

Beat: Travel

Halifax Harbour Bridges Removes \$1.25 Toll

Beginning On April 1st, 2025

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USPA NEWS - For those who live in the Halifax Regional Municipality, using one of the two suspension bridges to cross the Halifax Harbour has become a routine part of their daily commute. Over the years many have thought that the tolls should be removed for crossing the Angus L MacDonald Bridge and the A.Murray MacKay Bridge and now that is about to happen. Effective April, 1st the tolls will be removed from both bridges. Recently Halifax Harbour Bridges released the following statement to help answer some of the commonly asked questions.

"Starting April 1, a major change is coming to Halifax Harbour Bridges (HHB). Drivers will no longer pay tolls to cross the Angus L. Macdonald and A. Murray MacKay bridges, marking the end of an era that began 70 years ago when the Macdonald Bridge first opened."

What to Expect:

"Plans are already underway to remove the toll plazas at both bridges, and this work will proceed as quickly as possible. Drivers should expect some temporary changes in traffic patterns as this transition takes place.

For the approximately 200,000 MACPASS account holders, any remaining balance in your account as of April 1 will be eligible for a refund after that date. The refund process is currently being developed, and details on how to claim your refund will be shared as soon as they are available. Given the high number of accounts, refunds will take time, and we appreciate everyone's patience during this process."

TIP: To help process your refund, please make sure your MACPASS account is updated with your current contact and payment information.

"With the removal of toll booths, drivers should remain extra cautious as they approach and cross the bridges. Be mindful of posted speed limits- including 25 km/h in the plaza areas; stay alert to new traffic patterns, and practise patience and kindness with other drivers as everyone adjusts to this new system.

Please be aware there will be increased enforcement on the bridges.

This marks a historic moment for Halifax Harbour Bridges and all those who rely on them daily. We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to a smooth transition as we move into this toll-free future together."

When will the toll come off the Halifax bridges?

"The toll for all passenger and commercial vehicles will be removed April 1. Restrictions that limit overweight vehicles and certain classes of prohibited vehicles will remain in place."

Will commercial vehicles now be allowed on the Macdonald Bridge?

"No. Commercial vehicles over 3,200 kg must still use the MacKay Bridge. Violators will face a \$237.50 fine for a first offence. Commercial vehicles towing a trailer should use the MacKay Bridge.

Passenger vehicles towing a recreational vehicle or other non-commercial load can cross either bridge toll-free if the total weight does not exceed 3200 kg. If the weight exceeds that limit, use of the MacKay Bridge is required."

What about transit buses and charter buses?

"These vehicles can continue to use either bridge and are exempt from the weight restriction on Macdonald bridge."

Will there be a dedicated truck or bus lane on either bridge?

"No. The envisioned alignments will be mixed traffic as are most roads and highways in the province."

Will the toll plazas be removed by April 1?

"HHB is moving as quickly as possible to remove the toll plazas to create the optimum open-road experience. The plaza on the Macdonald will be likely removed first, followed by the plaza on the MacKay which requires a more complicated road configuration to ensure safety and efficiency."

How will the new lanes be configured on the Macdonald Bridge?

"To ensure safe and efficient traffic flow that minimizes the need for lane changes, the central toll lanes will be eliminated, and Halifax bound traffic will be funneled similar to how it is currently configured, but without the tolling plaza. Drivers are advised to follow the signage in place and exercise caution as the toll plaza is removed and the transition to free-flow traffic is put in place."

How will the new lanes be configured on the MacKay Bridge?

"The approaches to the MacKay toll plaza will evolve and the design with traffic experts is ongoing."

Will bridge traffic speeds increase with removal of the tolls?

"HHB will maintain the current speed limits: 70 km/h on the MacKay Bridge and 50 km/h on the Macdonald Bridge.

However, based on experience, HHB anticipates that some drivers may be tempted to speed through the toll plazas. To ensure safety, HHB will increase enforcement efforts to prevent speeding and distracted driving.

Whether the booths are in place or demolished by April, drivers must remain attentive. The plazas and/ or new alignments will still require careful navigation. HHB urges all motorists to follow posted speed limits and drive with caution."

Will HHB Bridge Patrol still respond to accidents and breakdowns on the bridge?

"Yes. As a continuing part of our mission to provide safe, reliable cross-harbour transportation, our Bridge Patrol will respond to accidents and emergencies to ensure the safety of drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. A prompt response means freer flowing traffic more quickly."

How can I get the balance of money on my MACPASS account returned?

"There are more than 200,000 active MACPASS accounts with a balance. MACPASS staff will begin closing accounts and refunding money to users with links to credit cards beginning April 15. This exercise may take several weeks.

The best way to ensure the speedy return of your funds is to log in to your account before April 1 and make sure your contact and credit card information is up to date. You can also log in to add a credit card or Via/MasterCard/debit card for a refund. For those without a credit card attached to their account, you can contact the MACPASS Customer Service staff in person or by phone after May 12."

Will I still be able to use my MACPASS for parking at Halifax International Airport?

"This is still under discussion."

Can I continue to use MACPASS at the Cobequid Pass and the Confederation Bridge?

"If you are registered with those organizations, your transponder will continue to be active at the Cobequid Pass and the Confederation Bridge. Please do not remove your sticker transponder to continue to use those facilities. Your MACPASS account can still be closed and the balance on your account refunded."

What should I do with my MACPASS after April, 1st?

"Drivers are advised to remove the sticker from their windshield and throw it in the garbage. If you have a hard-shell, place it in your blue bag recycling as it is considered e-waste.

If you use your sticker or hard-shell for Cobequid Pass or the Bridge to Prince Edward Island do not remove the sticker and continue to use these facilities as you do today.

Please be aware this project is evolving, and this Q&A will be updated as more information becomes available. If your question is not covered in this document, please contact us at bridges@hdbc.ns.ca and we will respond as quickly as possible."

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com