long as it weighs less than 50lbs; a \$25 charge applies for a second bag.

US Airways – First bag checked in is free as long as it weighs less than 50lbs; a \$25 charge applies for a second bag. Will also charge \$100 for each bag after the second bag.

Spirit Airlines – Charges for the very first and second bag checked. Check bags at the airport and you will pay \$20 each for bag number one and two.

Virgin American Airlines – First bag checked in is free as long as it weighs less than 50lbs; a \$10 charge applies for a second bag.

Additional fees/charges apply to luggage that exceeds 50lbs. For example Delta Airlines is now charging \$80 for bags that exceed 50lbs while United Airlines charges \$100.

JetBlue Introduces Refundable Fares

JetBlue added a refundable fare that allows for unlimited changes, including name changes, and full, penalty-free refunds up until the time of departure. The fares are \$50 to \$100 higher than the carrier's highest non-refundable fares.

In other JetBlue news, the carrier plans to serve Los Angeles (LAX) for the first time starting May 21st with three daily flights to New York and daily service to Boston. Also, on May 21, JetBlue is adding service from Burbank to Washington, Dulles

Airlines' Performance Near 20-Year Low

1. Airtran Airways
2. JetBlue Airways
3. Southwest Airlines
4. Northwest Airlines
5. Frontier Airlines
6. Continental Airlines
7. Alaska Airlines
8. United Airlines
9. American Airlines
10. Delta Airlines
11. US Airways
12. Mesa Airlines
13. SkyWest

14. Comair
15. American Eagle
16. Atlantic Southeast

Source: 2008 Airline Quality Rating Study

Amtrak Deploys Mobile Security Teams To Inspect Luggage

Amtrak has begun deploying mobile security teams to patrol stations and trains and randomly inspect passenger baggage. Amtrak's initial deployment is on its Northeast Corridor, between Washington and Boston. Amtrak said the random checks and other security measures ultimately would be implemented nationwide. The mobile squads can consist of armed, specialized Amtrak police; explosives detecting K-9 units; and armed counterterrorism special agents in tactical uniforms.

Next Up – Continental and United?

Delta Airline's decision to merge with Northwest Airlines could pave the way for other mega mergers, such as United-Continental, and massive consolidation in the US market. Analysts think United and Continental are already far along in merger talks. Continental could even pull out of the SkyTeam Alliance as they review their continued partnership in the alliance with Northwest, Delta, and SkyTeam. Northwest had the right of first refusal on any potential sale of Continental but gave this up in order to pursue a merger with Delta. In the U.S. domestic market, a combined Continental-United would have a 21.6% market share, outpacing Delta-Northwest's 19.9%. In the U.S. international market, Continental-United would also top Delta-Northwest, with a 17.2% share versus a 14% share.

BRIEFING/EUROPE

In-flight Cell phone Use Gets Closer In Europe

European regulators have dropped the ban on in-flight cell phone calls, but passengers' ability to chat will depend on which airline they fly. European union regulators loosened the rules on cell phone service, a satellite-based technology that can be turned on by a captain at about 10,000 feet. It also can be turned off at any time. The ban remains in place in the United States. Air France became the first international airline to offer mobile service as part of a six-month test to gauge customer response. Other carriers, however, are shying away from the feature, saying that passengers don't want chatter and ring tones invading their space.

Heathrow Welcomes New Flights

Previously only American, United, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic were allowed to fly between the USA and Heathrow. Now, four more U.S. carriers are preparing to land at the congested, delay-prone airport. Delta, Northwest, Continental and US Airways will offer service there from eight U.S. airports, including three that now have no Heathrow flights. In addition, Air France is launching the first non-stop service between Heathrow and the USA by a carrier that is neither British nor American. Its new Heathrow-Los Angeles service will be part of its new trans-Atlantic joint venture with Delta.