



Media Release

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Annual MEA Weekend to Spur Travel Through MSP Airport This Week

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL –Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) is preparing to see the annual MEA travel effect once again—a multi-day passenger spike when the airport may be just as busy as a travel day over the summer or during the winter holidays. The annual MEA break for Minnesota educators later this week gives students across the state a longer weekend and a chance for families to get in one last vacation or trip before winter hits.

“Last year, we were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic during MEA weekend. This year, some days are forecasted to nearly double the number of travelers at MSP compared to MEA weekend in 2020,” said Brian Ryks, CEO of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, which operates MSP. “We may see a day or two being some of our busiest of the year.”

Thursday, October 21, is projected to be the busiest day of the MEA weekend, with more than 34,000 departing passengers expected to go through TSA checkpoints, with Wednesday, October 20, closely behind. Both days will see peak periods of departing passengers, especially for the earliest flights of the day. Beginning Tuesday, October 19, five out of six days through Sunday, October 24 will see more than 26,000 passengers clearing MSP checkpoints, based on current booking forecasts. In 2020, MEA weekend travel hit a single day peak of more than 17,400 passengers clearing MSP checkpoints. On a typical MEA weekend before the pandemic, such as in 2019, more than 47,000 passengers would clear TSA checkpoints on the busiest days.

Because of the peak traffic forecasted for MSP this week, travelers should arrive at the airport at least two hours in advance of a domestic departure or three hours prior to an international departure. However, passengers should confirm the recommended airport arrival time with their airlines.

There are [more choices to fly this year](#) for MEA weekend than a year ago. Airlines are operating 180 routes in October (170 domestic and 10 international) with 389 average daily departures. That compares to approximately 135 routes and an average of 300 daily departures in 2020.

Federal regulations require all individuals to wear face coverings inside terminals and aboard aircraft through January 2022. The health and safety of travelers, visitors and airport employees remains the focus of the airport’s [Travel Confidently MSP program](#), which includes vigorous cleaning, access to

contactless hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the terminals and more than 200 protective barriers at major passenger interaction points.

MSP is marking the return of a more robust MEA travel week with a fun lineup of events including balloon artists and giveaways for kids in the Terminal 1 Main Mall beginning at 1 p.m. on October 20. Several live music performances are also scheduled through the Arts@MSP program, including Joe Mailander (of the *Okee Dokee Brothers*), featuring Jillian Rae and Anthony Ihrig of the *High '48*. They will have two family-friendly performances in the Terminal 1 Main Mall on Wednesday afternoon, at 1 p.m. and 2:15 p.m.

MSP is also offering discounted [prebooked parking](#) rates for MEA weekend at Terminal 1 for October 23-24, which will save parkers \$7 per day. Pre-booked parking guarantees a spot for customers and gives them a touchless experience by using a QR code from their online parking confirmation to enter and exit the structure.

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 \(MSP\)](#) 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.