

World Cup 2026 Ops Guide - USA, Mexico and Canada

Kateřina Michalská
18 February, 2026



If you have ever planned ops around the Super Bowl, F1, or the Olympics, you already know what to expect. Hotels sell out fast, ramps fill up, and slots become critical.

Now spread that across three countries, six weeks, and 16 host cities.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup runs June 11 to July 19. With 48 teams and 104 matches, it will be one of the busiest BizAv periods North America has seen. Traffic will surge across Mexico, the US, and Canada.

Check the official FIFA match schedule below. Arrivals typically peak the day before and on match morning. Departures spike immediately after. Things ramp up fast from the Round of 32 onward.

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026																																																																															
MATCH SCHEDULE		GROUP STAGE MATCHES																ROUND OF 32				ROUND OF 16				QUARTER-FINALS		SEMI-FINALS		FINAL																																																	
		Thursday 11 June	Friday 12 June	Saturday 13 June	Sunday 14 June	Monday 15 June	Tuesday 16 June	Wednesday 17 June	Thursday 18 June	Friday 19 June	Saturday 20 June	Sunday 21 June	Monday 22 June	Tuesday 23 June	Wednesday 24 June	Thursday 25 June	Friday 26 June	Saturday 27 June	Sunday 28 June	Monday 29 June	Tuesday 30 June	Wednesday 1 July	Thursday 2 July	Friday 3 July	Saturday 4 July	Sunday 5 July	Monday 6 July	Tuesday 7 July	Wednesday 8 July	Thursday 9 July	Friday 10 July	Saturday 11 July	Sunday 12 July	Monday 13 July	Tuesday 14 July	Wednesday 15 July	Thursday 16 July	Friday 17 July	Saturday 18 July	Sunday 19 July																																							
WESTERN REGION	VANCOUVER			AUS 13:00 USA 16:00						CAN 19:00 QAT 22:00																																																																					
	SEATTLE																																																																														
	SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA																																																																														
	LOS ANGELES																																																																														
CENTRAL REGION	GUADALAJARA																																																																														
	MEXICO CITY																																																																														
	MONTERREY																																																																														
	HOUSTON																																																																														
EASTERN REGION	DALLAS																																																																														
	KANSAS CITY																																																																														
	ATLANTA																																																																														
	MIAMI																																																																														
	TORONTO																																																																														
	BOSTON																																																																														
	PHILADELPHIA																																																																														
	NEW YORK NEW JERSEY																																																																														
All times are Eastern Time (ET).																																																																															
GROUP A MEXICO (MEX) CANADA (CAN) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA) GUATEMALA (GUA) COSTA RICA (CRI)								GROUP B BRAZIL (BRA) ARGENTINA (ARG) PERU (PER) CHILE (CHI) ECUADOR (ECU)								GROUP C GERMANY (GER) Netherlands (NED) USA (USA) CANADA (CAN) MEXICO (MEX)								GROUP D FRANCE (FRA) CROATIA (CRO) SOUTH AFRICA (RSA) KOREA REPUBLIC OF (KOR) JAPAN (JPN)								GROUP E SPAIN (ESP) ITALY (ITA) COSTA RICA (CRI) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA) GUATEMALA (GUA)								GROUP F NETHERLANDS (NED) JAPAN (JPN) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA) GUATEMALA (GUA) COSTA RICA (CRI)								GROUP G NETHERLANDS (NED) JAPAN (JPN) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA) GUATEMALA (GUA) COSTA RICA (CRI)								GROUP H NETHERLANDS (NED) JAPAN (JPN) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA) GUATEMALA (GUA) COSTA RICA (CRI)								GROUP I NETHERLANDS (NED) JAPAN (JPN) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA) GUATEMALA (GUA) COSTA RICA (CRI)								GROUP J NETHERLANDS (NED) JAPAN (JPN) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA) GUATEMALA (GUA) COSTA RICA (CRI)							
FIFA PARTNERS: adidas, Coca-Cola, Emirates, aramco, Lenovo, QATAR AIRWAYS, VISA																																																																															
FIFA WORLD CUP 26 SPONSORS: Ultra, Hissense, McDonald's, 7-Eleven, Verizon																																																																															

Official FIFA schedule times are published in Eastern Time (ET). Local time at some host cities is different!

Or hover over the cities on the map below to quickly check which dates matches are happening:

Mexico

If there is one country that can break a World Cup mission before you even leave the ground, it is Mexico. AFAC permits, possible slot controls, special event fees, and chronic Mexico City congestion will make this the main access bottleneck.

If you need support with Mexico planning or permits, contact CST Flight Services at: info@cstflightservices.com.

Permits

Mexico permits are handled by AFAC. Applications are detailed, documentation must be complete, and approval timelines remain unpredictable. During the tournament, permits will be one of the main reasons flights slip.

Private flights now operate under the AIU (Single Entry Authorisation) introduced in Jan 2024. Despite the name, it is valid for 180 days and allows multiple entries and domestic legs. Processing has improved, but issuance still depends on the destination airport receiving an authorisation number from AFAC HQ in Mexico City. That can take minutes or a couple of days.

Charter permits are typically issued on a one-shot basis. **Do not expect new Blanket Permits before the tournament.** If you do not already have one, plan for a one-shot authorisation and start early.

For full background, see the OPSGROUP article on Mexico permits.

Slots and fees

Slot controls may tighten for the World Cup period, potentially with priority given to sponsors and VIP traffic. Special event fees are also likely, although details have not yet been published.

Match day pressure

Mexico City airspace is saturated even on a normal weekday. Expect sequencing delays, tight parking, and heavier security on match days. Host cities are Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey, with match activity starting June 11.

Mexico City (MMMX/Mexico City, Estadio Azteca) will see the biggest spikes around:

- **June 11** Kickoff match
- **June 17** Group stage
- **June 24** Group stage
- **June 30** Knockouts
- **July 5** Knockouts

Guadalajara (MMGL/Guadalajara, Estadio Akron) is busiest during the group stage:

- **June 11-26** Group stage

Monterrey (MMMY/Monterrey, Estadio BBVA) runs heavy activity through the group stage, followed

by a key knockout match:

- **June 14-24** Group stage
- **June 29** Knockouts

Where to Park and Land - Mexico Host Cities



Host City	Stadium	Best BizAv Options	Approx. Distance/Drive	Main International Gateways
Mexico City	Estadio Azteca	MMTO/Toluca, MMSM/Felipe Angeles	30-60 miles / 60-120 min	MMMX/Mexico City
Guadalajara	Estadio Akron	MMGL/Guadalajara	15-20 miles / 30-50 min	MMGL/Guadalajara
Monterrey	Estadio BBVA	MMMY/Monterrey, MMAN/Del Norte, MMIO/Salttillo	10-60 miles / 20-75 min	MMMY/Monterrey

Mexico airports: BizAv practicality

For most BizAv ops, the strategy is simple: avoid MMMX unless absolutely unavoidable and build plans around airports that can realistically support volume.

- **MMMX/Mexico City:** Not an option for BizAv. Only commercial, military, and government flights are permitted.
- **MMSM/Felipe Angeles:** Set to play an important role for large-body ops, with approved overnight parking available for wide-body aircraft.
- **MMTO/Toluca:** The go-to BizAv airport for Mexico City positioning, open H24.
- **MMGL/Guadalajara:** Capacity is improving. Universal plans to open a new FBO on March 27, with expanded ramp space and private CIQ.
- **MMMY/Monterrey:** The main BizAv airport for Monterrey ops.
- **MMAN/Del Norte:** Closer to the Monterrey venue than Saltillo, but more operationally complex under military control. You'll need to balance operational complexity against drive time.
- **MMIO/Salttillo:** Around one hour from Monterrey and the best geographic BizAv alternate after MMY and MMAN. The longer ground transfer may be a limiting factor.

USA

The US will handle most of the tournament traffic, with matches across 11 host cities.

CBP and eAPIS submissions need to be accurate. Double-check passenger data and documents before filing. At busy airports, expect tighter CBP availability, especially on match days and during knockout rounds. Once traffic builds, last-minute changes will be difficult.

Security will be more visible than usual. Expect increased TSA ramp presence, credential checks, and stronger local law enforcement around stadium areas.

Slot controls are likely at major airports including KJFK/John F Kennedy, KEWR/Newark, KLAX/Los

Angeles, KATL/Atlanta, and KMIA/Miami, particularly around key match days.

Tournament timeline

New York/New Jersey (KEWR/Newark, KJFK/John F. Kennedy - MetLife Stadium) will be the toughest place to operate during the tournament, especially around the Final on July 19. Expect the biggest spikes around:

- **June 13-27** Group stage
- **June 30** Knockouts
- **July 5** Knockouts
- **July 19** Final

Strong alternates include **KTEB/Teterboro and KHPN/White Plains**.

Around the Final, assume KEWR and KJFK will be at capacity unless parking is confirmed well in advance. If you are flexible, position early to alternates.

Slot and parking pressure will build in the days leading up to July 19.

Demand will stay high across all US host cities once the knockout rounds begin. The US has significant infrastructure and capacity, but flexibility will tighten during peak periods.

Below is a simplified operational view by city:

Atlanta (KATL/Atlanta - Mercedes-Benz Stadium)

- **June 15-27** Group stage
- **July 1, 7, 15** Knockouts

Boston (KBOS/ Boston Logan - Gillette Stadium)

- **June 13-26** Group stage
- **June 29** Knockouts
- **July 9** Quarterfinal

Dallas (KDFW/Dallas Fort Worth, KDAL/Dallas Love Field - AT&T Stadium)

- **June 14-27** Group stage
- **June 30 - July 14** Knockouts including a semifinal

Houston (KIAH/Houston George Bush, KHOU/Houston Hobby - NRG Stadium)

- **June 14-26** Group stage
- **June 29, July 4** Knockouts

Kansas City (KMCI/Kansas City - GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium)

- **June 16-27** Group stage
- **July 3** Knockouts
- **July 11** Quarterfinal

Los Angeles (KLAX/Los Angeles - SoFi Stadium)

- **June 12-25** Group stage
- **June 28, July 2, 10** Knockouts

Miami (KMIA/Miami - Hard Rock Stadium)

- **June 15-27** Group stage
- **July 3, 11** Knockouts
- **July 18** Third-place match

Philadelphia (KPHL/Philadelphia - Lincoln Financial Field)

- **June 14-27** Group stage
- **July 4** Knockouts

San Francisco Bay Area (KSFO/San Francisco - Levi's Stadium)

- **June 13-25** Group stage
- **July 1** Knockouts

Seattle (KSEA/Seattle - Lumen Field)

- **June 15-26** Group stage
- **July 1, 6** Knockouts

Host City	Stadium	Best BizAv Options	Approx. Distance/Drive	Main International Gateways
Atlanta	Mercedes-Benz Stadium	KPDK/DeKalb, KRYY/Cobb County,	10-25 miles / 20-50 min	KATL/Atlanta
Boston	Gillette Stadium	KBED/Bedford	35-45 miles / 45-75 min	KBOS/Boston
Dallas/Arlington	AT&T Stadium	KDAL/Dallas Love Field, KFTW/Fort Worth, KADS/Addison, KAFW/Fort Worth Alliance	20-35 miles / 30-50 min	KDFW/Dallas Fort Worth
Houston	NRG Stadium	KEFD/Ellington, KSGR/Sugar Land,	20-30 miles / 30-50 min	KIAH/Houston George Bush, KHOU/Houston Hobby
Kansas City	GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium	KMCC/Downtown, KIXD/New Century Aircenter	10-25 miles / 20-40 min	KMCI/Kansas City
Los Angeles	SoFi Stadium	KLGB/Long Beach, KBUR/Burbank, KVNy/Van Nuys	25-45 miles / 30-80 min	KLAX/Los Angeles
Miami	Hard Rock Stadium	KOPF/Opa-Locka, KFXE/Fort Lauderdale Executive, KFLI/Fort Lauderdale	10-25 miles / 20-45 min	KMIA/Miami
New York/New Jersey	MetLife Stadium	KTEB/Teterboro, KHPN/White Plains	15-50 miles / 25-80 min	KEWR/Newark, JFK/John F. Kennedy
Philadelphia	Lincoln Financial Field	KPNE/Northeast Philadelphia, KILG/Wilmington	10-30 miles / 20-50 min	KPHL/Philadelphia
San Francisco Bay Area	Levi's Stadium	KSJC/San Jose, KHWD/Hayward, KOAK/Oakland	5-35 miles / 15-60 min	KSFO/San Francisco,
Seattle	Lumen Field	KBFI/Seattle Boeing Field, KPAE/Seattle Paine Field	5-30 miles / 15-55 min	KSEA/Seattle

FIFA PASS: helpful, but not a free pass

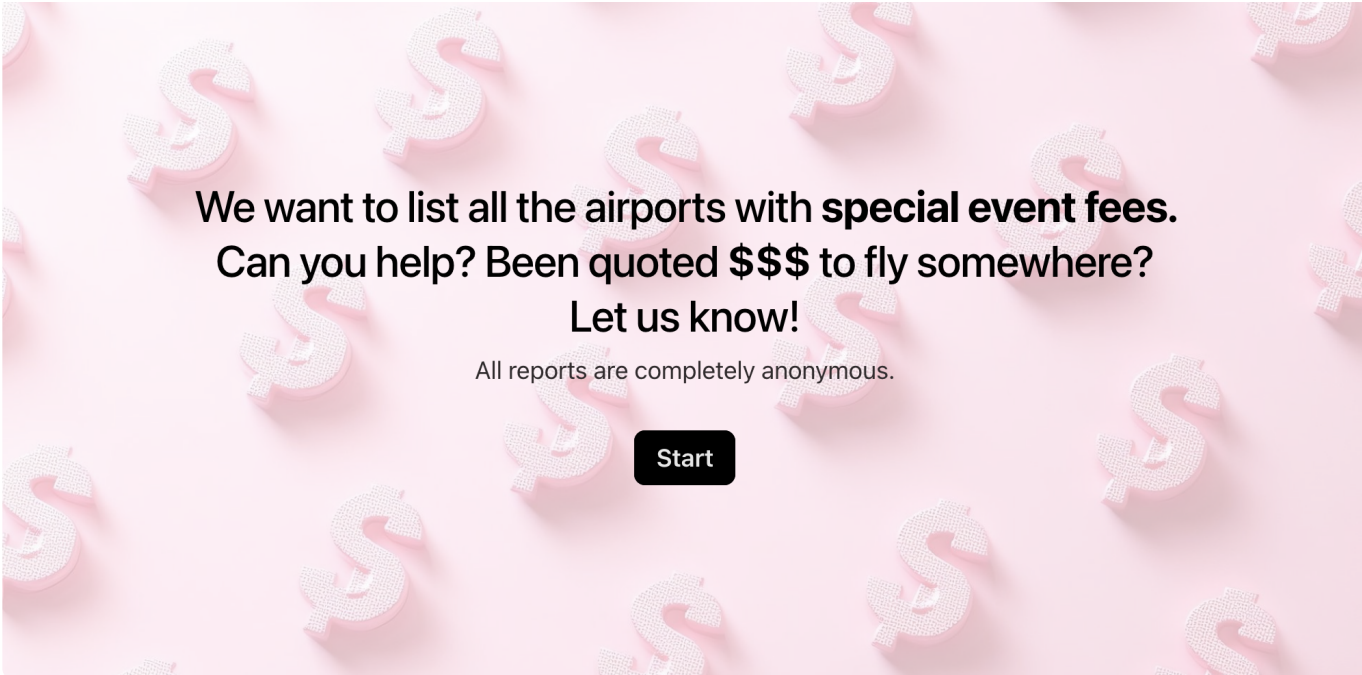
The US government and FIFA have rolled out FIFA PASS, a priority visa appointment system for World Cup 2026 ticket holders travelling to US host cities. In simple terms, it gives eligible passengers a faster way to secure their visa interview ahead of the tournament.

For BizAv operators, this may help reduce visa lead times during peak travel periods. **It does not replace standard US entry requirements**, so visa status should still be verified carefully. Think of it as helpful, but not guaranteed.

Special event fees

Special event fees are very likely at a number of US airports during the tournament, especially in cities hosting knockout matches and the Final. Some airports may publish details early, while others could confirm charges closer to the event, so it is worth keeping an eye on developments.

We update our US Special Event Fees overview throughout the year as new info comes in. If you hear about confirmed fees or local restrictions that are not yet on the list, let us know so we can share the update with everyone.



**We want to list all the airports with special event fees.
Can you help? Been quoted \$\$\$ to fly somewhere?
Let us know!**

All reports are completely anonymous.

Start

Canada

Canada hosts fewer matches than the US, but it can be a useful pressure valve.

If you're arriving from Europe or repositioning between venues, **Toronto and Vancouver** offer a practical place to park without jumping straight into the busiest US airspace. It can work well as a staging point while you wait for a better slot window south of the border.

Factor in customs. Most BizAv arrivals require CANPASS coordination, so passenger data and timing need to be accurate.

Tournament timeline

Canada's host cities are Toronto and Vancouver. Match activity begins early in the tournament, so expect demand from mid-June onward, even if overall traffic levels remain lower than the busiest US venues.

Toronto (CYYZ/Toronto Pearson - BMO Field) will see activity around:

- **June 12, 17, 20, 23, 26** Group stage
- **July 2** Knockouts

Vancouver (CYVR/Vancouver - BC Place) will see activity around:

- **June 13, 18, 21, 24, 26** Group stage
- **July 2** Knockouts
- **July 7** Quarterfinal

Host City	Stadium	Approx. Distance/Drive	Main International Gateways/Best BizAv Options
Toronto	BMO Field	12-18 miles / 25-50 min	CYYZ/Toronto Pearson
Vancouver	BC Place	8-12 miles / 20-40 min	CYVR/Vancouver

Share your experience

Are you already arranging services at any World Cup host airport? Have you run into anything unusual, unexpected, or worth flagging to other operators?

We would love to hear from you! Drop us a note at team@ops.group and let us know what you are seeing on the ground.