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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRAVELING MARYLAND TOLL ROADS DURING THE LABOR DAY HOLIDAY PERIOD?

Ease Travel Delays at the Bay Bridge with Best Times to Cross

Drive with Safety Top of Mind

Tolling in Maryland is All-Electronic



BALTIMORE, MD (August 26, 2024) – The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) encourages drivers to strategize on their travels while maintaining the one common goal that we all have, which is to safely reach our holiday destinations. Including patience on your pack list along with driver courtesy will help us all accomplish this goal. For motorists traveling the Baltimore metropolitan area, it is important to note that the southeast section of I-695 remains closed at MD 173 (Exit 1) on the Outer Loop and MD 151/North Point Boulevard (Exit 42) on the Inner Loop. For more information visit <https://mdta.maryland.gov/HarborCrossings>.

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The I-95 Fort McHenry Tunnel and I-895 Baltimore Harbor Tunnel have restrictions on hazardous materials, width and height. Vehicles carrying hazardous or explosive materials, including bottled propane gas in U.S. DOT approved containers larger than 10 pounds (maximum of 10 ten-pound containers) are prohibited from using both tunnels. It does not matter whether or not the bottles are empty or full. This is the case for personal and business usage. These vehicles should use the western section of I-695 around the tunnels. Note: Hazmat prohibitions and permissions within the tunnels are governed by the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR): Title 11, Subtitle 7, Chapter 1 (11.07.01). Based on COMAR, certain hazmats are permitted to travel the tunnels. Learn more by visiting <https://mdta.maryland.gov/TunnelRestrictionsAndVehiclePermits>.

Work zones are present within the **heavily traveled** I-95 corridor. **The MDTA urges all motorists to focus, slow down and stay alert when driving through or near work zones.**

ESSENTIAL BAY BRIDGE TRAVEL INFORMATION

For 24/7 real time Bay Bridge traffic information call 1-877-BAYSPAN (1-877-229-7726) or visit Baybridge.com. For real-time updates on major incidents on Maryland toll roads follow <https://x.com/TheMDTA> on X/Twitter.

More than 350,000 vehicles will cross the Bay Bridge between Friday, August 30, and Labor Day Monday, September 2. **Expect travel delays in both directions – often simultaneously – at the bridge and along the US 50 corridor throughout the entire holiday travel period when traveling peak hours.** Motorists should stay on US 50 on both sides of the bridge to keep local roadways open for first responders and residents.

The best times to travel across the Bay Bridge this holiday period include the following off-peak times:

- **Thursday, August 29** – before 12 p.m. and after 8 p.m.
- **Friday, August 30** – before 10 a.m. and after 9 p.m.
- **Saturday, August 31** – before 9 a.m. and after 6 p.m.
- **Sunday, September 1**– before 11 a.m. and after 6 p.m.
- **Labor Day Monday, September 2** – before 10 a.m. and after 10 p.m.

Weather and traffic permitting, two-way operations will be implemented to help prevent eastbound queues from becoming gridlocked approaching the Bay Bridge. Two-way operations may be limited based on westbound traffic volumes, as bridge officials strive to mitigate delays on both sides of the bridge. Two-way operations are prohibited during bridge wind warnings/restrictions, fog/limited visibility or times of precipitation, and may be prohibited during incidents.

Drivers who travel during peak hours should expect significant delays when crossing the bridge. We remind drivers that the core issue is traffic volume exceeding lane capacity, not two-way operation timing nor management.

Lane use signals apply to travel lanes BEFORE, ON and AFTER the bridge wherever lane use signals are present.

- **RED X:** Means the lane is closed. You **MUST NOT** enter or travel in any lane over which a RED X signal is shown.
- **YELLOW X:** Prepare to vacate the lane beneath the YELLOW X signal and move to a lane with a **DOWNWARD GREEN ARROW**.
- **DOWNWARD GREEN ARROW:** Motorists can drive in the lane beneath the GREEN ARROW signal.

Commercial vehicles must travel across the Bay Bridge in the right lane. The MDTA Police and its law enforcement



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partners continue regular patrols and targeted traffic safety initiatives to keep every motorist safe. This includes enforcement when motorists fail to obey the lane-use control signals on the highway approaches and on the bridge.

MANY DRIVERS, MANY ROADS, ONE GOAL: ARRIVE SAFELY.

- Remember that Maryland's Move Over law applies to all stopped vehicles displaying any type of caution signals or warning lights. If you cannot safely move over into an available lane that's not immediately adjacent to the stopped vehicle, slow down.
- Allow for extra time to get to your destination.
- Adhere to speed limits. Speeding gives you less time to react and increases the severity of a crash.
- Avoid distractions when driving. It only takes a second to wreck it.
- There's no excuse for impaired driving. Designate a sober driver, call a taxi or ride-share service or use Maryland Transit Administration's public transportation options.
- Look twice for motorcycles. Riders must have a valid motorcycle license and should stay up to date on motorcycle safety. Maryland requires that all riders must wear U.S. DOT certified helmet.
- Make sure your vehicle is road ready. If your vehicle breaks down, exit the roadway. If that isn't possible, remain inside your vehicle and call #77 for assistance.
- **Stay in your lane.** Double (side-by-side) separation of lanes with solid-white lines in the same direction indicates lane changing is prohibited. Changing lanes in tunnels and on bridges can be hazardous, especially with minimal or no shoulders.

The MDTA Police will remain vigilant and target dangerous drivers, seat belt violations and criminal activity throughout the holiday travel period. **To report aggressive or dangerous driving on Maryland toll roads, call MDTA Police Dispatch at 410-537-7911.**

ALL-ELECTRONIC (CASHLESS) TOLLING METHODS

Tolls in Maryland are collected through *E-ZPass*, Pay-By-Plate and Video Tolling. *E-ZPass* is the most cost-effective, saving drivers up to 77% versus the higher rates –and also saving the additional paperwork – that comes with Video Tolls.

With Pay-By-Plate, tolls are automatically billed to the driver's registered credit card as they use Maryland toll facilities, with no need for a transponder or pre-paid deposit. Pay-By-Plate [rates](#) are the same as former cash rates. Learn more and enroll in *E-ZPass* or sign up for Pay-By-Plate at <https://www.driveezmd.com/acct-types/>.

If using a rental vehicle over the holiday, you can add vehicle information temporarily to an *E-ZPass* or Pay-By-Plate account. Otherwise, be sure to alert the rental car company before traveling a route that includes a toll facility.

Use our toll rate calculator to plan your driving routes and estimate the cost of tolls based on your vehicle at <https://driveezmd.com/toll-rate-calculator/>.

DriveEzMD Customer Service Centers will be closed Monday, September 2. Visit DriveEzMD.com, download the DriveEzMD mobile app or use the automated system at 1-888-321-6824 for 24/7 account maintenance or to make payments.

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