



METROPOLITAN AIRPORTS COMMISSION

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Jeff Lea

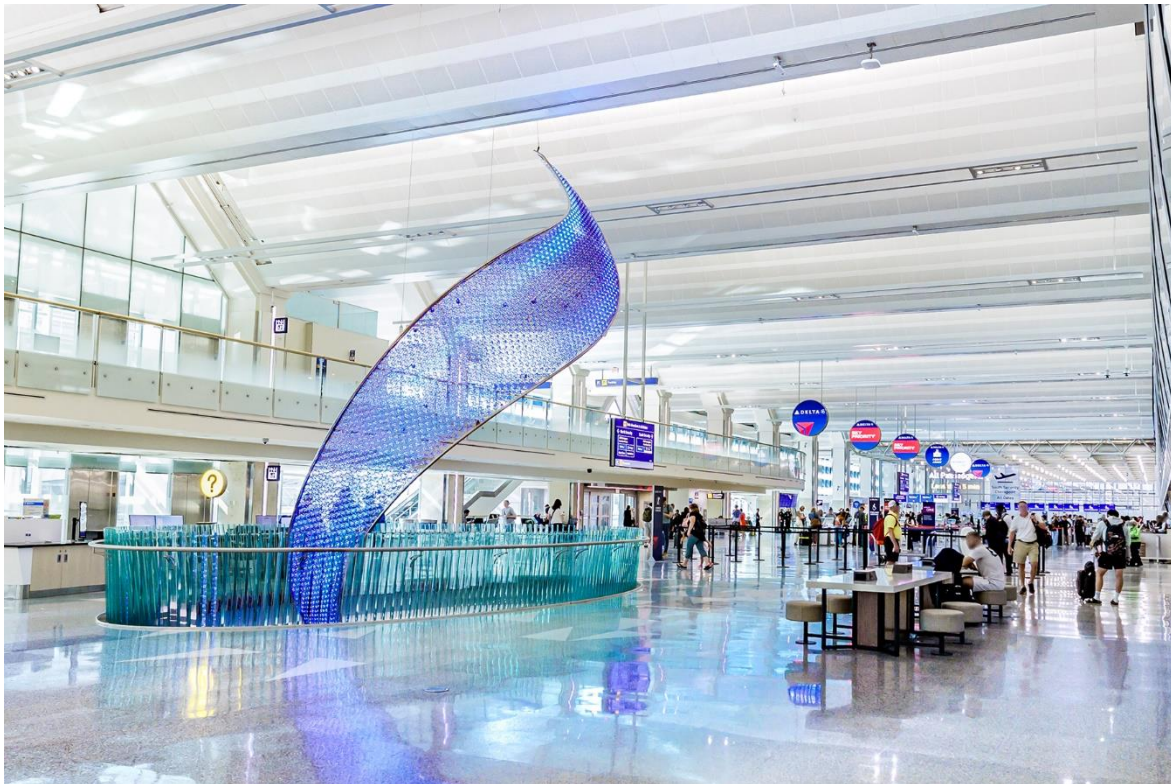
MAC Strategic Communications

jeff.lea@mspmac.org

314-793-4240 (m)

MSP Airport prepares for surge in passengers for MEA Week

Terminal 1 FLEX Lane makes debut for more pick-up and drop-off options



MSP Terminal 1 ticketing lobby. Courtesy: Metropolitan Airports Commission

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, Minn. — Fall air travel will peak at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) this week, fueled by travelers taking advantage of Minnesota's annual statewide MEA school break. MEA week passenger volumes are expected to increase 19% compared to average activity levels in the early part of this fall.

During the federal government shutdown, MSP’s federal partners have worked to maintain passenger security and air traffic control at normal operational levels.

“We’re grateful for the thousands of federal workers who are continuing to support air transportation at MSP and across the country during the government shutdown,” said Brian Ryks, CEO of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), which owns and operates MSP. “While there have been minimal impacts so far at MSP, passengers may experience delays and longer wait times wherever they fly in the days ahead.”

MSP airlines and the MAC have increased staffing levels to assist travelers and reduce wait times for check-in and security processes. Travelers are encouraged to arrive at the airport at least two hours in advance of a domestic departure or three hours prior to an international departure.

Thursday, Oct. 16, is expected to be the busiest day for the MEA travel period, with more than 52,000 people forecast to pass through TSA security checkpoints. The second-busiest day is anticipated to be Wednesday, Oct. 15, with more than 50,000 people forecast to clear checkpoints. MEA week travel generally concludes on Sunday, Oct. 20, with an MSP checkpoint forecast of more than 48,000 people.

MSP Airport debuts new FLEX Lane at Terminal 1 ahead of MEA travel



MSP’s Terminal 1 FLEX Lane offers an additional zone for passenger drop-offs and pick-ups. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Airports Commission

In time for this busy MEA travel period, MSP opened a new FLEX Lane at Terminal 1 to provide an additional zone for passenger drop-offs and pick-ups.

The newly designated FLEX Lane is on the left side of the Terminal 1 Departures Drive roadway across from the primary drop-off curb. This new option offers terminal access through doors 5-8 connected to the Green and Gold parking ramps. A one-level escalator or elevator ride connects to pedestrian sky bridges for a simple “up and over” path to reach the Terminal 1 ticketing lobby. Alternatively, arriving passengers can return to the FLEX Lane for pick-up via the upper-level sky bridges or from below the roadway on Level T.

“We’ll see heavy peaks of vehicle and passenger traffic for MEA week, so this new option will certainly bring immediate benefits to those wanting to avoid congestion in dropping off or picking up passengers,” said Scott Skramstad, director of MSP terminal and landside operations for the MAC. “The FLEX Lane is a convenient and free alternative to the primary zones that gives passengers more options getting to and from the terminal.”

Drivers entering Terminal 1 will see new signage directing them to the new FLEX Lane option as they approach the Departures Drive loop. More than 80% of MSP passengers fly in and out of Terminal 1, which serves hub carrier Delta Air Lines and 11 other airlines.

Terminal 2 travelers also have an alternative to the primary curbside pick-up and drop-off area. The free [Terminal 2 Express Lane](#) opened in 2024. Drivers can access this through the Purple Ramp. It provides a covered loading zone on the second level with a quick walk to the terminal via a sky bridge.

Other helpful tips for MEA week travel at MSP:

- MSP passengers can reserve a spot in the security line for free through [MSP RESERVE](#). Reservation times vary per terminal, and availability is limited.
- Travelers can [prebook parking](#) online to guarantee a spot and capture the lowest daily rates. Bookings must be made at least 12 hours prior to scheduled arrival time.
- Travelers in Terminal 1 should check the 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.
- In addition to the new FLEX Lane option, drivers can use either level of the terminal drive loop to pick up or drop off passengers.
- To further reduce traffic congestion at curbside pick-up areas, drivers picking up passengers are encouraged to wait in advance at [MSP’s free cell phone lots on Post Road](#). Drivers should stay parked until their arriving party contacts them to pick them up at either terminal.
- Get the latest TSA security screening information and tips [including identification requirements and regulated items for carry-on and checked baggage](#).

About The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) owns and operates one of the nation's largest airport systems, including [Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport \(MSP\)](#) 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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