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Palmdale Regional Airport

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Coordinates : 34°37′46″N 118°05′04″W﻿ / ﻿34.62944°N 118.08444°W﻿ / 34.62944; -118.08444﻿ (34.62944; -118.08444)

See: *United States Air Force Plant 42 for the United States Government use of the facility*

Palmdale Regional Airport (**IATA**: **PMD**, **ICAO**: **KPMD**, **FAA LID**: **PMD**) is an airport in [Palmdale, California](#). The city of Palmdale took over the airport at the end of 2013, managing it via the Palmdale Airport Authority.^[2]

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Overview [edit]

Palmdale Regional Airport has a small airline terminal and a [hangar](#). The airport terminal is at the southwest corner of the airport and began civilian operations in 1971. The [FAA's Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center](#) is next to the facility.

The airport is included in the [National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems](#) for 2011–

Palmdale Regional Airport



USGS 2006 orthophoto

IATA: **PMD** · **ICAO**: **KPMD** · **FAA LID**: **PMD** · **WMO**: **72382**

Summary

Airport type	Public/Military (Joint Use)
Owner/Operator	City of Palmdale & United States Air Force
Serves	Palmdale, California
Elevation AMSL	2,543 ft / 775 m
Coordinates	34°37′46″N 118°05′04″W﻿ / ﻿34.62944°N 118.08444°W﻿ / 34.62944; -118.08444﻿ (34.62944; -118.08444)

Map

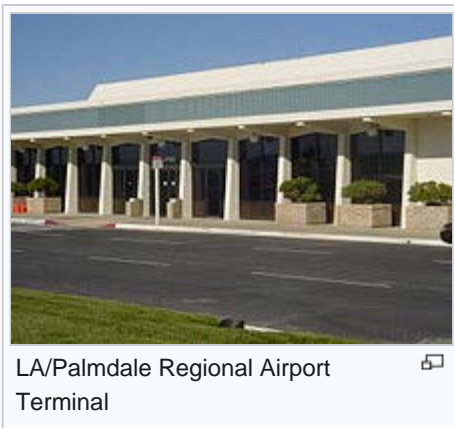
Edit links

2015, which **categorized** it as a primary commercial service facility based on enplanements in 2008 (more than 10,000 per year).^[3] **Federal Aviation Administration** records say the airport had 10,392 passenger boardings (enplanements) in **calendar year** 2008, 82% more than the 5,712 in 2007.^[4]

PMD has two main runways, runways: 4/22, and 7/25, and both are over 2 miles (3 km) long. 7/25 was built to withstand an 8.3 **Richter Scale earthquake**, making it one of the world's strongest runways. Another smaller runway, 72/252, is used as an assault strip.^[5]

PMD and Plant 42 are separate facilities that share a common runway at the site. The facility is located in the Antelope Valley, approximately 60 miles from downtown **Los Angeles**.

Facilities [edit]



LA/Palmdale Regional Airport Terminal



Location of airport in California

Runways			
Direction	Length		Surface
	ft	m	
4/22	12,001	3,658	Concrete
7/25	12,002	3,658	Concrete
72/252	6,000	1,829	Concrete
Statistics (2008)			
Aircraft operations			64,433
Source: Federal Aviation Administration ^[1]			

The airport covers 5,832 **acres** (2,360 **ha**) at an **elevation** of 2,543 feet (775 m) above **mean sea level**. It has three **runways** with **concrete** surfaces: 4/22 is 12,001 by 150 feet (3,658 x 46 m); 7/25 is 12,002 by 200 feet (3,658 x 61 m); 72/252 is 6,000 by 75 feet (1,829 x 23 m).^[1]

During the 1990s, airlines operated out of the Palmdale Regional Airport, which consisted of the terminal and parking lot on leased land. The last airline pulled out in 1998. **Los Angeles World Airports** (LAWA) owns 17,000 acres east of Plant 42 that was acquired for an airport.

The city of Los Angeles bought the land in the 1960s when it planned to build an airport in Palmdale, but the airport was never built. In March 2001 Los Angeles County hired Tri-Star Marketing to prepare the presentations needed to bring air-passenger service back to Palmdale Regional Airport. However, the regional transportation plans formulated by the Southern

California Association of Governments focus on having airports in Burbank, Ontario, Irvine and El Toro handle the excess air-passenger service for the Southern California region.

Airline service: 2007-2008 [edit]

After several airlines were unable to sustain operations at Palmdale, the terminal was remodeled and reopened in May 2007. Convincing airlines of the marketability of the airport without subsidies has been difficult. Although Palmdale Airport offers airline passengers a quicker ground travel time from [Sherman Oaks](#) than the LAX airport car trip down the [405 freeway](#), it has not provided the range of destinations that would make passengers choose it over [LAX](#) and [Bob Hope Airport](#). The communities around LAX and Burbank do not want the noise of additional flights, but most Antelope Valley residents support expanding service at Palmdale.

In January 2007 subsidies valued at \$4.6 million, with \$2 million slated to underwrite losses incurred from providing airline service, were raised to restore commercial service to the airport. The incentive package included a \$900,000 grant from the federal government to the city of Palmdale to develop regional airport service.^[6]

In February 2007 the city of Palmdale and LAWA selected United Airlines to provide service between Palmdale and [San Francisco International Airport](#) (SFO). (The only other proposal was from [Delta Air Lines](#) to [Salt Lake City](#)). The [United Express](#) flights operated by [SkyWest Airlines](#) offered twice-daily, [Canadair CRJ-200](#) regional jet service beginning on June 7, 2007.

Between June 7 and December 31, 2007, the airport served 12,022 passengers,^[7] about 58 passengers per day.

On September 3, 2008, the San Francisco [United Express](#) service operated by [SkyWest Airlines](#) was increased from two 50-seat regional jets a day to four 30-seat [Embraer EMB-120 Brasilia](#) turboprop flights per day.^[8] On its September 18 schedule update, United canceled all flights beginning December 7, 2008, the day after the expiration of the federal grant and 18 months after the beginning of the SFO-PMD services.

The airport currently does not have any scheduled passenger airline service.

Museums [edit]

The [Blackbird Airpark Museum](#)^[9] and the adjacent Palmdale Plant 42 Heritage Airpark (Now "Joe Davies Heritage Airpark")^[10] have recently been opened on Plant 42 property along Avenue P (both are free to the public) with displays of the SR-71, U-2, [Century Series](#) fighters and other aircraft designed, engineered, manufactured, and flight tested at its facilities.

The Blackbird Airpark Museum is an extension of the AFTTC Museum at Edwards AFB, while the Heritage Airpark is operated by the city of Palmdale. Both are manned by retirees who had



Looking down runway 7 from about 6000 feet [AGL](#) in 2007.

previously worked in the aerospace industry, some actually having worked on the aircraft displayed at the two parks. All of the aircraft have been carefully restored for public display. Operating hours of the airparks are the same - Friday through Sunday (except in inclement weather) from 11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Pacific Time. On federal government holidays both airparks are closed. The two airparks are located at Avenue P and 25th Street East near Site 9.

FAA operations [edit]

The [Federal Aviation Administration](#) (FAA) operates its [Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center](#) ([ARTCC](#)) at its site on Plant 42 by Avenue P and 25th Street East. This center controls and tracks aircraft for the western United States, and covers non-local aircraft communication needs flying over California, [Arizona](#), [Nevada](#), and [Utah](#).

History [edit]

The origins of Palmdale Regional Airport go to the early 1930s, when a small airstrip was built in the desert. It was listed in 1935 documentation as **CAA Intermediate #5**. It was established by the Bureau of Air Commerce (later the [Civil Aeronautics Administration](#)) who maintained a network of emergency landing fields. It provided a pilot in distress with a better alternative than landing on a public road or a farmer's field.^[1]

World War II [edit]

In 1940, **Palmdale Army Airfield** was activated as a [United States Army Air Corps](#) (later Air Forces) airfield for use as an emergency landing strip and for [B-25 Mitchell](#) medium bomber support training during [World War II](#). It was one of many intermediate fields that were used as auxiliary fields or emergency landing fields by the AAF during World War II. Their dispersion along the air routes, their infrequent use, and their U.S. government ownership made them ideal for use by military aircraft. It acted as a sub-base for [Muroc Army Airfield](#) and [Hammer Army Airfield](#).^[1]

Postwar use [edit]

Palmdale Army Airfield was declared a surplus facility in 1946 and was purchased by Los Angeles County for use as a municipal airport. The outbreak of the [Korean War](#) in 1950 caused the Air Force to reactivate the property for use in final assembly and flight testing of military jet aircraft.

Both the Air Force and its aircraft contractors needed a location away from major population centers - due to sonic booms, other noises and security concerns - but close enough to the major centers of aircraft design and production, while having excellent flying weather the year around. The land which became Plant 42 fit these criteria. Consequently, the Air Force agreed to purchase the land from Los Angeles County in 1951.



Palmdale Airport in 1953, showing its World War II configuration [↪]

Lockheed assembled 250 new **L-1011 TriStar** wide body jetliners at their manufacturing plant located at the airport from 1968 to 1984.^[12]

Past airline service [edit]

From 1970 to 1983 the Los Angeles Department of Airports, now called **Los Angeles World Airports** (LAWA), acquired about 17,750 acres (72 km²) of land east and south of **United States Air Force Plant 42** in unincorporated Los Angeles County to be developed into the future "Palmdale Intercontinental Airport," an alternative to **LAX**. LAWA has not developed its Palmdale airport land beyond the small airport terminal.

From the late 1960s and early 1980s, commuter air carriers Cable Commuter Airlines followed by successor **Golden West Airlines** operated **de Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter** turboprop service from the airport with several nonstop flights a day to Los Angeles (**LAX**).^{[13][14]} By 1983, Mojave Airlines was operating several nonstop flights a day to LAX with **Beechcraft C99** commuter turboprops.^[15]

In 1989, LAWA and the U.S. Air Force came to an agreement concerning use of the Plant 42 complex's facilities and land for commercial use. The agreement allows a maximum of 400 flights per day.

LAWA used Plant 42's facilities in past years for scheduled air carrier service. In 1990, **America West Airlines** was operating nonstop service to Las Vegas and Phoenix with **de Havilland Canada DHC-8 Dash 8** turboprops.^[16] However, this America West service lasted less than a year.^[17] Also during the 1990s, several commuter airlines used the Palmdale Regional Airport passenger terminal sited on Plant 42. These air carriers included **SkyWest Airlines** operating as the **Delta Connection** flying **Fairchild Swearingen Metroliner** propjets nonstop to **LAX** in the early 1990s and **Mesa Airlines** operating as **United Express** flying **Beechcraft 1900C** turboprops to LAX in the mid 1990s.^[18] Both airlines operated up to six round trip flights a day between the airport and LAX before ceasing all service. This civilian terminal was unused from 1998 to 2004; on December 29, 2004, civilian use resumed when **Scenic Airlines** began scheduled service to **North Las Vegas, Nevada**, although that service officially terminated in January 2006. **United Airlines** regional airline affiliate **United Express** operated by **SkyWest** then began daily service to **San Francisco International Airport** (SFO) in June 2007, first with **Canadair CRJ-200** regional jets which were then replaced with **Embraer EMB-120 Brasilia** turboprops. However, United Express then suspended all flights on the SFO-PMD route in December 2008 upon the expiration of grants which subsidized this scheduled air service.

In late 2008, **Palmdale** expressed interest in assuming operations at Palmdale Airport, including management of the terminal, taxiways, and parking, from LAWA. LAWA indicated that it was receptive to transferring the lease. The city of Palmdale took over the airport at the end of 2013, managing it via the Palmdale Airport Authority.^[2]

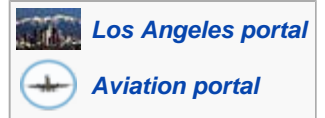
Incidents [edit]

On February 1, 1991, **USAir Flight 1493**, a Boeing 737 landing on Runway 24L at **LAX**, collided upon touchdown with a **SkyWest Airlines** Fairchild Metroliner, Flight 5569 departing to Palmdale Regional Airport, that had been holding in position on the same runway. The collision killed all

12 occupants of the SkyWest plane and 23 persons aboard the USAir 737.

See also [edit]

- List of airports in California



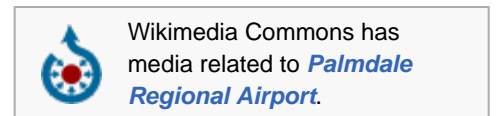
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This article incorporates **public domain material** from the **Air Force Historical Research Agency** website http://www.afhra.af.mil/.

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- ↑ ^{*a b*} Palmdale Regional Airport website
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- ↑ Palmdale Plant 42 Heritage Airpark
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- ↑ http://www.departedflights.com, Nov. 15, 1979 Official Airline Guide (OAG), LAX-Palmdale schedules & April 26, 1981 Golden West Airlines system timetable
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- ↑ http://www.departedflights.com, Oct. 28, 1990 America West Airlines route map
- ↑ http://www.departedflights.com, Oct. 27, 1991 America West Airlines route map
- ↑ http://www.departedflights.com, Oct. 1, 1991 & April 2, 1995 Official Airline Guide (OAG) editions, LAX-Palmdale schedules

External links [edit]

- Palmdale Aviation & Aerospace Commission
- FAA Airport Diagram (PDF), effective March 1, 2018
- FAA Terminal Procedures for PMD, effective March 1, 2018
- Resources for this airport:
 - FAA airport information for PMD
 - AirNav airport information for KPMD
 - ASN accident history for PMD



- [FlightAware airport information](#) and [live flight tracker](#)
- [NOAA/NWS latest weather observations](#)
- [SkyVector aeronautical chart](#), [Terminal Procedures](#)

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Palmdale, California

[show]

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Los Angeles World Airports

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