

Advisory



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Bridge connecting New Jersey and PA Turnpikes to remain closed indefinitely for analysis and repairs

The bridge connecting the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Turnpikes will be closed indefinitely while engineers conduct studies to determine how to best repair the structure for the long term. A fracture was discovered Friday afternoon in the top member of the steel truss on the approach span on the Pennsylvania side of the bridge. The fracture rendered the structure unsafe, and the bridge was closed to traffic immediately. Engineers and construction crews worked through the night Friday to temporarily stabilize the fractured steel component. That work will continue through the weekend.

"We understand that tens of thousands of commuters and other travelers are inconvenienced every day that this bridge remains out of service," said New Jersey Turnpike Authority Executive Director Joseph W. Mrozek. "Unfortunately, at a minimum, the bridge will remain closed for several weeks. We will not be able to reopen it until we are absolutely certain it is safe. All of the agencies and contractors involved will be working urgently to make that happen as quickly as possible. In the meantime, we have to ask the public for their patience."

The next step in the assessment and repair of the structure involves the construction of eight towers on the ground beneath the bridge. The towers will support the weight of the structure temporarily. Jacks will be used to attempt to lift the structure back into its original position. Sensors will be installed to enable engineers to monitor the load at key points on the structure. High-definition TV cameras will be installed to monitor the structure for any movement. Tests will be conducted to determine the cause of the fracture and to assure that the rest of the structure is sound.

The connecting bridge, known as the Delaware River Turnpike Bridge, is owned and maintained jointly by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. It is located beyond Interchange 6 on the Pearl Harbor Memorial Extension of the New Jersey Turnpike. The bridge opened to traffic in 1956 and carries approximately 42,000 vehicles per day.

The Pearl Harbor Extension will be closed to westbound traffic while the bridge is closed. Motorists headed to Pennsylvania will need to find an alternate crossing. Alternatives include Interstate 78, Interstate 295, and the Burlington-Bristol Bridge.

For real-time information about traffic conditions, drivers are encouraged to download the SafeTripNJ app for their iPhones or Android devices or call 511 from any telephone. Live camera views of traffic conditions are available on the Turnpike Authority's website at www.state.nj.us/turnpike.