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# Holiday Travel Tips for Thanksgiving at Sea-Tac Airport

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## Holiday Travel Tips for Thanksgiving at Sea-Tac Airport

### *Nearly one million travelers will go through the airport in one week*

SEATTLE – Holiday travelers bring your patience and use a few travel tricks as nearly one million other passengers move through Seattle-Tacoma International Airport during the week of Thanksgiving. With a projected six percent increase in passengers so far this year, Sea-Tac will see more than 900,000 people use the airport from Tuesday, November 20 through Monday, November 26. The busiest travel days are typically the Tuesday and Wednesday before the holiday, and the Sunday and Monday afterwards.

This isn't the busiest time of the year for Sea-Tac, which is during the summer months between June and August, but there are plenty of people traveling, and picking up family and friends for the holiday. A few shortcuts to think about before traveling, picking up, or dropping off passengers will make your day safer and more efficient.

More than half of the travelers (54 percent) on a typical day at Sea-Tac Airport only fly one or two times during the year, which means many of our visitors haven't experienced some of our most significant changes.



To improve the travel experience for seasoned pros and newbies alike, the Port of Seattle is encouraging fliers with tools, including:

- **Use the Apps!** Check out the new Sea-Tac Airport App to watch security checkpoint wait times, search for your flight, find yourself on the terminal map, and search for restaurants, lounges, the meditation room or your favorite retail store. Also, use multiple other apps to help you navigate and enjoy the airport.
- **Looking to join friends and family inside the terminal without buying a ticket?** Try SEA Visitor Pass, a pilot program that allows a limited number of guests to go through security and spend time in the airport terminal.
- **Sign up for text alerts.** Get text updates about what's happening at the airport by texting "Update" to (206) 347-8045.

To help you during this busy travel season, here are more details broken down to getting to the airport, how to prepare for the security checkpoint, and what's new in the Terminal.

### Getting to the airport

- **Arrive early!** Travelers are encouraged to leave plenty of time to get to the airport, check in for their flight, and clear security. Screening lanes experience unpredictable spikes in congestion. Plan on arriving at the airport at least two hours in advance for a domestic flight, and three hours for international travel. To save time, it's suggested that travelers check in for their flights and print boarding passes prior to arriving at the airport. Some airlines allow passengers to print luggage tags in advance. This saves time at the ticket counter.
- **Use alternatives for driving to the airport.** Take light rail, public transit, taxis, airport shuttles or ride-share vehicles or use a different route to avoid the clogged expressway. *The airport parking garage is anticipated to have exceptionally high occupancy throughout the holiday and alternatives to driving are strongly encouraged.*

Public transportation is by far the best option if you want to stay out of a traffic jam. Use Link Light Rail to travel all the way to the airport or meet your party at one of

the nearby stations. Tukwila and Angle Lake stations offer free parking one stop away to avoid airport traffic headaches.

- **Avoid the Arrivals and Departure drives.** Here's why and **what to expect** from the Port of Seattle Police. Port of Seattle Police officers will patrol the Airport Expressway to prevent motorists from parking on the shoulder, and Traffic Support Specialists will be deployed on the Arrivals and Departure drives to assist with traffic flow. If you do drive, park at the **Sea-Tac Airport garage** and walk into the terminal.

If you must drive, peak traffic congestion occurs on the Departure level from approximately 4:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. During the middle of the day, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., both Arrivals and Departure drives experience backups. In the evenings, the Arrivals drive experiences heavy traffic from about 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

- **Think opposite.** In the morning, drop off passengers on the Arrivals level. In the evenings, arrange to meet your passengers on the Departures level. Going opposite gets you out of the traffic crunch. Another example, many arriving passengers do not check bags and are already on the Departures level when they exit, easy to pick up.
- **Come from the south end.** Motorists coming from north of the airport can avoid the heaviest traffic by accessing the airport from **alternate routes**.
- **Blind and low vision travelers** can try **new assistive technology** with Aira, with the Port providing free connection service while at the airport.
- **Are you there yet?** If you're picking up passengers, make sure they are there before going to the drive. It will take some time for them to walk from the plane or pickup bags.

## Ready for security checkpoint

- **Be ready for security checkpoints.** Once travelers get to the airport, Sea-Tac and its partners in the Transportation Security Administration want to help you move through **security checkpoints** as quickly as possible. Enhanced security measures now in effect at Sea-Tac and airports nationwide require travelers to remove electronics larger than a cell phone from their carryon luggage.
- **Be thoughtful with food.** Sea-Tac recommends that unless you plan on eating food at the airport or on your flight, consider packing your holiday treats in your checked luggage.
- **Sign up for Trusted Traveler Programs** such as TSA PreCheck, Global Entry and CLEAR to get you through the lines faster. These **expedited security programs** help for both domestic and international travel, including a faster way through customs with Automated Passport Control and Mobile Passport Control.

## What's new in the terminal

- **New options for traveling with pets!** Three new pet relief areas are installed inside the terminal for easier customer access and compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). You can find them in the North and South Satellite and Central Terminal near Concourse B. Check our website for an **up-to-date map and info**.

- **More amenities for traveling mothers!** Sea-Tac now has seven nursing suites throughout the airport.

Don't miss our dining and retail options! This November, it's about the journey and the destination. Sea-Tac Airport is home to retailers and restaurants from the Northwest, as well as brands from around the world, that provide passengers with incredible experiences worth lingering over during the holiday season. This [map](#) shows you where to grab a bite, satisfy your coffee fix or do last minute shopping.

- **More elbow room on Concourse D!** The newly opened Concourse D Annex will help mitigate current congestion for travelers waiting at crowded gates and aircraft waiting on the airfield for an open gate to deplane passengers during peak periods. The 32,400 square foot building will allow for what is called 'hardstand operations,' where passengers are shuttled to and from an aircraft parked away from the terminal building. Stop by the brand-new Starbucks and Hudson for grab-and-go travel treats!
- **What's all that construction?** Yes, there are some major projects underway, including the North Satellite Modernization, International Arrivals Facility and Central Terminal Renovation Project, and one you don't see, the Baggage System Upgrade.

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## About Seattle-Tacoma International Airport

*Operated by the Port of Seattle, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA, KSEA) is ranked as the 9th busiest U.S. airport, serving 46.9 million passengers and more than 425,800 metric tons of air cargo in 2017. With a regional economic impact of more than \$22.5 billion in business revenue, Sea-Tac generates more than 151,400 jobs (87,300 direct jobs), representing over \$3.6 billion in direct earnings and more than \$442 million in state and local taxes. Thirty-four airlines serve 91 non-stop domestic and 28 international destinations.*

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