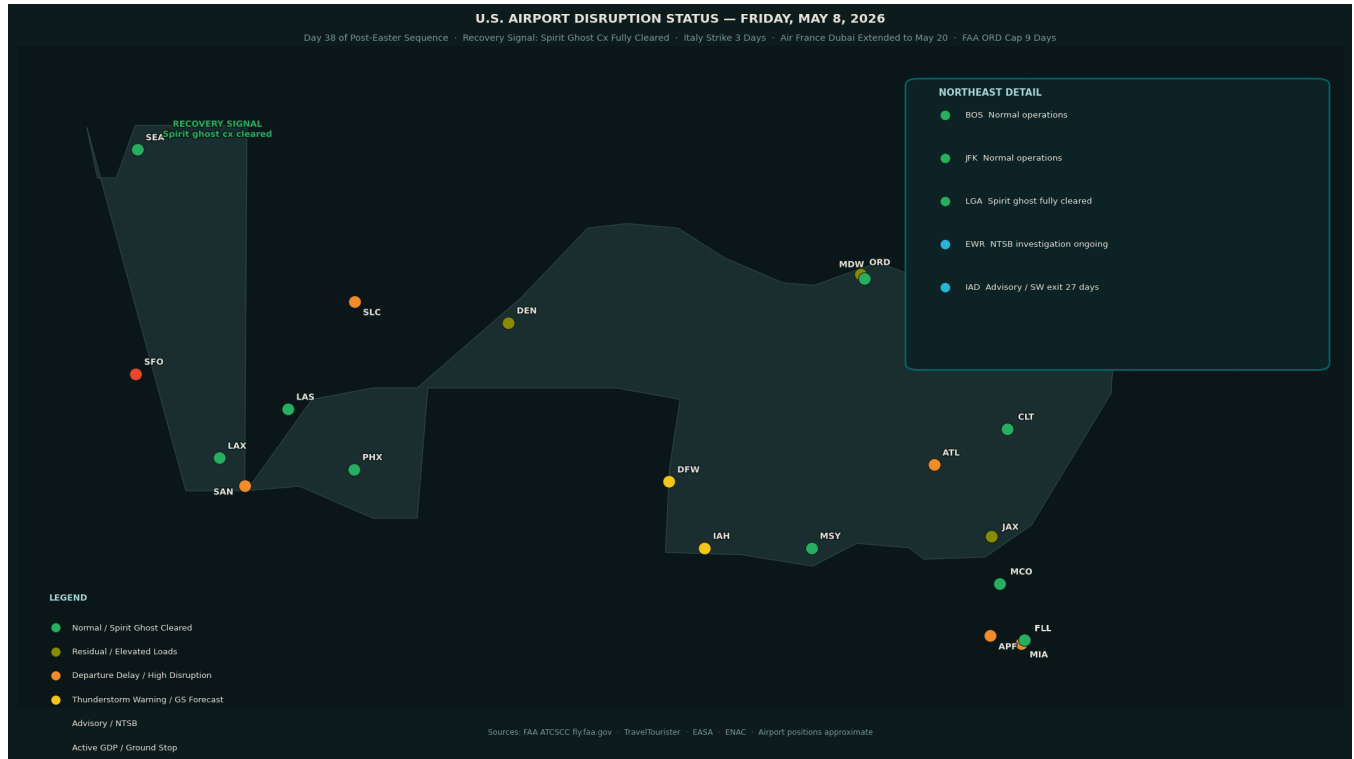


Daily Air Travel Disruption Briefing

Friday, May 8, 2026 · Day 38 of Post-Easter Sequence · Post-Spirit Day 7 · Recovery Signal: Spirit Ghost Cx Fully Cleared · Italy Strike 3 Days · Air France Dubai Extended to May 20 · FAA ORD Cap 9 Days



Active FAA Ground Programs

Airport	Program	Window EDT	Avg Delay	Cause
SFO	Ground Delay Program	11:00 AM–4:59 PM EDT	63 min	Low ceilings; structural Rwy 1R closed through Oct 2, 2026
MIA	Departure Delay	Active 10:39 AM EDT ↑	15 min (incr.)	Traffic management initiatives / volume / MIT
APF	Departure Delay	Active 10:57 AM EDT ↑	30 min (incr.)	Volume
DFW/DAL	Ground Stop (Fcst)	Through ~6:00 PM EDT	—	Thunderstorm line possible; CDRS/SWAP routes
IAH/HOU	GDP (Forecast)	After ~6:00 PM EDT	—	Thunderstorm line; arrival reroutes possible
JFK	GS (Forecast)	After ~1:00 AM EDT Sat	—	Volume/weather end of evening push
ORD/MDW	Advisory (Fcst)	After ~11:00 PM EDT	—	CDRS/SWAP/arrival routes possible

Yesterday's System Context — May 7, 2026 (Day 37)

The May 7 DEN blizzard generated 335 disruptions in a single day (301 delays + 34 cancellations) — the largest single-airport event since the April 28 record. SkyWest led cancellations (25), Southwest led delays (103 del), and United international cascades reached Frankfurt, Munich, Tokyo, Reykjavik, and Cancún. Today, DEN is recovering with residual crew and aircraft positioning. The broader network shows the first genuine recovery signal in 38 days: Spirit Airlines ghost cancellations have fully cleared from airport databases (effective May 6–7), removing the 200+ phantom cx/day that was inflating the cancellation count.

Airport	May 7 Del	May 7 Cx	Primary Driver	Today Outlook
DEN	301	34	May blizzard; SkyWest + SW + United	Recovering; positioning residual
ATL	~150	~40	Delta crew crisis + Endeavor Air	404 total today (402 del + 2 cx)
SAN	5	2	Volume/normal ops	194 total today (single-runway)
SLC	10	5	Snow residual	76 total today (late-season snow)
SFO	171	5	GDP 61 min structural	GDP 63 min today; persistent
FLL	3	1	Normal (Spirit ghost cleared)	Normal ops; no Spirit ghost
MCO	5	2	Normal (Spirit ghost cleared)	Normal ops; no Spirit ghost
ORD	275	62	Weather + prior cascade	Normal today; possible after 11PM

Active Airline Travel Waivers

Carrier	Waiver Coverage	Expires	Action / Notes
United	Rocky Mountain weather rebooking — DEN and 7 other airports	May 9, 2026	united.com → Manage Trips; same cabin, same cities
United	Spirit rescue fare — \$199 one-way — united.com/specialfares	May 16, 2026	No proof of Spirit ticket required; 8 days remaining

Carrier	Waiver Coverage	Expires	Action / Notes
Frontier	Spirit rescue 50% off — flyfrontier.com promo SAVENOW	May 10 (TOMORROW)	Last day tomorrow; flyfrontier.com
Allegiant	Spirit rescue — allegiantair.com promo ALLWAYSTHERE	May 12	allegiantair.com
Avelo	75% off Spirit routes — promo TRYAVELO	May 10 (TOMORROW)	aveloair.com; last day tomorrow
Multiple carriers	Italy May 11 waivers expected — check carrier site	Imminent	Delta, United, AA, LH waivers expected by today/tomorrow
BA/LH/KLM	Gulf airspace waivers — EASA CZIB R9	May 12	Air France Dubai now May 20; Riyadh May 12
Delta	No system-wide waiver active May 8	N/A	Monitor delta.com/advisories; crew OTP #6

International — Italy May 11 Black Day (3 Days) / Air France Dubai Extended to May 20 / SAERCO Day 23

Italy's designated "giornata nera" is now three days away. ENAC, Italy's civil aviation authority, published its mandatory "voli garantiti" (guaranteed flights) list on May 7, confirming which intercontinental and inter-island services will operate even during Monday's 8-hour strike window (VisaHQ). The protected windows remain 07:00–10:00 and 18:00–21:00 local. ENAV ATC at Rome and Naples strike 10:00 AM–6:00 PM; ADR Security at Fiumicino and Ciampino 12:00–4:00 PM; easyJet pilots and cabin crew nationally 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. Ground handlers at Naples, Palermo, Cagliari, and Milan-Malpensa also participating. Experience shows knock-on delays persist well into the evening as airlines reposition aircraft once the strike ends. Italy-bound carrier waivers are expected today or Saturday.

Air France extended its Dubai suspension to May 20 and its Riyadh suspension to May 12 (AeroTime). This means Air France's anticipated May 10 Dubai resumption will not happen, keeping transatlantic slot pressure at JFK, EWR, and IAD for at least two more weeks. EASA CZIB R9 remains valid through May 12; the next review may produce an R10 extension given Air France's own safety assessment.

Spain SAERCO — Day 23: Today is Friday, a Groundforce dual-strike day at Lanzarote (ACE) and Fuerteventura (FUE). Baggage-handling disruption is active on top of the ongoing SAERCO ATC minimum service. Canary Island travelers departing today should allow 2–3 extra hours and verify baggage check-in windows with their carrier.

Fleet and Program Tracker

Aircraft	Status	Program Notes	EIS / Timeline	Key Operators
737 MAX 8/9	Flying	Wiring harness fix delivering; deliveries resuming Apr	In service	FAA waiver; anti-ice fix due 2026
737 MAX 7	Cert pending	FAA Phase 2; Boeing Q2 2026 target (Ryanair CEO briefed; Bloomberg Apr 21)	Q2–3 2026 cert; Aug est.	Southwest primary
737 MAX 10	Cert pending	Final cert flight testing (31 SSAs required)	Q3–4 2026; EIS 2027	AA/UA largest buyers
737 MAX Everett North Line	Build prep	Tooling complete; SOJT training	Summer 2026 first build	4th final assembly line
787 Dreamliner	Ramping	Production normalizing post-2024 quality hold	In service	Charleston + Everett; 787-10 active
A320/A321neo	Ramping	2,500+ del; Delta exercised 34 more A321neo (189 total)	In service	CFM LEAP + PW1100G
A321XLR	EIS underway	First revenue flights 2025–26	EIS 2025–26	Iberia launched; 4,700nm range
Skywise Digital (Airbus)	Launched	Apr 1, 2026 — Navblue + Skywise merged	Operational	CDM with FAA NextGen

Canada Transborder Note

Denver blizzard hangover is easing on Canadian routes. YYZ–DEN and YVR–DEN corridors are running 20–30 minutes above normal today, down from 90–120 minutes yesterday. United's Rocky Mountain weather waiver expires tomorrow (May 9) — any Canadian passenger still rebooking DEN connections should act today.

The 3 Stories That Matter Today

Story 1: Italy May 11 Black Day — 3 Days, ENAC Publishes Guaranteed Flights List

With 72 hours until Italy's "giornata nera," ENAC published the mandatory protected-flight timetable on May 7, giving passengers their first concrete view of which services will operate on Monday (VisaHQ). Long-haul intercontinental flights and most inter-island services appear on the guaranteed list. Short- and medium-haul European flights, including many transatlantic-connecting services through Fiumicino, are outside protection windows if they depart between 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. ENAV ATC at Rome Area Control and Naples will halt for 8 hours; ADR Security at Fiumicino and Ciampino will strike a concurrent 4-hour window; easyJet crew nationwide joins for the full period.

The waivers are coming. Delta, United, American, Lufthansa, and ITA Airways are all expected to issue Italy travel waivers today or tomorrow — monitor your carrier's travel-alerts page (The Flight Club). Italian media note that the staggered strike structure reduces the effective protection of even early-morning slots: ground handlers at Naples, Palermo, and Cagliari walking out separately mean that even ENAC-protected 07:00–10:00 departures may lack baggage-loading capability. Corporate travel managers are routing all May 11 Italy connections via Zurich, Vienna, or Frankfurt.

Action: If you have any flight through Rome Fiumicino, Naples, or Palermo on May 11, rebook NOW to May 10 evening or May 12 morning. Milan–Malpensa is NOT affected by ENAV but IS affected by some handler actions. Check your carrier's travel-alerts page today — waivers will allow free change. Under EU Regulation 261/2004, if your carrier cancels and fails to reroute reasonably, you are entitled to a full refund plus duty of care.

Story 2: Air France Dubai Extended to May 20 — EASA R10 Likely Monday, Slot Pressure Continues

Air France announced an extension of its Dubai International suspension through May 20 and its Riyadh suspension through May 12 — eliminating its previously planned May 10 resumption and signaling that EASA's May 12 review will almost certainly produce a 10th revision (R10) rather than a lift (AeroTime). Air France has now extended its Gulf suspension seven times since February 28. Airlines with imminent resumption targets all shifted: Lufthansa May 31, KLM June 22, British Airways July 1 — all conditional on EASA lifting the bulletin, which grows less likely with each weekly extension.

The operational effect for US passengers is continued transatlantic capacity compression. European carriers that would normally carry Gulf-route connecting passengers — Air France via CDG, Lufthansa via FRA, KLM via AMS — are running reduced Gulf service, forcing more passengers onto US carrier JFK–Dubai services (United, Emirates, and Etihad). Slot pressure at JFK and EWR for transatlantic departures in the 8:00–9:00 PM EDT window remains elevated. The DXB 1-flight/day cap for foreign carriers through May 31 is unchanged.

Action: Travelers with Air France Dubai or Riyadh tickets through May 20 should contact Air France to rebook. Air France is offering postponement free of charge or a one-year voucher valid on Air France, KLM, or Delta partner flights. For Gulf itineraries, Emirates and Etihad (operating under GCAA, which lifted restrictions May 2) remain the most reliable routing options.

Story 3: Day 38 Recovery Signal — Spirit Ghost Cx Cleared, Network Disruption Shifting to Secondary Airports

Day 38 marks the first day of genuine network-level recovery since Good Friday. Spirit Airlines' ghost cancellations — which had been inflating US daily cancellation counts by 150–200 for 5 days after the carrier's May 2 shutdown — are fully cleared from booking and airport slot databases as of May 6–7. Today's disruption profile is structurally different: the major hubs (ORD, DFW, ATL, EWR, JFK) are operating normally or near-normally, with disruption concentrated in secondary airports with specific vulnerability factors (TravelTourister Day 38).

San Diego (SAN, 194 disruptions) is the US's only major single-runway commercial airport. A 3-minute elongation in departure sequencing cascades into a multi-hour queue. Salt Lake City (SLC, 76 disruptions) is absorbing late-season snowfall at the end of the ski season, with Delta's Mountain West hub feeding delays to ATL, JFK, and Denver. Jacksonville (JAX, 52 disruptions) reflects the post-Spirit passenger migration from FLL and MCO — Spirit's former JAX load is now distributed across American, Delta, and Southwest at elevated load factors.

Action: If your itinerary today includes a SAN connection, build a 90-minute minimum connection window — the single-runway creates unpredictable ground queues. SLC travelers should check the weather at origin and destination: Delta's SLC hub cascades to ATL and JFK. If your network travels today look normal, the Day 38 recovery signal is genuine — but the FAA ORD cap (May 17, 9 days) and Italy May 11 (3 days) are the next systemic disruption risks.

TSA Checkpoint Reminders

- REAL ID enforcement active: Standard driver's licenses no longer accepted. Bring a REAL ID, passport, or compliant ID. Confirm.ID fee: \$45 at tsa.gov since February 1, 2026.
- Shoes stay on at standard checkpoints since July 8, 2025. PreCheck and Clear unaffected.
- Power bank Wh limits tightened April 2026: Check carrier policy before packing high-capacity batteries.
- Clear carry-on bag pilot launching this summer at ATL, BOS, ORD, DFW, and IAH.
- TSA staffing gap — Day 84: 458+ officers resigned. Callout rates above 11%. SAN, ATL, and SFO will see extended queues today. Add a 30-minute arrival buffer.
- No new TSA policy changes reported as of May 8, 2026.

Recovery Outlook

Where we stand — Day 38: For the first time in 38 days, the US aviation network is showing genuine recovery characteristics. Spirit ghost flights are cleared. Major hubs are operating. Disruption has rotated to secondary airports with specific structural vulnerabilities (SAN single runway, SLC late-season snow, JAX Spirit migration loads). This is not a return to normal — ATL is still producing 400+ disruptions from the Delta crew crisis, and SFO's structural GDP remains active — but the worst of the post-Easter surge appears to be over.

Three countdowns define the next phase: FAA ORD Summer Cap activates May 17 (9 days). Italy May 11 black day (3 days) will spike disruptions at Rome and Naples. Memorial Day weekend (May 23–26, 16 days) arrives with Spirit void (1.65M May seats), Delta crew unreliability (OTP #6), and the ORD cap transition week (May 17–21) overlapping the holiday booking surge. A genuine recovery is possible by late May if no new weather events intervene — but the structural deficit from 38 days of above-baseline disruption means the summer travel season begins with a weakened national system.

Weekend outlook: Saturday and Sunday typically show lower business-traveler load, but Spirit displacement has elevated leisure-route load factors on Southwest, Frontier, and Allegiant significantly. The last Spirit rescue fares (Frontier and Avelo) expire Saturday May 10. After May 10, passengers who have not yet rebooked former Spirit tickets face standard market rates. United's \$199 rescue fare is the only remaining below-market option, valid through May 16.

Sources

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[2] FAA Daily Air Traffic Report — faa.gov/newsroom/faa-daily-air-traffic-report

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[4] TravelTourister SAN May 8 — traveltourister.com/news/san-diego-airport-chaos-may-8-2026/

[5] Italy May 11 Travel Notices — visahq.com/news/2026-05-07/it/italy-issues-detailed-travel-notice

[6] Italy Strike Details — theflightclub.it/en/2026/04/strike-may-11/

[7] Air France Dubai Extension — aerotime.aero/articles/air-france-extends-iran-war-flight-ban

[8] EASA CZIB R9 — easa.europa.eu/en/domains/air-operations/czibs/2026-03-r9

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