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NEW DATA: STUDY SHOWS FEWER CUSTOMS OFFICERS RESULT IN SIGNIFICANTLY LONGER WAIT TIMES AT NY-NJ AIRPORTS

A new study released today by the Global Gateway Alliance identified the best and worst times of day to pass through Customs at New York area airports. The study also established a correlation between manpower and Customs wait times: as the number of booths open decreases, the amount of time passengers wait in line increases.

Key Findings

- Wait times increase significantly when the ratio of passengers to Customs Officers increases. Newark sees a 25 percent increase in the number of passengers per booth when experiencing longer than average wait times, while JFK sees a 20 percent increase (table 3).
- The worst average maximum wait times at both airports range from a high of well over an hour to a low of almost 50 minutes (table 2).
- Of the 20 longest average wait times during the entire year, 18 occurred at terminals without automated passport kiosks (table 4).
- In general, the *best* time of day to go through Customs at JFK is between 1-2 a.m., apart from Friday and Saturday, when flights arriving later in the day, between 6-7 p.m., have the shortest average wait times (table 1).
- The time of day with the *longest* average waits at JFK varies depends on the day of the week, but generally speaking, as the week progresses, wait times increase (table 1).
- At Newark, the *best* time to travel is varied, but the shortest lines occur most frequently in the early morning hours (table 1).
- The *longest* average wait times at Newark are consistently between 3-4 a.m. These waits span 30 to 40 minutes in length (table 1).

"Customs is the gateway not only to our region but the nation as a whole. While automated kiosks have helped expedite the process, many passengers continue to face long lines when there aren't enough officers on duty," said **Global Gateway Alliance Chairman and Founder Joe Sitt**. "In a 24/7 world, CBP

needs to ensure its booths are staffed whenever planes are arriving, so all travelers at the largest international airports in the U.S. can pass through quickly and efficiently.”

Recommendations

1. **Off Peak and Peak Hour Manpower:** CBP must increase manpower during off peak and peak hours to ensure that no arriving passengers are met with long lines regardless of the time of day. Further, by establishing a “task force,” CBP could move officers between terminals to where additional staff is most needed to alleviate a backlog of flights.
2. **Customs Kiosks for All Terminals:** Automated Passport Control (APC) kiosks have dramatically reduced wait times at terminals with the technology, by as much as 20 percent. However, it is now time for CBP to fund the installation of APC kiosks at all international NY and NJ terminals to ensure that passengers are processed expeditiously and safely.
3. **Elimination of Paper Forms:** CBP officers spend a fair chunk of time handling and processing paper forms for each passengers. By digitizing the process, CBP could save time, increase safety for passengers, and minimize their paper waste. Fortunately, CBP has made a commitment to eliminate all paper forms by 2016 and we urge them to honor it.

Table 1: Best and Worst Times of Day to Travel in terms of *Average* Customs Wait Times

DoW	Airport	Avg WT for Whole Day (mins)	Best Time of Day		Worst Time of Day	
			Time	Wait (mins)	Time	Wait (mins)
Mon	JFK	21.18	1:00-2:00	12.39	13:00-14:00	25.69
	EWR	21.32	00:00-1:00	10.74	3:00-4:00	37.84
Tue	JFK	20.40	1:00-2:00	13.91	8:00-9:00	24.34
	EWR	19.97	2:00-3:00	7.99	3:00-4:00	35.25
Wed	JFK	21.01	1:00-2:00	15.73	8:00-9:00	25.07
	EWR	18.79	9:00-10:00	7.29	3:00-4:00	35.06
Thu	JFK	22.82	3:00-4:00	16.27	00:00-1:00	27.21
	EWR	21.20	1:00-2:00	3.34	3:00-4:00	38.02
Fri	JFK	23.32	18:00-19:00	18.27	00:00-1:00	27.84
	EWR	19.27	10:00-11:00	10.80	3:00-4:00	35.26
Sat	JFK	25.50	18:00-19:00	19.74	6:00-7:00	30.48
	EWR	19.85	10:00-11:00	11.38	3:00-4:00	36.13
Sun	JFK	21.06	1:00-2:00	13.80	6:00-7:00	28.08
	EWR	18.52	2:00-3:00	8.60	3:00-4:00	33.85

Table 2: Best and Worst Times of Day to Travel in terms of Average *Maximum* Customs Wait Times

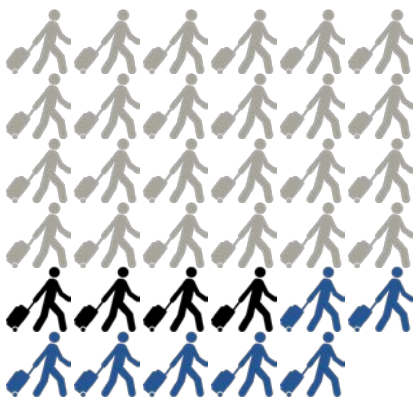
DoW	Airport	Avg Max WT for Whole Day (mins)	Worst Time of Day for Avg Maximum Waits	
			Time	Wait (mins)
Mon	JFK	45.65	13:00-14:00	58.93
	EWR	40.02	14:00-15:00	56.82

Tue	JFK	44.20	8:00-9:00	56.19
	EWR	36.50	13:00-14:00	49.94
Wed	JFK	45.45	15:00-16:00	53.46
	EWR	35.59	14:00-15:00	48.86
Thu	JFK	49.23	13:00-14:00	58.79
	EWR	39.63	14:00-15:00	55.10
Fri	JFK	50.43	00:00-1:00	63.60
	EWR	37.26	13:00-14:00	49.04
Sat	JFK	56.51	15:00-16:00	65.36
	EWR	39.74	3:00-4:00	52.71
Sun	JFK	47.42	6:00-7:00	58.24
	EWR	38.04	5:00-6:00	51.60

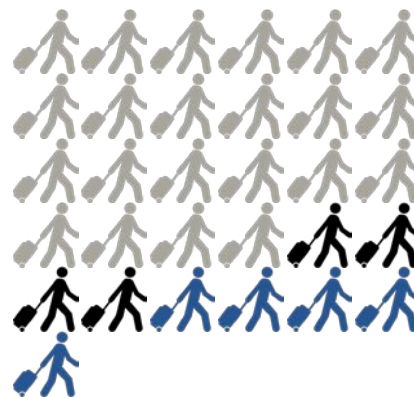
Table 3: Correlation between Customs Wait Times and Manpower

The below table identified the average Customs wait time for all terminals and the corresponding passenger to booth ratio (the number of passengers waiting to be processed by each booth). Separate analyses were done for both above and below average wait times. The findings from this table are also represented in the passenger graphic underneath.

Airport	Terminal	Avg WT (mins)	Max WT (mins)	No. of Pax per Booth when Wait Times are:		
				Average	Above Average	Below Average
JFK	All	22.23	48.42	26	31	22
	T1	28.04	56.61	27	31	22
	T4	18.79	49.48	28	33	26
	T7	21.84	41.23	23	30	19
	T8	24.26	44.76	24	30	19
EWR	All	19.83	38.12	28	35	24
	TB	21.71	39.68	27	34	21
	TC	16.70	36.04	30	37	26



There is a **25%** increase in passengers per booth at **Newark** during longer than average waits.



There is a **20%** increase in passengers per booth at **JFK** during longer than average waits.

KEY

- No. of pax per booth when wait times are below average
- Average no. of pax per booth
- No. of pax per booth when wait times are above average

Table 4: The Top 10 Longest Average Wait Times at JFK and Newark for 2014, in minutes

Table 4.1: Top 10 Longest Average Wait Times at JFK

Rank	Terminal	Date	DoW	Time of Day	Avg WT	Max WT
1	Terminal 7	8/28/14	Thu	23:00 - 00:00	131	170
2	Terminal 8	11/15/14	Sat	07:00 - 08:00	110	149
3	Terminal 7	8/13/14	Wed	21:00 - 22:00	105	138
4	Terminal 7	8/30/14	Sat	13:00 - 14:00	103	151
5	Terminal 8	9/4/14	Thu	08:00 - 09:00	102	161
6	Terminal 8	9/20/14	Sat	08:00 - 09:00	101	147
7	Terminal 7	8/28/14	Thu	21:00 - 22:00	100	177
8	Terminal 1	1/15/14	Wed	13:00 - 14:00	99	189
9	Terminal 8	8/24/14	Sun	08:00 - 09:00	95	152
10	Terminal 7	8/20/14	Wed	14:00 - 15:00	93	131

Table 4.2: Top 10 Longest Average Wait Times at Newark

Rank	Terminal	Date	DoW	Time of Day	Avg WT	Max WT
1	Terminal B	9/27/14	Sat	14:00 - 15:00	82	145
2	Terminal C	8/17/14	Sun	18:00 - 19:00	79	130
3	Terminal B	9/27/14	Sat	15:00 - 16:00	73	133
3	Terminal B	6/6/14	Fri	15:00 - 16:00	73	119
3	Terminal B	9/7/14	Sun	16:00 - 17:00	73	95
6	Terminal B	10/13/14	Mon	15:00 - 16:00	72	118
7	Terminal B	9/27/14	Sat	16:00 - 17:00	70	115
8	Terminal B	12/16/14	Tue	14:00 - 15:00	69	124
9	Terminal B	6/7/14	Sat	15:00 - 16:00	68	107
10	Terminal B	11/27/14	Thu	14:00 - 15:00	66	99
10	Terminal B	4/15/14	Tue	15:00 - 16:00	66	105
10	Terminal B	9/18/14	Thu	16:00 - 17:00	66	110

Methodology

Customs wait times data was sourced from Customs and Border Protection at <http://awt.cbp.gov/> and analyzed by day of week and longest ever wait times to provide results as presented here. For more information on the individual variables, please see the Glossary.

Glossary

Avg WT The average amount of time in minutes it took for a passenger to clear Customs, measured in hourly intervals.

Avg Max WT The average of every maximum wait time within a specified period. For example, the longest passenger wait time for every Wednesday between 3 and 4 p.m. would be

included in the calculation to provide an average maximum wait time for that period.

<i>DoW</i>	Day of the week.
<i>Max WT</i>	The maximum amount of time it took in minutes for a passenger to clear Customs, measured in hourly intervals.
<i>Pax:Booth</i>	The number of passengers passing through each Customs booth within the hour interval, presented as a ratio.
<i>T1, T4, T7, T8</i>	Short for Terminal 1, Terminal 4, Terminal 7, Terminal 8, at JFK, respectively.
<i>TB, TC</i>	Terminal B, Terminal C, at Newark, respectively.

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ABOUT GGA

Global Gateway Alliance (GGA) was established to address the major challenges facing the metropolitan region's airports and related infrastructure that, if left unaddressed, will serve as a major impediment to the long-term growth of New York City and surrounding areas. By harnessing the expertise of leaders in business, government, academia, labor and other sectors, we seek to tackle these challenges head-on and serve as the leading advocate in an effort to improve our airports and facilitate the continued growth of the region. For more information regarding the Global Gateway Alliance, please visit www.globalgatewayalliance.org. Follow GGA on Twitter @GGA_NYNJ and 'Like' the organization on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/UsqxGw>.

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