



NEWS RELEASE

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PA Turnpike Approves 2021 Toll Increase, New TOLL BY PLATE Rates

HARRISBURG, PA. (JULY 21, 2020) — The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) today approved a six-percent toll increase for all E-ZPass rates systemwide and for PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE rates that had been established before last month's permanent conversion to All-Electronic Tolling (AET) at these locations:

- Beaver Valley Expressway (I-376);
- Delaware River Bridge (NJ border);
- Gateway Toll Plaza (Ohio border);
- Greensburg Bypass (PA Turnpike 66);
- Keyser Ave. and Clarkes Summit Tolls (Northeastern Extension); and
- Southern Beltway (PA Turnpike 576).

The increase — slated to take effect at 12:01 a.m. on Jan. 3, 2021 — will enable the PTC to continue to maintain and operate its system and ensure safe travel for up to 500,000 daily customers.

“The primary driver of the annual toll-rate increases continues to be our quarterly transit payments to PennDOT and the resulting debt service that comes along with the legislatively mandated funding obligation,” said PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton. “As a result, the PA Turnpike has delivered almost \$7 billion in funding to PennDOT in the last decade, primarily to support mass-transit operations in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.”

Compton said the PTC's debt-service costs on outstanding Act-44 bond debt are \$440 million annually and growing; this amount must be paid each year even if the Commission seeks, and is granted, deferment of a quarterly Act-44 payment — as it recently did to partially offset revenue impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

New TOLL BY PLATE Rates Set

As part of its recent systemwide change in toll operations, the Commission today also approved new TOLL BY PLATE rates at toll facilities converted to AET in June. The new rates, which also take effect Jan. 3, 2021, include an average 45% increase over the 2020 cash rate for TOLL BY PLATE motorists to reflect the costs of collections for this tolling method. The new rate will not be applied at the previously mentioned TOLL BY PLATE facilities converted before 2020.

“The new TOLL BY PLATE rate reflects the higher costs the Commission incurs to process the toll and collect payment — a pricing approach used by tolling agencies across the nation to cover the costs of administering AET systems,” Compton explained. “This balanced approach allows us to maintain a lower rate for those choosing a payment method that is less costly to manage, while those who choose a pricier payment option absorb those costs.”

Because of today’s action, the most common toll for a passenger vehicle will increase from \$1.50 to \$1.60 for E-ZPass customers and from \$2.50 to \$3.90 for those choosing TOLL BY PLATE. The most common toll for a Class-5 tractor trailer will increase from \$12.20 to \$13 for E-ZPass and from \$17.30 to \$26.60 for PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE customers.

With the PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE option, high-speed cameras capture license-plate images as vehicles pass by. The registered owner receives an invoice for trips made through the tolling point. Invoices can be paid online, by phone or by mail. Upon receipt of a TOLL BY PLATE invoice, recipients do have an option to open an E-ZPass account and pay the lower rate.

The PTC is exploring options to offer TOLL BY PLATE discounts to motorists through pre-registration options. More details on these programs will be announced later this year.

Compton encouraged travelers to consider E-ZPass, since it is the most convenient, least costly way to travel in Pennsylvania and is accepted in all neighboring states and across the eastern United States. E-ZPass is the largest interoperable toll-collection program in the United States, consisting of toll agencies in 18 states from Maine to Florida and west to Illinois. It was recently announced that Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) will start accepting E-ZPass later this year, joining the Central Florida Expressway Authority’s toll-road network in Metro Orlando in accepting E-ZPass for payment of tolls.

“Currently, 86 percent of our customers have chosen E-ZPass, with more switching every day. Now that hundreds of grocery stores in the commonwealth offer E-ZPass, chances are you regularly pass by at least one of them,” Compton said. “Because of our low administration and enrollment fees, and the ability to set up an automatically replenished or cash-funded E-ZPass account, there’s simply no reason not to get it.”

Most of PA’s top grocery chains offer E-ZPass GoPaks, including Giant Eagle, Acme, Giant Food Stores and Wegmans. In addition, travelers can pick up an E-ZPass GoPak — which includes a transponder that must be registered before it is used — at all 17 Turnpike service plazas and Pennsylvania AAA offices. To find a location nearby, visit <https://www.paturnpike.com/toll/sales.aspx>.

The PA Turnpike no longer accepts cash or credit cards on the system after having permanently converted to All-Electronic Toll (AET) collection last month. Since the PTC began studying, planning for and implementing AET, more than 30 agencies in 14 states have established systems using proven AET technologies.

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