



Runway Utilization Report

Winter Peak Period 2025-2026
Prepared by Larry Finney

The runway utilization report reflects operations during calm wind conditions (defined as winds under four knots). When winds are calm, pilots and air traffic control (ATC) have more flexibility in choosing which runway to use—but calm winds don't mean every runway is automatically available.

Each morning, ATC evaluates several factors before determining runway use, including current and forecasted weather, surface winds, winds aloft, conditions along the Sierra crest, and any scheduled IFR traffic. Runway length also plays a role in pilot decision-making. Some pilots may opt for the longest runway regardless of wind conditions, based on their aircraft requirements or personal safety preferences.

The data tables on the following page present year-over-year comparisons. They include both the actual counts and the percentages, with the percentages being most



Runway 2 use over time. Winter 16/17 was pre-tower.

important for analyzing runway utilization.

For additional context, the tables also show the relative difference in percentages, highlighting how runway use has shifted over time. This should not be confused with changes in total operation counts, which are better reviewed in other Truckee Tahoe Airport reports, such as the quarterly Operations & Community Comment Tracking Charts recently shared at the April 22nd board meeting.

During this winter peak season, we saw a slight decline in piston departures from Runway 2, decreasing from 45% in the 2024–2025 season to 42% this year. Despite this small drop, this represents the second-highest level of Runway 2 usage for piston aircraft since tracking began five years ago.

Because jets and turboprops primarily require Runway 11/29, piston aircraft operations provide a useful indicator of how effectively we are distributing traffic and utilizing quieter departure options.

Earlier versions of this report compared current data to the winter of 2016–2017, a period before the Air Traffic Control Tower was operational. At that time, only 10% of

piston departures used Runway 2, highlighting the significant shift in runway utilization since the Tower's introduction.

Efforts to increase use of Runway 2 have included ongoing pilot outreach, strategically placed airport signage, and regular briefings with Tower staff encouraging use of the calm wind runway whenever it can be done safely.



As we move into the summer months, we'll likely see a lower percentage of departures from Runway 2 compared to winter—typically around 28%. This is largely due to traffic conflicts that arise when glider operations begin.

When gliders are using Runway 20, ATC often can't depart aircraft from Runway 2 because it would create opposite-direction operations. That said, ATC makes every effort to assign Runway 2 for departures—especially for light aircraft—whenever conditions allow.

Winter Peak Period 25 - 26

December 15 — April. 15

All Aircraft		2024-2025		
Runway	Arrivals	Departures	All	
RWY 11	5%	7%	6%	
RWY 2	7%	30%	19%	
RWY 20	8%	2%	5%	
RWY 29	75%	54%	65%	
Unknown	5%	6%	6%	

Operations: 5,108

2025-2026		
Arrivals	Departures	All
6%	8%	7%
6%	28%	17%
7%	3%	5%
77%	57%	67%
4%	4%	4%

Operations: 5,991

Change		
Arrivals	Departures	All
1%	1%	1%
-1%	-2%	-2%
-1%	1%	0%
2%	3%	2%
-1%	-2%	-2%

Operations: 883

Jet		2024-2025		
Runway	Arrivals	Departures	All	
RWY 11	12%	3%	8%	
RWY 2	0%	0%	0%	
RWY 20	8%	0%	4%	
RWY 29	79%	96%	87%	
Unknown	1%	1%	1%	

Operations: 742

2025-2026		
Arrivals	Departures	All
11%	1%	6%
0%	0%	0%
5%	0%	3%
84%	98%	90%
0%	0%	0%

Operations: 827

Change		
Arrivals	Departures	All
-1%	-2%	-2%
0%	0%	0%
-3%	0%	-1%
5%	2%	3%
-1%	-1%	-1%

Operations: 85

Turboprop		2024-2025		
Runway	Arrivals	Departures	All	
RWY 11	4%	20%	12%	
RWY 2	2%	8%	5%	
RWY 20	9%	0%	5%	
RWY 29	82%	67%	74%	
Unknown	3%	5%	4%	

Operations: 880

2025-2026		
Arrivals	Departures	All
4%	18%	11%
1%	7%	4%
6%	1%	3%
86%	69%	77%
3%	5%	4%

Operations: 1,145

Change		
Arrivals	Departures	All
0%	-2%	-1%
-1%	-1%	-1%
-3%	1%	-2%
4%	2%	-3%
0%	0%	0

Operations: 265

Piston		2024-2025		
Runway	Arrivals	Departures	All	
RWY 11	3%	4%	3%	
RWY 2	10%	45%	28%	
RWY 20	7%	3%	5%	
RWY 29	77%	45%	61%	
Unknown	3%	3%	3%	

Operations: 3,259

2025-2026		
Arrivals	Departures	All
4%	6%	5%
9%	42%	26%
7%	4%	6%
77%	46%	61%
3%	2%	3%

Operations: 3,774

Change		
Arrivals	Departures	All
1%	2%	2%
-1%	-3%	-2%
0%	1%	1%
0%	1%	0%
0%	-1%	0%

Operations: 515