

It's Not the Weather: Most Flight Cancellations Are in Airline's Control, According to a New Report

Traveling can be a headache and, at worst, a nightmare.

And though many airlines will often blame flight delays and cancellations on factors out of their control, namely the weather, a new report shows that this might not actually be the case.

Investigators with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) studied flight cancellations from January 2018 through April 2022 and found that most were caused by factors within the airline's control – largely a lack of adequate crew and airplane maintenance issues.

The study found that the back half of 2021 saw more flight cancellations than 2018 and 2019 combined even though there were 14% fewer flights scheduled during that time. Cancellation rates continued to increase through the end of April 2022.

The data states that the leading cause of cancellations from October to December of 2021 was aircraft maintenance and lack of crew. Delays in the last half of 2021 were also caused in the majority by airline-controlled factors.

“Stakeholders said that operational challenges, including a need for additional pilots and crew, have made it harder for airlines to manage flight disruption,” the study stated. “In response, airlines added new staff, opened new training

facilities, and reduced the number of scheduled flights, among other things.”

The GAO said that the study was conducted to examine the core reasoning behind the frequent flight delays and cancelations following the pandemic at a time when the airline industry began to boom again.

Airlines had been bombarded with cancelations and delays at the end of 2022 and into the first half of 2023.

Last December, Southwest Airlines infamously made headlines as it canceled hundreds of flights right on and before Christmas, leaving thousands stranded and without their luggage.

A recent study by WalletHub ranked it as the worst airline of 2023. Delta Airlines was named the best.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/report-flight-cancelations-are-airlines-fault-not-weather/450764>