NEWS

CONTACT: Nicole Hall | O: 619.400.2859 | M: 858.531.2863 | E: nhall@san.org

San Diego International Airport Anticipates Busy Thanksgiving Holiday Travel Period

Nearly 1 million Passengers Expected during 11-Day Travel Period

SAN DIEGO, CA — November 17, 2026–San Diego International Airport (SAN) anticipates as many as 950,000 passengers during the Thanksgiving holiday travel period, Friday, November 20 through Monday, November 30.

An average of approximately 87,000 passengers per day are expected during the 11-day period, an increase of 8 to 10 percent over last year.

The busiest travel day is expected to be Sunday, November 29, with as many as 100,000 passengers projected to travel through SAN. Other peak days include Friday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the Monday after the holiday, when approximately 88,000 to 92,000 passengers are anticipated each day.

“The Thanksgiving holiday is one of our busiest travel periods of the year,” said Atif Saeed, President and CEO of the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority. “Unlike spring, summer, and winter holiday travel periods, Thanksgiving travel is concentrated within a much shorter window, resulting in significant increases in passenger traffic immediately before and after the holiday.”

With increased passenger and roadway traffic expected, the Airport Authority encourages travelers and those picking up or dropping off passengers to plan ahead.

Holiday Travel Tips:

Check your flight status. Confirm your flight time with your airline before heading to the airport.

Arrive early. Allow extra time for traffic and security, especially during peak curbside hours: 4–6:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., and 8 p.m.–12 a.m.

Roadway changes. Terminal 1’s first phase opened in September 2025; ongoing construction has changed airport roads. A new on-airport roadway now directs westbound drivers on North Harbor Drive to Terminals 1 and 2. Follow signage and drive safely. For more information click here.

Follow the signs. Whether dropping off or picking up passengers, please follow construction signage and stay within marked lanes. Be alert and ensure car doors and personal belongings are not blocking other drivers and passengers. Lastly, follow the directions of Airport Traffic Officers – they are there to ensure the safety of everyone at the airport.

Make parking reservations in advance. Terminal 1 and 2 Parking Plazas are open and offer more than 8,000 parking spaces just steps away from the terminals. Parking and curbside valet reservations can be made on the airport’s website at https://www.san.org/parking.

Getting To, From, and Around SAN:

Traveling between Terminal 1 & 2. Passengers can hop on the Terminal Loop Shuttle which transports passengers between the terminals. The shuttle operates between 4 a.m. and 2 a.m.

San Diego Flyer. Free electric shuttle between the Old Town Transit Station and SAN operates seven days a week, with an average arrival time of every 20 to 30 minutes. The first pick up is at 4:45 a.m. and the last pick up/drop off at 12:20 a.m. Visit San Diego Flyer for more information.

Get dropped off or use a ride-share. Have friends or family drop off or pick up. Lyft, Uber, or other rideshare options are also good alternatives. Visit san.org/before-you-go-travel-tips/ride-services/ to learn more about pickup locations at Terminal 1 and 2.

Skip the traffic – Cell Phone Lot. Picking up? Avoid circling! The Cell Phone Lot in the Terminal 2 West Parking Lot on McCain Road is the perfect place to wait for your party. The lot is open from 5 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.

SAN Pass Program. Meet loved ones at the gate, send off a traveler, or explore the airport's restaurants, shops, and art without a boarding pass. For more information on SAN Pass and to apply, visit san.org/relax-before-you-fly/san-pass-program/.

At the Airport:

Shop, dine, and relax. Terminal shops and restaurants are open for meals, snacks, and travel essentials. Visit san.org/Shop-Dine-Relax for hours and locations of SAN concessionaires.

Construction & Transit Updates. To learn more about construction impacts, transit options, and more, visit san.org/airport-capital-improvement-projects/.

ABOUT SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (SAN)
Owned and operated by the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, San Diego International Airport (SAN) is one of the region's most important civic assets, serving more than 25 million passengers each year as the community's gateway to the world and contributing nearly $12 billion annually to the local economy. Conveniently located minutes from Downtown San Diego, SAN is the busiest single-runway airport in North America and the third-largest airport in California, with service to 90 destinations around the globe, including 13 nonstops to Europe, Latin America, Canada, and Asia. In 2025, the Authority opened the first phase of the new Terminal 1, a more efficient facility recently recognized as one of the most beautiful airport terminals in the world. When the new Terminal 1 is fully completed in 2028, it will have generated more than $4.5 billion for San Diego's economy and created more than 25,000 jobs, paying a total of $2 billion in wages to local workers. The Authority's continued investment in the airport experience strengthens San Diego's global competitiveness while delivering lasting value for the community.

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