American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

2019: A year of storms – and recovery – at DFW

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Waves of bad weather including lightning and strong winds have hit DFW 25 times this year. Many of the storms arrived unexpectedly, and on peak travel days where load factors were above 90%. This has posed a challenge for customers and team members alike.

While those flying with us generally only interact with the Reservations team and frontline agents to re-book their flights when plans change, much more goes on behind the scenes to restore operations after a day of severe weather.

Jetbridge cab curtain blown off at DFW after the March storm.

The Cargo facility's HVAC pulled off the building because of high winds.

The back of the HVAC at the Cargo building before Facilities stepped in.

The largest storm of the season hit DFW on March 13. Lightning caused the ramp to close several times that morning for a total of 44 minutes. By the time Mother Nature eased up, equipment had been blown off the roof, five jetbridges on widebody gates were damaged so badly they were deemed inoperable, and even more jetbridges were damaged and in need of repair. At DFW, losing five mainline widebody gates for a day could lead to dozens of Flagship flight delays or cancellations, impacting thousands of customers.

But, thanks to the Facilities Maintenance team, nearly every damaged jetbridge and other instance of facility damage from that storm was fixed within 12 hours. This group was not only instrumental in getting the DFW operation back up and running, they were key in getting the global operation back on schedule quickly and safely. In addition to repairing the mainline bridges, the team stepped up to repair damaged regional gates, too.

“Had the Facilities Maintenance team not gotten those five widebody gates back in service within the day, we would have had to cancel or delay up to 20 Flagship flights out of DFW, leading to additional cancellations systemwide. That’s a big deal,” said Mark Blumer, Senior Manager of DFW’s Tower Operations.

DFW’s Facilities Maintenance team consists of 230 team members who are collectively responsible for 92 jetbridges and associated equipment, three baggage systems and two terminals, plus several other buildings.

“A majority of what our team does here at DFW is behind the scenes, but we always get the job done,” said Alan Anderson, Supervisor of Facilities Maintenance. “We work hard each day to keep our operation running safely, which is paramount to our success, especially with more than 900 scheduled daily flights this summer.”

Paul Reichenberger, a Parts Technical Crew Chief, said they work on three separate baggage handling systems and more than 90 gates.

“Our Facilities Maintenance Department here at DFW has their hands in just about everything, no matter what the weather is, they are out in it working to keep the building safe and the equipment everyone else uses to do their jobs working,” he said. “They work behind the scenes keeping the buildings and everything in them operational and safe.”