



Global IT Outage

IATA Guidance: JNUS

Situation

Beginning 19 July 2024, a major global IT outage disrupted industries worldwide, including aviation. The issue stemmed from a defective Windows update by cybersecurity company CrowdStrike, impacting an estimated 8.5 million computer systems worldwide¹ causing potentially tens of billions of dollars in damage.² In addition to impacts across a wide range of industries, thousands of flights were cancelled or delayed, causing global travel disruptions. The outage led to blue error screens appearing on flight information display screens, check-in terminals, and other vital airport and airline systems, preventing the operation of flights. Some airports were temporarily closed and many cancelled inbound movements due to an inability for outbound aircraft to depart. As of the evening of 19 July, Cirium estimated that the outage had resulted in the cancellation of 4.6% of scheduled flights (5,078 total) worldwide.³

Impact

The occurrence impacted airlines, airports, and air traffic services globally. The industry had no advance warning of the problem. Thousands of flights were cancelled or delayed, causing significant travel disruptions. Airlines have had to manage rebooking, refunds, and customer service challenges, while trying to recover services using manual procedures. Crew scheduling, aircraft rotations, and maintenance coordination have all been disrupted. IATA understands the cause of the outage has been resolved, but it has taken a few days for some airlines to recover planned services and networks.

The situation was unforeseeable, and unavoidable. Authorities such as the UK Civil Aviation Authority have classified this situation as a likely "extraordinary circumstance"; a recognition that this is deemed to be beyond an airline's control.⁴

Recommendation

IATA requests coordinators to approve JNUS eligibility and to consider affected slots as operated. This recommendation aims to help harmonize the application of Justified Non-Utilization of Slots (JNUS) globally. More specifically, JNUS eligibility should apply to airlines where:

- Delays or cancellations have resulted from the IT outage, between 19-25 July 2024.
- JNUS eligibility should be approved where approved at the other end of the route.
- Network impacts should be considered that may have made subsequent connecting flights unsustainable

¹ <https://blogs.microsoft.com/blog/2024/07/20/helping-our-customers-through-the-crowdstrike-outage/>

² <https://www.reuters.com/technology/insurers-face-business-interruption-claims-after-global-tech-outage-2024-07-19/>

³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cnk4jdpw49et?post=asset%3A0f2be88f-2dfb-48a2-b73c-a7871f618774#post>

⁴ www.caa.co.uk/media/xyqkmm3/guidance-to-industry-it-outage-19-july-2024.pdf, also available from <https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/about-us/correspondence-with-airlines-and-airports/>



IATA strongly recommends coordinators make timely eligibility decisions. Airlines require certainty during periods of disruption. JNUS eligibility decisions should not be delayed until the historic determination process.

Airlines should be prepared to provide documentation that confirms the above circumstances. Coordinators should be prepared to provide clear reasoning if unable to approve JNUS eligibility. IATA encourages coordinator-airline dialogue to identify if the events impacting individual airlines are unforeseeable, unavoidable and fall outside of the airline's control. Where agreement cannot be found, the airport Coordination Committee (or equivalent body) should be requested to provide guidance.

Contact

For more information concerning IATA's guidance, please contact slots@iata.org