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Contact:
Jeff Lea
jeff.lea@mspmac.org
314-793-4240

MSP Prepares for Final Holiday Travel Push of 2023
Travelers can reserve parking, security line spots ahead of their travel day

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL – Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) will see another upswing in passengers and operations as holiday travel heats up through the end of 2023 and into the new year.

The busiest days at MSP before Christmas will be Dec. 21, and Dec. 22, with Friday's peak activity forecasted to surpass 36,000 passengers checking-in and clearing Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security checkpoints. A similar bump in activity is projected in the days leading up to New Year's Day.

"We're projecting some peak days of heavy passenger activity through the upcoming holidays as we close out a strong year in travel and head into 2024," said Brian Ryks, CEO of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, which operates MSP. "We continuously collaborate with the TSA and our airlines to align staffing, especially during these high-travel periods, to help minimize wait times and offer more assistance to travelers through the check-in and security processes."

MSP is approaching the final weeks of 2023 with year-to-date passenger activity trending near 90% of 2019 levels, when the airport served an all-time high of 39.5 million passengers. That demand has carried over through the most recent holidays. MSP set a post-pandemic daily record of nearly 50,000 people clearing TSA checkpoints on Oct. 19, during the annual MEA break. A few weeks later, checkpoint volumes during the Thanksgiving holiday period increased approximately 10% compared to the previous year.

For the upcoming peak travel period, passengers should plan to arrive two hours ahead of domestic flights and three hours ahead of international flights.

Airport parking will be in high demand. Holiday travelers are encouraged to pre-book their parking online to guarantee a spot and capture the lowest daily rates. Bookings must be made at least 12 hours prior to your scheduled arrival time. The earlier you book, the more you can save.

Travelers in Terminal 1 should review the two checkpoint wait time boards when they enter the ticketing lobby. Passengers can access all gates from either checkpoint, but the North Checkpoint often has shorter wait times.

Terminal 2 passengers can reserve a spot in the security line for free through MSP Reserve. Appointments are available 3:45 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Availability is limited.

Roadways will be congested at peak times as well. To reduce traffic at curbside pick-up areas, drivers are encouraged to use MSP's cell phone lots on Post Road. Capacity was recently expanded to 140 spaces. These are free waiting areas for drivers who are encouraged to stay parked until their arriving party contacts them by phone to pick them up at either terminal.

Earlier this month, MSP debuted its newly relocated Uber and Lyft pick-up area in the Terminal 1 Ground Transportation Center. The new location, down one level from the previous location, doubles the vehicle pick-up spaces and offers a covered loading zone to minimize weather impacts on passengers. App-based riders can access the Ground Transportation Center via the Tram Level of Terminal 1.

Travelers should review the latest TSA security screening information and tips including identification requirements and regulated items for carry-on and checked baggage.

Travelers can enjoy special [musical and dance performances](#) in the coming days, provided by Arts@MSP. On Thursday, Dec. 21, find a balloon artist and a face painter on the mall at Terminal 1 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. On the same day, Airport Foundation MSP will offer complimentary gift wrapping for items purchased at MSP between the hours of 8-10 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. in the Terminal 1 Mall.

About The Metropoitan Airports Commission (MAC)
The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) owns and operates one of the nation's largest airport systems, including [Minneapolis-St Paul International (MSP)](#) and six general aviation airports. The MAC's airports connect the region to the world and showcase Minnesota's extraordinary culture to millions of passengers from around the globe who arrive or depart through MAC airports each year. Though a public corporation of the state of Minnesota, the organization is not funded by income or property taxes. Instead, the MAC's operations are funded by rents and fees generated by users of its airports. For more information, visit [www.metroairports.org](#).

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