

Updates to the Origin - Destination Survey of Airline Passengers - Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

The Department is proposing to update the method of collecting and processing aviation traffic data in the O&D Survey (Survey)



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USA, January 15, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Department is proposing to update the method of collecting and processing aviation traffic data in the Origin-Destination Survey of Airline Passenger Traffic (O&D Survey), as well as to expand the number of reporting air carriers, the sample size collected, and the scope of the data reported. These changes would align the current O&D

Survey with modern industry business and accounting practices, enable cost savings, reduce burden through automation, and provide enhanced utility for users of the data. In addition, DOT is proposing to change the timing of the release of the Form 41, Schedule T-100(f) "Foreign Air Carrier Traffic Data by Nonstop Segment and On-flight Market" from a 6-month delay to a 3-month delay to match that of Form 41, Schedule T-100 "Air Carrier Traffic and Capacity Data by Non-Stop Segment and On-Flight Market."

When the current rules for collection of the O&D Survey were established in the 1960's, the O&D Survey provided the best reasonably obtainable measure of passenger aviation activity. The mainframe technologies of the era dictated many aspects of the O&D survey business process and the elements selected for collection. A key driver of the process was that data storage was expensive in that era which resulted in a minimum of data elements being included. This meant more robust descriptive data, such as the time of arrival and departure, were not included in the collection. Because mainframes were centralized computing resources, the O&D Survey process was designed to route paper tickets to a centralized facility for processing and loading into the systems.

In the intervening years, changes in airline business models and accounting practices enabled by technology improvements were not reflected in DOT's collection methodology, leading to a misalignment between the rules for reporting the information and current accounting practices that generally requires human intervention to reconcile differences and prevents O&D Survey

Reporting Carriers from fully automating the system of data collection. The primary design issue that prevents current improvements is the regulatory requirement that the operating carrier that first touches the ticket is the carrier that has responsibility to report the ticket, known as the "first reporting carrier rule." In the 1960's, this rule was selected because the most efficient process was physically to detach the ticket coupons as they were flown for each flight and send all the coupons to the centralized processing facility to be matched and combined with the relevant revenue information. Because the carrier that issued the ticket, which had all the necessary information on hand, often did not first touch the ticket, the carrier with the least amount of information was by rule responsible for reporting the ticket. Modern and decentralized E-ticket systems eliminate the need for a physical coupon matching process and enables more efficient reporting rules and access to more relevant data.

DOT has worked with representatives of the aviation industry trade association Airlines for America (A4A) to determine the best way to improve the methodology, collection, and utility of the O&D Survey. DOT is proposing this rule to reform and simplify the O&D Survey, principally by reorienting the reporting requirements so that air carriers report primarily information for tickets that they issue.

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