

Deh Cho Bridge

Frequently Asked Questions



QUICK FACTS

Q: Where is the Deh Cho Bridge?

A: The Bridge is located near Fort Providence, Northwest Territories. It spans the Mackenzie River at km 24 on Highway #3.

Q: How long is the Bridge?

A: The Bridge is 1.045 kilometres long.

Q: How wide is the Bridge?

A: The Bridge is 10.4 metres wide.

Q: How high is the Bridge?

A: The Bridge is 27.2 metres above the Mackenzie River.

Q: What is the total weight of the Bridge?

A: The total weight is 49,923 tonnes.

Q: What is the maximum traffic load on the Bridge?

A: The maximum load is 2,000 tonnes—the equivalent of 48 Super B trains.

Q: What is the total cost of construction?

A: The total cost is \$202 million.

Q: When did construction on the Bridge begin?

A: Construction began in 2008.

Q: What is the posted speed limit on the Bridge?

A: The speed limit is 50 kilometres per hour.

Q: What is the grade of the Bridge?

A: The grade is 3.5%.

Q: What is the gantry?

A: The gantry is an overhead structure equipped with transponder readers and high-resolution cameras to record information for the collection of the commercial toll. All northbound vehicles crossing the Bridge pass under the gantry. The gantry is located one kilometre away from the Bridge on the Fort Providence side.

Q: What is the clearance height at the gantry?

A: The clearance height is 7.4 metres.

Q: What is the electronic toll monitoring (ETM) system?

A: The ETM system consists of high-resolution cameras, sensors and scales for monitoring traffic on the Bridge.

Q: Are there emergency telephones on the Bridge?

A: Two emergency telephones will be installed on the Bridge in 2013. Each one will be located approximately one-third of the way along the Bridge.

Q: Who will receive calls from the emergency telephones?

A: Emergency telephones will dial directly to the RCMP.

Q: Will it be possible to use the emergency telephones for purchasing a toll permit?

A: No. Emergency telephones will be used only for reporting emergencies such as a disabled vehicle on the Bridge.

LEGISLATION

Q: What is the *Deh Cho Bridge Act*?

A: Passed in 2003 by the Government of the Northwest Territories, the *Deh Cho Bridge Act* is the primary legislation authorizing the construction of the Deh Cho Bridge. It provides legal authority for the tolling system. The Act states that commercial vehicles over 4,500 kg traveling northbound must pay a toll. The Act also empowers the Government to lay charges if someone fails to pay the required toll.

Q: What are the *Deh Cho Bridge Regulations*?

A: Passed in 2012, the *Deh Cho Bridge Regulations* are more specific than the Act. The regulations specify two payment methods for the commercial toll: single-use toll permits (advanced purchase) and the remittance method (monthly payments). The regulations also authorize inspections for determining whether Bridge users have paid the applicable toll or made appropriate arrangements under the remittance method.

Q: How are penalties and fines established?

A: The *Summary Conviction Procedures Regulations* establish fixed fine amounts for not paying the required toll, tampering with the tolling system, and obstructing an officer.

Q: How much are the fines?

A: Fine amounts are significant. The fine for not paying the toll is \$1,725. The fine for tampering with the tolling system is \$2,875. The fine for obstructing an officer is \$575.

Q: Is it a legal requirement to display owner information on the side of the vehicle?

A: Yes. This requirement, under the *Large Vehicle Control Regulations*, became law in February 2012. This is a standard requirement in other Canadian jurisdictions. The fine for not complying is \$115.

TOLLING REQUIREMENTS

Q: Who is required to pay a toll?

A: Registered owners of northbound commercial vehicles over 4,500 kg crossing the Deh Cho Bridge are required to pay a toll. Private vehicles are not required to pay a toll.

Q: Does the 4,500 kg vehicle-weight threshold include the unit(s) being towed?

A: Yes. The entire vehicle combination is weighed, the vehicle itself and any towed unit(s). Examples of vehicle combinations include a pick-up truck and trailer or truck tractor and semi-trailer.

Q: I'm not sure how much my vehicle weighs. Where can I weigh it?

A: You can weigh your vehicle at weigh-scales located in Enterprise (km 84 on Highway #1), Hay River (km 1 on Highway #5) and Fort Simpson (km 460 on Highway #1). It is your responsibility to pay the required toll if your vehicle exceeds 4,500 kg.

Q: How do Bridge users pay the toll?

A: Bridge users have two payment options: single-use toll permits or the remittance method. Single-use toll permits must be purchased prior to crossing the bridge. To purchase a toll permit, contact the permit center by sending an email to permits@shockware.com or calling toll-free 1-877-737-7786 or faxing 1-877-795-4405. Monthly remitters are required to comply with specific terms and conditions which are posted on the tolling website: www.tolling.ca. (See FAQ section on remittance agreements.)

Q: What are the toll amounts?

A: The current fee structure for tolling is as follows:

Class A: commercial vehicles with two to four axles

- \$75.00 (monthly remittance with transponder-equipped vehicle)
- \$91.25 (single-use toll permit)

Class B: commercial vehicles with five or six axles

- \$150.00 (monthly remittance with transponder-equipped vehicle)
- \$166.25 (single-use toll permit)

Class C: commercial vehicles with seven or more axles

- \$275.00 (monthly remittance with transponder-equipped vehicle)
- \$291.25 (single-use toll permit)

Q: What is the toll amount for a “hot shot” unit or a bus towing a trailer?

A: These vehicle combinations fall into Class A so the toll amount is \$75 for monthly remitters with a transponder-equipped vehicle or \$91.25 for purchasers of a single-use toll permit.

Q: Are toll amounts likely to increase?

A: Toll amounts will be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index. Toll adjustments will be made through amendments to the *Deh Cho Bridge Regulations*.

Q: Can I purchase a toll permit at the Bridge?

A: No. There is no pay telephone or cell phone service at the Bridge.

Q: Are pick-up trucks be tolled?

A: Commercial pick-up trucks are tolled if they exceed 4,500 kg including the weight of trailers.

Q: School buses are exempt from the toll. What about a charter bus carrying students?

A: A charter bus is considered a commercial vehicle so it is subject to a toll.

Q: Do government vehicles receive a discount on tolls?

A: Vehicles registered for government use are not required to pay the toll.

Q: If I purchased the wrong class of toll permit or paid a toll that wasn't required, can I apply for a refund?

A: Yes. You can submit a completed refund request form, along with the \$25 fee, to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. If the refund request is granted, the \$25 fee will also be refunded. The form is posted on the website: www.tolling.ca.

Q: Recovery vehicles are exempt when actively engaged in a recovery operation. What if they haul trailers or other units?

A: Under the *Deh Cho Bridge Regulations*, recovery vehicles are subject to the toll except when actively engaged in a recovery operation.

Q: What about service vehicles? Are they exempt?

A: Yes. The *Deh Cho Bridge Regulations* specify that utility service vehicles such as bucket trucks, mechanical repair trucks or welding trucks are not required to pay a toll.

ELECTRONIC TOLL MONITORING (ETM) SYSTEM

Q: Is there a record of every vehicle crossing the Bridge?

A: The electronic toll monitoring (ETM) system records all traffic that passes through the tolling zone.

Q: Where is the tolling zone?

A: The tolling zone is located between the gantry and the entrance on the south side of the Bridge.

Q: Why does the ETM system record private traffic over the Bridge? Will my private vehicles be photographed?

A: The ETM system records all traffic on the Bridge. Information, including photographs, is collected and stored in accordance with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This preserves the privacy of private-vehicle drivers and passengers.

Q: What is a weigh-in-motion scale?

A: A weigh-in-motion (WIM) scale uses sensors embedded in the highway surface to record the weight and vehicle configuration of in-motion traffic. This technology is the industry standard for traffic data collection.

Q: Is the WIM scale accurate?

A: The WIM scale is calibrated twice a year to ensure it is operating to required specifications.

REMITTANCE AGREEMENTS

Q: What is a remittance agreement?

A: A remittance agreement is a contract between the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and a Bridge user. Monthly remitters agree to report all bridge crossings and remit payment by the 28th day of each month for crossings in the previous month. The onus is on the monthly remitter to keep track of all northbound crossings. Terms and conditions can be viewed on the tolling website: www.tolling.ca.

Q: What are the benefits of monthly remittance?

A: The benefits of monthly remittance are numerous. Remitting a single payment for all crossings in a given month simplifies accounting and payment procedures. Monthly remitters, whose vehicles are equipped with a transponder, also pay less per toll compared to purchasers of single-use toll permits.

Q: How can I become a monthly remitter?

A: Any bridge user is eligible to apply by returning a completed remittance application to the Department of Transportation. Remittance application forms are posted on the tolling website: www.tolling.ca. Applications can be submitted by e-mail to toll_admin@gov.nt.ca or by mail to:

Remittance Agreement Finance Office
Department of Transportation - South Slave Region
Suite 201 - 76 Capital Drive
Hay River, NT
X0E 1G2

Q: What are my responsibilities as a monthly remitter?

A: As a monthly remitter, you must comply with all terms and conditions of the remittance agreement. You must keep records of all northbound crossings and report them accurately on the tolling website: www.tolling.ca. You must also purchase or lease an approved transponder for every vehicle under your control that crosses the Bridge. (See FAQ section on transponders.)

Q: As a monthly remitter, am I required to file my report on the tolling website?

A: Monthly remitters must use the standard reporting form on the tolling website: www.tolling.ca.

Q: How do I make payments as a monthly remitter?

A: Payments must be made by cheque, payable to the Government of the Northwest Territories and sent to the following address:

Remittance Agreement Finance Office
Department of Transportation - South Slave Region
Suite 201 - 76 Capital Drive
Hay River, NT
X0E 1G2

Q: If I'm a monthly remitter and I haven't crossed the Bridge in a given month, do I have to report?

A: Yes. Monthly remitters must submit a report marked "NIL" even if no crossings were made in a given month.

Q: How long is a remittance agreement valid?

A: A remittance agreement must be renewed annually.

Q: As a monthly remitter, can I include contractors, sub-contractors or rental companies under the terms of the agreement?

A: No. Only vehicles registered to you or your company are eligible for inclusion.

Q: Are there any other requirements for the application process?

A: Yes. The remittance agreement is conditional upon a successful credit review. The credit application form is included with the remittance application package on the tolling website: www.tolling.ca.

Q: Can remittance carriers access transponder data?

A: DoT does not routinely make transponder data available to monthly remitters. If DoT identifies a reporting discrepancy, transponder data may be shared with the monthly remitter.

Q: As a monthly remitter, how can I be sure I'm reporting accurately?

A: The onus is on monthly remitters to establish a reliable method for keeping track of all northbound crossings.

Q: Are monthly remitters fined in the case of reporting errors?

A: Reasonable allowances are made for minor reporting errors. In these cases, monthly remitters are given an opportunity to settle the account. However, significant reporting errors and continuous under-reporting may result in charges for toll evasion.

Q: Can I lose my status as a monthly remitter?

A: The Registrar of Motor Vehicles reserves the right to revoke a remittance agreement if a monthly remitter is not complying with terms and conditions.

Q: My application for monthly remitting wasn't approved. When can I re-apply?

A: DoT will handle these situations on a case-by-case basis.

Q: I'm a Partners-in-Compliance (PIC) member. Am I required to resubmit all of my carrier information?

A: No. An MOU involving DoT and PIC is in place to ensure secure and simple transfer of carrier information. Carriers will be charged \$10 per transponder registration from IRD.

TRANSPONDERS

Q: How do transponders work?

A: Transponders use radio-frequency technology to send and receive signals. Transponders are the standard device used in tolling and transportation systems around the world.

Q: Where can I get a transponder?

A: Transponders for use on the Bridge must be purchased or leased from International Road Dynamics (IRD). Call IRD toll-free at 1-877-444-4473 or send an email: transponder.admin@irdinc.com.

Q: How will I know if my transponder is properly activated?

A: There is a transponder reader at the Enterprise weigh scale. Properly activated transponders will trigger a “green light” on the reader when the vehicle is on the scale. There is no transponder reader at the Bridge itself.

Q: I'm not a monthly remitter. Can I use a transponder on the Bridge?

A: No. Only authorized monthly remitters can use transponders on the Bridge. Monthly remitters must purchase or lease an approved transponder and register it with IRD. PIC carriers who have been approved as monthly remitters may use their PIC transponders on the Bridge as long as IRD is informed. If you are not a monthly remitter, an inactive transponder offers no benefit. If you cross the Bridge with an inactive transponder and you haven't purchased a toll permit, you will be charged with toll evasion.

Q: How do I install my transponder?

A: Transponders are placed on the inside of the windshield of your vehicle. Installation instructions are provided with the transponder. If you need assistance, please call IRD.

Q: How long will my transponder last?

A: IRD transponders have a two-year warranty but they may last longer.

Q: What if my transponder gets lost, damaged or stolen?

A: If your transponder gets lost, damaged or stolen, you must report it to IRD without delay. Send an email to transponder.admin@irdinc.com or phone 1-877-444-4473. In these cases, carriers are responsible for the replacement costs.

Q: Can I use my transponder in more than one vehicle?

A: No. Transponders can only be registered to one vehicle at a time. Appropriate arrangements must be made with IRD if you wish to transfer a transponder to a different vehicle. IRD requires a minimum of 24 hours to complete a transfer request. You must also receive confirmation from IRD that the transponder has been properly transferred to the new vehicle before crossing the Bridge.

Q: How much does it cost to purchase and register a transponder?

A: The combined cost to purchase and register a transponder is \$60. This includes a two-year replacement warranty. Transponders can also be leased for \$25 per year. If a client has a transponder from another program and the transponder meets the required specifications, the transponder can be registered for \$15.

Q: What if my company operates in more than one jurisdiction?

A: If you are a monthly remitter and your company operates in multiple jurisdictions, you must report toll crossings for each jurisdiction separately.

ENFORCEMENT

Q: How does the Department of Transportation ensure compliance with tolling requirements?

A: Tolling requirements are strictly enforced. Compliance is monitored through on-road patrols and the ETM system, which includes high-resolution cameras for capturing images of all bridge traffic. Highway Transport Officers (HTOs) also use ETM data to follow up on clients who don't have a valid registration, haven't purchased the appropriate over-dimension permit or haven't properly secured their load.

Q: Do HTOs have transponder readers at the Bridge?

A: Yes. HTOs have access to all electronic tolling data. HTOs also have the current list of monthly remitters and records of purchased toll permits and carrier registrations.

BRIDGE MAINTENANCE

Q: Does the Bridge affect road bans?

A: Road bans are only imposed if DoT deems it to be necessary due to road conditions.

Q: Is the Bridge ever shut down due to fog or other extreme weather conditions?

A: As with other DoT infrastructure, weather conditions are assessed on a case-by-case basis by maintenance crews.

Q: What about icy conditions?

A: Maintenance crews keep the Bridge clear of snow and ice as part of routine highway maintenance.

Q: What about bison on the Bridge?

A: DoT will install a Texas gate like the gates at the entrances and exits of Banff National Park. This prevents bison from accessing the Bridge. The gate will be installed on the northern approach to the Bridge.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Q: Who can I contact if I have other questions?

A: Questions may be directed to toll_admin@gov.nt.ca or 1-867-874-5000.