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USVI Affected by Hundreds of Spirit and American Airlines' Flight Cancellations Caused by Severe Weather, Staff Shortage

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Spirit Airlines By. GETTY IMAGES

Spirit Airlines and American Airlines have cancelled hundreds of flights in the last three days, and those cancellations have been affecting travelers to and from the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The disruptions have hit Spirit harder, which cancelled over half of its flights on Tuesday as it continues to experience an operational collapse that has thrown its business into chaos for three consecutive days.

According to flight-tracking website FlightAware, Spirit canceled 373 flights, or 54 percent of its schedule Tuesday, after canceling over 40 percent of its flights Monday and close to 20 percent on Sunday, the Wall Street Journal reported.

A Spirit Airlines spokesman said “overlapping operational challenges” which included system outage, staffing shortage in some areas, and bad weather led to the cancellations. But the airline also canceled some flights in an effort to reset operations and was working on refunding and rebooking customers.

According to WSJ, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, a union that represents flight attendants at Spirit and other airlines, said the struggles were compounded by an IT outage Tuesday morning that prevented crew schedulers from being able to access their system for over an hour.

Virgin Islanders have taken to Facebook and other social media platforms to share their experience and grievances.

Spirit Airlines is not alone in the recent wave of cancelations. American Airlines also canceled hundreds of flights because of protracted bad weather that started on Sunday night at the airline's Dallas-Forth Worth hub and extended into Monday morning. WSJ said that as of Tuesday afternoon, American had canceled about 9 percent of its flights, but the number was stabilizing throughout the day.