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MEM overcomes unprecedented week of weather, water pressure issues

When many Memphis International Airport employees reported for snow duty on February 10, none could have predicted that day would mark the beginning of an extended period of emergency operations at the airport, as one weather-related event after another led to 12 days of winter and emergency operations. Winter weather events on February 10, 14, and 17 brought more than 10 inches of precipitation to the Memphis area, halting transportation, disrupting supply chains, and bringing unprecedented challenges for businesses and individuals.

While the February 10/11 event was not as significant in nature, the subsequent weather events meant our snow operations were active continuously for a week. When winter weather is forecast, MEM schedules its crews based on the amount, duration and type of the expected precipitation. Snow and ice require different types of treatment. The goal is to prevent the buildup of ice and snow on runways and taxiways so that aircraft can continue to operate. Meanwhile, the airlines handle all aspects of ticketing, scheduling, gate operations, baggage, and deicing of aircraft.

MEM has 44 vehicles dedicated to snow/ice removal, including snow brooms, plow trucks, snow blowers, liquid and granular de-icing trucks, and tractors. About 75 Airfield Maintenance and 50 Building Maintenance employees worked throughout the snow operations, along with staff from Operations, Communications, Airport Police, Procurement, and other areas. Most of these employees stayed onsite for the entire 7-day period. The vast majority of the Airport Authority's 300 employees are involved in winter weather operations in some capacity.



Throughout the winter weather, MEM remained open, though of course the conditions here and elsewhere had an impact on airline operations during that time. Then, on February 18, a new issue emerged. The weather's effects on Memphis Light Gas, and Water's water distribution system created significant pressure issues across the Memphis area. The airport essentially lost water service, and as a result restrooms were inoperable, boilers had no water supply, and there was no potable water for aircraft. Thus, MEM made the difficult decision to close the terminal building in the early hours of Feb. 19, halting passenger arrivals and departures while we worked on a solution to the water pressure issues.

Airport employees worked relentlessly to find a temporary solution while MLGW worked on long-term repairs to its system. Temporary restroom trailers equipped with running water and heating were brought in from Georgia and we continued to stay in constant communication with the airlines, agencies and businesses that make up the MEM community. As a result, MEM was able to reopen to passenger traffic on February 20.



After maintenance employees identified, located, and installed temporary pumps to restore pressure, restrooms inside the facility were reopened on Feb. 21. MLGW has since repaired its system.

"The winter weather of 2021 will be talked about for years to come, and it certainly pushed the limits of both staff and equipment," said Scott Brockman, President and CEO of Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority. "However, the employees at MEM rose to the occasion and we were able to overcome these challenges, and I couldn't be prouder of our team."

Each crisis brings new lessons learned, and looking ahead, MEM will explore additional snow removal equipment, water supply backups, and other operational improvements.



Memphis International Airport offers travel tips for spring break

2021's Spring Break period is likely to be more spread out than previous years due to scheduling differences of area schools. This year's primary Spring Break travel periods are expected to be March 11-14 and March 25-28.

While the pandemic continues to result in reduced passenger volume, MEM is expected to experience periods of increased activity and is issuing the following tips for passengers:

Airline Operations

- MEM recommends that travelers arrive at the airport at least 90 minutes before their departure time
- Passengers should check with their airlines to monitor schedules.
- Airlines rather than the airport are responsible for all aspects of ticketing, scheduling, gate operations and baggage handling. Check with your airline if you have questions about any of these aspects of air travel.
- Airlines require passengers to wear masks/facial coverings when boarding and throughout the duration of the flight.

TSA

- TSA recently announced it has substantial efforts underway in preparation for spring break travelers. Those efforts include technology upgrades across airport checkpoints that reduce or eliminate physical contact, recruitment efforts to prepare for possible increasing passenger volumes, and vaccination efforts for our officers and personnel who regularly engage directly with members of the public.
- As a temporary exemption from its "3-1-1" rule (no liquids in excess of 3.4 oz. in carry-

on bags), TSA is allowing one oversized liquid hand sanitizer container, up to 12 ounces per passenger, in carry-on bags.

- In order to expedite security screening time, passengers should review the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA's) list of prohibited items.
- Firearms in carry-on bags are prohibited by federal law. Check your bags before you arrive at the airport.

COVID-19 Measures

Federal law requires you to wear a mask at all times when traveling through Memphis International Airport. Masks must completely cover the nose and mouth of the wearer.

For more info, please click the link below for the full news release.

[Read Full Release](#)



MEM remembers Boss, one of our original therapy dogs

MEM mourns the recent passing of Boss, a 14-year-old English golden retriever who was part of our original team of therapy dogs that began working at the airport in 2014. Boss quickly endeared himself to passengers and employees alike and was best known for putting his leash in his mouth and "walking" himself around the airport as he greeted passengers. His calm, gentle demeanor was a welcome presence at MEM, bringing smiles to passengers and only requiring a belly rub or two in exchange for his company.

[Read Full Story](#)



Airlines at MEM offer one-stop connectivity to 23 Caribbean destinations

For passengers looking to travel to the Caribbean, [airlines at MEM](#) provide one-stop connections to 23 Caribbean destinations in 12 countries. Connections can be made through Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas, Houston, and Miami to the following countries:

- Antigua
- Aruba and Curaçao
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Cuba
- Dominican Republic (D.R.)
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Puerto Rico **no passport required for U.S. citizens*
- St. Maarten
- Turks and Caicos
- U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Croix & St. Thomas) **no passport required for U.S. citizens*

To plan your Caribbean getaway from MEM, check booking dates with American Airlines (via CLT and MIA) Delta Air Lines (via ATL), Southwest Airlines (via MCO) or United Airlines (via IAH).



International travelers must prove to be COVID-free

For international travelers returning to the U.S., of January 12, 2021, the CDC is requiring for [pre-departure testing of all passengers](#) on flights to the United States. In accordance with the [CDC Order](#), airlines must verify that each passenger over the age of 2 provides a negative COVID-19 test result, conducted within 3 calendar days prior to departure, and an [attestation](#) that they received a negative test result or have recovered from COVID-19.

[Read CDC News Release](#)



Latest commercial air service updates

Airline schedules continue to change frequently, and passengers are encouraged to check with their airlines for the latest developments.

- **Allegiant:** Austin, Destin-Ft. Walton (seasonally suspended, resumes April 30), Ft. Lauderdale, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Orlando-Sanford, Punta Gorda, and St.

Pete-Clearwater

- **American Airlines:** Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas, Miami, Phoenix
 - **Delta Air Lines:** Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City
 - **Frontier:** Denver, Orlando
 - **Southwest Airlines:** Atlanta, Baltimore (resumes in April), Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Orlando, Phoenix, Tampa
 - **United:** Chicago, Denver, Houston
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Latest retail and concessions hours of operation

Some of the shops and restaurants that had previously closed due to low passenger volume have reopened with limited hours. The following is a list of open concessions and retail at MEM:

Ticketing:

- River City News and Gifts: Open 7am - 2pm
- Starbucks: Closed
- Maggie O'Shea's: Closed

A/B Connector:

- Regions Bank: Open 9am to 4pm, Mon-Fri
- PGA Tour Shop: Closed
- Starbucks: Sunday, Monday, Wednesday-Friday – 4:30am - 4:30pm; Saturday and Tuesday – 4:30am - 12:30pm
- Urban Market: Closed
- River City News and Gifts: Open 5am to 5pm

B/C Connector:

C Concourse:

- Home Team Sports Bar & Grill: Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 6am - 12:30pm; Sunday, Thursday and Friday 6am-4:30pm; Limited food menu, full bar service.
- CNBC News and Gifts: Open 5am - 5pm daily
- River City News and Gifts: Open (varies depending on flight location)
- Neely's Interstate BBQ: Open 9:30am - 5:00pm
- Blue Moon Tap Room: Monday and Friday - 4:30pm - 8pm
- Moe's Southwest Grill: Closed
- Starbucks: Closed

A Concourse:

- Lenny's Sub Shop: Monday - Sunday 5am-12pm, closed Saturdays
- Runway 901: Monday - Sunday 12pm-4pm; Closed Saturday
- River City News and Gifts: Open 6:00 am to 2:00 pm, Will open for any later flights (if applicable)
- Torn Basil: Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday - 11am - 4:30pm
- River City News and Gifts Kiosk: Closed



Keeping the Public Informed

We have created and continue to update a page on our website to keep the public informed of the steps being taken at MEM in response to COVID-19. Screens like the graphic above are currently in rotation in baggage claim and on the jumbotrons.

Visit the page here, and pass along to any of your contacts who may ask what the airport is doing: <https://flymemphis.com/covid-19>

[Read More](#)



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