



United Airlines bumps passengers at high rate, but is improving

E-MAIL

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE

LINKEDIN

18



By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

GLOBE STAFF APRIL 10, 2017

United Airlines, over the past five years, bumped passengers involuntarily from its flights at one of the highest rates among major airlines, according to federal transportation data.

The airline [drew criticism](#) this week after a video went viral showing security officials dragging a

male passenger from a United flight that it had overbooked.

[Federal statistics](#) show that in a five-year span ending with 2016, United Airlines bumped more than 42,500 passengers (who were holding confirmed reservations) involuntarily from flights because the company had overbooked the flight.

That equals about 1.06 involuntary bumps for every 10,000 passengers United served during those years, which was a higher rate than only two other major airlines in the country during those years.



United Airlines bumps passengers at high rate, but is

Get Fast Forward in your inbox:

Forget yesterday's news. Get what you need today in this early-morning email.

[Sign Up](#)

EspressJet Airlines, which operates flights under the United Express, American Eagle and Delta Connection names, had the highest rate of about 2.09 involuntary bumps per 10,000 passengers, followed by SkyWest Airlines, which had a rate of about 2.03.

[View Story](#)

Video shows guards



United flight

United Airlines had asked for four passengers to relinquish their seats for airline employees on stand-by. They chose at random when no one volunteered.

United was trailed fairly closely by Southwest (1.01) and Frontier (0.97).

Still, the data show that United's track record improved considerably over those years.

In 2012, United's rate of involuntary bumps was 1.83. But last year it was 0.43, which was better than the average of 0.62 among major airlines.

United's improving numbers are in line with the [broader trend within the industry](#) in recent years, as major airlines, collectively, have lowered the rate at which passengers are involuntarily bumped.

Airlines are allowed to sell more tickets than there are seats on the plane, and they routinely overbook flights because some people do not show up.



United Airlines bumps passengers at high rate, but is

It's not unusual for airlines to offer travel vouchers to encourage people to give up their seats voluntarily.

If that approach doesn't work, airlines can demand that passengers give up their seats.

Airlines are [required by federal rules](#) to give all passengers who are bumped involuntarily a written statement describing their rights and explaining how the carrier decides which passengers get bumped. Such passengers also frequently are entitled to compensation, depending on how much they paid for their ticket and how long they are delayed.

United has also bumped passengers voluntarily at a relatively high rate in recent years.

In the five-year stretch ending in 2016, United bumped more than 346,000 passengers voluntarily, or at a rate of about 8.6 per 10,000 passengers, federal data show.

Three other airlines had higher rates: ExpressJet, at 17.3 voluntary bumps per 10,000 passengers; SkyWest, at 15.7; and Delta, at 10.1.

The data come from Air Travel Consumer reports published by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

Officials from United did not respond to a request for comment Monday afternoon.

Passengers bumped from overbooked flights, by airline

Figures cover the five-year stretch from 2012 through 2016. The table is sorted to show airlines by the involuntary bump rates column, from highest to lowest.

Bumps represent passengers who held confirmed reservations and were denied boarding a flight because it was oversold. Voluntary bumps represent passengers who gave up their seat voluntarily on an oversold flight in exchange for compensation. Figures do not include passengers affected by cancelled, delayed, or diverted flights.

Airline	Voluntary bumps	Involuntary bumps	Total passengers	Involuntary bump rate, per 10,000 passengers
ExpressJet Airlines	238,403	28,737	137,430,937	2.09
SkyWest Airlines	215,926	27,942	137,355,870	2.03

United Airlines	346,230	42,569	402,176,641	1.06
Southwest	417,452	64,339	639,574,714	1.01
Frontier Airlines	14,879	5,779	59,483,469	0.97
American	252,959	27,808	456,998,548	0.61
Spirit Airlines	17,033	1,613	35,428,814	0.46
Alaska Airlines	25,501	4,352	101,218,193	0.43
Delta Air Lines	585,497	18,640	580,803,338	0.32
Jetblue Airways	6,299	3,957	151,006,340	0.26
Hawaiian Airlines	3,104	534	50,776,731	0.11
Virgin America	5,407	302	33,722,107	0.09

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings

Related

- **Video shows guards dragging passenger off United flight**

Material from the Associated Press was used in this report. Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele)

SHOW 18 COMMENTS

Stay updated, right in your news feed.

Most Popular In Metro →



Storms could bring hail and severe winds

Damaging winds, quarter-size hail, and even a tornado are possibilities in Massachusetts today.

[MORE...](#)



Trump proposal relies on claims by religious researchers

A proposal by President Trump's administration would undo the Affordable Care Act's five-year-old mandate for birth control coverage. [MORE...](#)



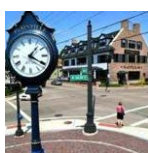
Dick Albert, former Channel 5 weatherman, dies

“It’s a huge loss,” said Harvey Leonard. “It’s truly like losing a brother, that’s what I considered him to be.” [MORE...](#)



The majority of Harvard’s incoming class is nonwhite

Harvard’s push to broaden diversity comes as the Trump administration turns its focus on affirmative action policies. [MORE...](#)



In Michelle Carter’s hometown, opinions vary on justice of her sentence

Residents who spoke to the Globe were split on whether Carter, now 20, received an appropriate sentence for urging Conrad Roy III to kill himself. [MORE...](#)



Teamster in Top Chef trial could get jail time for posting on Facebook during trial

Daniel Redmond, one of four Teamsters on trial, posted an article on the Facebook page, “Support the Teamster 4,” violating a court order to not speak publicly about the case. [MORE...](#)



VA Secretary ousts third official at troubled N.H. hospital

VA Secretary David Shulkin said he was responding to allegations of dangerously substandard care made by medical staff in a Boston Globe report last month. [MORE...](#)



In a Malden classroom, a lesson on immigration

Many economists say drastically cutting immigration hurts the economy for everyone. [MORE...](#)



Thousands of cyclists take off in first day of the 38th Pan-Mass Challenge

More than 5,300 cyclists took off Saturday morning in the 2017 Pan-Mass Challenge, raising money for patient care and cancer research. [MORE...](#)



TD Garden to pay \$1.65m after teen sleuths claimed it owed \$13m

A group of teenagers discovered the venue had failed to live up to its obligations to hold three fundraisers a year to benefit the Department of Conservation and Recreation. [MORE...](#)

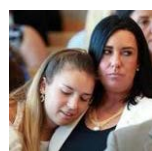
Police disperse hundreds of youths in the North End

State Police spokesman David Procopio said Boston police requested Massachusetts State Police assistance with dispersing between 500 and 1,000 youths. [MORE...](#)



He thought he was dying, but highway chief paved his own road to salvation

Tom Tinlin needed a lot of things to go his way when a blood vessel in his brain burst in April. Fittingly, one of them was traffic. [MORE...](#)



Mother of Conrad Roy III seeks \$4.2m in wrongful death suit against Michelle Carter

Lynn Roy says she is seeking damages “caused by the defendant’s negligence and wanton and reckless conduct.” [MORE...](#)



In the Michelle Carter case, the eyes have it

Judge Lawrence Moniz took great pains to explain that his job was to find that delicate balance between rehabilitation and punishment. [MORE...](#)



State agrees with Trump administration to delay long-awaited water pollution rules

A landmark plan to curb pollution in lakes, rivers, and streams throughout Massachusetts has been delayed for at least another year. [MORE...](#)



Lawbreakers or just really lucky? Mass. has more repeat lottery winners than any other state

Some people redeem so many winning tickets that they raise questions about the integrity and oversight of the \$5 billion state lottery. [MORE...](#)



‘When are you doing it?’ Read the Carter case texts

Text messages released in the case show Michelle Carter becoming increasingly aggressive in pressuring Conrad Roy III to commit suicide. [MORE...](#)



Mass. health insurers uneasy over Trump’s threat to cut subsidies

State insurers are at risk of losing \$132 million in government subsidies next year if President Trump makes good on his promise to cut off ACA payments. [MORE...](#)



A cross-country bicycle trip of a lifetime — delayed 40 years

John Sweeney averaged 65 miles a day, mostly along Route 20, a 3,365-mile ribbon of asphalt that is the longest road in the United States. [MORE...](#)

Top 10 Trending Articles

Most Viewed

Most Commented

Most Shared

Nick Cafardo: Which players may be available in trade after...

Trump administration advances religious researchers’ birth...

What’s it like be an NFL quarterback at 40? We asked Warr...

Storms could bring hail and severe winds Saturday

Trump forsakes scenic traditions to vacation in the land of ...

Dick Albert, former Channel 5 weatherman, dies
My Account

There’s one month left of summer. Here’s what you can’t m...
Manage my Account

Mobile Customer Service
Mobile Customer Service

Sign Up For Newsletters
Dwight Gooden never considered retiring or playing for a ...

Contact
Jaylen Brown’s trip for the NBA Africa Game continues his ...

[Help](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Globe newsroom](#)

[Advertise](#)

Social

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Google+](#)

More

[ePaper](#)

[News in Education](#)

[Archives](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[Terms of service](#)

[Terms of purchase](#)

[Work at Boston Globe Media](#)
