

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are some common questions asked about the award-winning I-15 Express Lanes. If you don't find the answer to your question here, please send the I-15 Express Lanes Customer Service Center an e-mail at support@myfastrak.511sd.com or contact via phone by dialing 511 and say "FasTrak" (within San Diego county) or (888) 889-1515 (outside of San Diego county) and we'll be happy to get the answer for you.

General Questions about the I-15 Express Lanes

What are the I-15 Express Lanes?

The I-15 Express Lanes system is the nation's most advanced and innovative highway. It provides a flexible, four-lane "expressway within a freeway" that can be managed by expanding or contracting based on traffic flow. Brought to you by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the I-15 Express Lanes ultimately will bring congestion relief to northbound and southbound I-15 travelers. These lanes are designed to offer multiple choices for commuters and were created to provide vanpools, carpools, Express Bus and FasTrak® customers with a smoother, quicker and more reliable trip along the booming I-15 corridor. The Express Lanes also help ease demand on the general purpose lanes, benefiting all commuters and contributing to a "greener" community as commuters realize both the environmental and economic benefits of ridesharing and public transit.

What makes the Express Lanes unique?

The I-15 Express Lanes are an example of a revolutionary, forward-thinking design that serves transportation purposes today, while at the same time laying the groundwork for the needs and technology of tomorrow. Fashioned with a barrier separating the Express Lanes from the general purpose lanes, the design allows for the addition of potential new technology, including future traffic management and new communication technology installed in vehicles, enabling them to communicate with roadway systems. A moveable barrier separates the northbound and southbound Express Lanes, allowing operators to expand or contract the number of lanes to manage congestion and

handle major incidents, special events and related traffic management needs. The new design provides maximum flexibility to meet both the region's current needs and to accommodate future growth and capacity.

What is the timeline for completion of the Express Lanes?

Currently, 16 miles of congestion-free Express Lanes are open on I-15. The north segment, which will open in 2011, will complete the 20-mile stretch from SR 163 to SR 78. The existing south segment, which first opened in 1988, is 8 miles and will be widened to four lanes, modernized and then reopened in 2012.

How do I use the Express Lanes?

The original eight miles of Express Lanes, or the south segment, runs from SR 163 to SR 56. Access to the south segment is limited to its two ends. The middle 8-mile segment starts at SR 56/Ted Williams Parkway and has multiple access points to and from the Express Lanes and the general purpose lanes to increase its utility for a greater number of travelers. Other enhancements include an expanded Express Bus service. Initially, the existing service will use new transit stations along the corridor as they are opened. Plans call for introducing bus rapid transit in 2012, with new transit vehicles that can be boarded at any of the four new transit centers that will be added along the Express Lanes corridor. Additional rapid transit stations also will be constructed or modernized farther south along I 15 and sections of SR 94 into downtown San Diego. Transit riders, carpoolers and vanpoolers can now take advantage of additional parking within the transit centers or any of the other Park and Ride lots that are serviced by the Express Bus routes. All of these features



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work together to help reduce congestion and improve commute times throughout the region.

How much does it cost to travel on the new Express Lanes?

Transit riders, carpools, vanpools, motorcycles and permitted clean air vehicles may travel on the Express Lanes for free. For solo drivers, a distanced-based dynamic pricing system launched in March 2009. Under the new system, FasTrak customers accessing the Express Lanes pay a toll based on the distance they travel in the lanes and a rate per mile for their entry location. Every few minutes, the system will recalculate the per-mile toll rate based on the level of traffic in the I-15 corridor, ensuring traffic flows freely in the Express Lanes. The toll rate you see on the signs located just before each of the entrances to the Express Lanes is the minimum toll you can expect to pay if you enter the facility, regardless of your eventual exit location. The signs also advise you of one or more possible fares for longer trips to upcoming freeway interchanges, such as SR 56 or I 63. If you are traveling to a destination somewhere between the first possible interchange, you can expect to pay a toll that falls between the minimum and the toll for traveling all the way to the interchange.

Where can I enter the I-15 Express Lanes?

To enter the south segment of Express Lanes when traveling southbound on I-15, follow the overhead signs to the ramp connecting SR 56/Ted Williams Parkway to I-15 and merge left onto the Express Lanes; from SR 56, merge onto I-15 and left to the Express Lanes on-ramp. To enter the Express Lanes when traveling northbound on SR 163, merge right north of SR 52 and onto the Express Lanes entrance ramp directly before the SR 163/I-15 merge. From I-15 northbound, merge all the way left and onto the Express Lanes entrance ramp from the leftmost lane on I-15. The 8-mile middle segment of the Express Lanes that starts at SR 56/Ted Williams Parkway has multiple entrances and exits to increase the utility of the Express Lanes for a greater number of commuters. In

addition, commuters can access the Express Lanes through direct access ramps at Sabre Springs Parkway/Peñasquitos, Rancho Bernardo Road and Del Lago Boulevard (North County Fair).

What times are the I-15 Express Lanes open?

The middle 8-mile segment of the I-15 Express Lanes (from SR 56/Ted Williams Parkway to Rancho Bernardo Road) is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in both directions. The south 8-mile segment of the I-15 Express Lanes (from SR 163 to Ted Williams Parkway) hours of operation are typically:

Mon. – Thurs.

Southbound: 5:30 a.m. – noon

Northbound: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Fri. a.m.

Southbound: 5:45 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Fri. p.m., Sat., Sun.

Northbound: 5 p.m. on Friday - 5 a.m. the following Monday

On holidays, the Express Lanes operate only in the northbound direction.

The Express Lanes' variable message signs display travel times to the next interchange - what does that mean?

The travel times displayed on the Variable Toll Message Signs are for the Express Lanes travel times. Customers asked for this type of information so they could ensure they are receiving value in return for paying the toll to use those lanes. Travel times for the general purpose lanes are displayed on other changeable message signs in the I-15 corridor.

I saw a sign on the Express Lanes that said HOV ONLY instead of a toll rate. What should a Fastrak driver do if they see this?

If you are a FasTrak customer and you see the message "HOV ONLY" displayed on the Variable Toll Message Sign, do not enter the Express Lanes. That message is only



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displayed when traffic in the Express Lanes is congested and no excess capacity is available to sell to single-occupant vehicles. If you were in the Express Lanes when the message appears, you are allowed to stay in the lanes at the rate that was posted when you entered - you do not need to exit the lanes. If you enter after the "HOV ONLY" message is displayed, you could be assessed a fine and you will be charged the maximum fare, currently \$8.

Can large trucks use the I-15 Express Lanes?

Only light trucks and sport-utility vehicles are allowed on the Express Lanes. Under California law, commercial trucks with more than two axles are not allowed on the Express Lanes.

Can I tow my trailer or boat on the I-15 Express Lanes?

No. Trailers and boats are not allowed on the Express Lanes.

Can I drive my hybrid vehicle on the I-15 Express Lanes?

Only certain hybrid-electric vehicles with estimated fuel economy of 45 MPG or better and with special "HOV Access" clean air vehicle decals issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) are exempt from vehicle occupancy requirements and may use the Express Lanes for free, essentially in the manner of a carpool. These include the Toyota Prius, Honda Civic Hybrid and Honda Insight. Other clean air vehicles, including natural gas and electric vehicles, also may have special clean air vehicle designation that allows them to use the Express Lanes free of charge. Consult the Air Resources Board Web site for more information: www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/carpool/carpool.htm.

What was the impetus for constructing the I-15 Express Lanes?

The average daily traffic on I-15 ranges from 170,000 to 295,000 vehicles, with daily commute delays ranging from 30 to 45 minutes in the general purpose lanes. By 2020, the

traffic is expected to increase to almost 380,000 vehicles per day. Delays were expected to be as long as 90 minutes if improvements were not made. The I-15 FasTrak program successfully demonstrates that value pricing can be an effective tool for increasing the use of an HOV facility while maintaining free-flow conditions in the facility. SANDAG is committed to delivering on the TransNet promise and improving the quality of life for San Diegans. The I-15 Express Lanes system is the nation's most advanced and innovative highway, providing a smarter way to commute as well as saving time, gas and helping the environment.

What is SANDAG?

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is the San Diego region's primary public planning, transportation and research agency, providing the public forum for regional policy decisions about growth, transportation planning and construction, environmental management, housing, open space, energy, public safety and national topics. SANDAG is governed by a Board of Directors composed of mayors, council members and county supervisors from each of the region's 19 local governments. Supplementing these voting members are advisory representatives from Imperial County, the U.S. Department of Defense, Caltrans, San Diego Unified Port District, Metropolitan Transit System, North County Transit District, San Diego County Water Authority, Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, and Mexico. The Board of Directors is assisted by a professional staff of planners, engineers and research specialists.

How is the construction of the I-15 Express Lanes funded?

The I-15 Express Lanes are funded in part by TransNet, the local half-cent sales tax for transportation. SANDAG also has secured \$350 million from the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (funded by Proposition 1B) and a variety of state, federal, and local funds. The cost at completion is expected to be \$1.3 billion.



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FasTrak Questions

General FasTrak Questions

What is FasTrak?

FasTrak is a registered trademark of the Transportation Corridor Agencies and is the standard for electronic toll collection in the state of California. Interoperable on all toll roads and bridges statewide, FasTrak allows solo drivers to pay a fee on the I-15 Express Lanes through electronic toll collection. To participate, solo drivers must have a prepaid FasTrak account and transponder properly installed on their windshield when they use the Express Lanes. Carpools, vanpools, motorcycles and permitted clean air vehicles can use the lanes at no charge.

How does the FasTrak electronic toll collection system work?

To use the I-15 Express Lanes as a solo driver, you must have a FasTrak transponder. The transponder is a small radio device that is mounted inside the vehicle on the windshield. It identifies the customer's prepaid toll account. Overhead antennae in the Express Lanes read the transponder and deduct the correct toll electronically from the customer's FasTrak prepaid account. An electronic sign located before the entrance to the existing Express Lanes gives customers advance notice of the current toll as they approach the lanes.

Where is the toll rate posted?

Electronic signs with the posted toll rate are located in advance of every I-15 Express Lanes entrance.

How do I sign up for FasTrak?

You may now sign up and manage your I-15 Express Lanes FasTrak account online by going to www.511sd.com/fastrak. You may also contact the Customer Service Center by calling 511 and saying "FasTrak" (within San Diego County). Or call (888) 889-1515 (outside San Diego County) during business hours.

Transponder Questions

How do I install the transponder on my vehicle?

A transponder should be mounted inside the car squarely on the top middle section of the windshield directly behind the rearview mirror. It should be no more than one inch from the windshield's top edge below any dark shaded tint. If your vehicle does not permit the placement of the transponder in that location, mount the transponder in the lower left or right corner of the windshield no more than one inch from the lower and outer edges. According to Article 13, Section 23302 of the Vehicle Code, you are responsible for mounting your transponder properly. Please note that if mounted incorrectly, the transponder may not work and you could be subject to citation.

Can my FasTrak transponder be moved between vehicles?

Yes. You must provide us with the license plate number, state, make and model of the primary vehicle for your FasTrak transponder. If your primary vehicle changes, you must contact the FasTrak Customer Service Center to update your vehicle information. Call 511 and say "FasTrak." We recommend that you sign up for a FasTrak transponder for each vehicle that you drive on a regular basis as a FasTrak customer.

What happens if my transponder is lost or stolen?

Please notify us immediately if your transponder is lost or stolen. Your only liability is your transponder cost of \$40 and any tolls charged to your account prior to notification. Call 511 and say "FasTrak."

How long does the battery last?

The warranty for the battery is five years. Several factors, including prolonged direct exposure to the sun, can affect the life of the transponder. The fastest way for you to obtain a new transponder if your battery dies is to visit the Customer Service Center. Call 511 and say "FasTrak."



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Does it work for all carpool lanes or just FasTrak lanes?

Your transponder only allows you to pay for the use of the I-15 Express Lanes or any other toll roads and bridges in California that use the FasTrak system. Your FasTrak transponder does not give you access to any other type of carpool lane.

Will it work on freeway on-ramps?

No. Your transponder only allows you to pay for the use of the Express Lanes. Your FasTrak transponder does not give you access to any other type of carpool lane.

Does it work out of state?

No, but it does work on any FasTrak toll road or bridge in California.

My transponder isn't beeping - is it not working?

Your transponder will not beep on the I-15 Express Lanes. If there is a problem with your transponder, the Customer Service Center will notify you.

Can I change the battery in it?

No. If you open the transponder for any reason, you will void the warranty and you will be charged \$40 for the value of the transponder.

Billing Procedure Questions

How will I be billed?

For credit card accounts, you must maintain a prepaid account with a minimum of a \$10 balance. The account will be automatically replenished in the amount of \$40 or more. For check or money order accounts, the FasTrak Customer Service Center will send you a request for a minimum \$50 check or money order replenishment when your account balance drops below \$30. Monthly account and transponder fees will be deducted automatically from your account balance on the first day following the end of the month (where applicable).

Will I receive statements?

With the launch of the new online account management system, you will be given options for when you would like to have your monthly statement e-mailed to you and you can view monthly statements online at any time. If you don't use the online account management system, you will continue to receive a printed quarterly statement. There is a \$2 cost per statement charged to your account. To register online visit www.511sd.com/fastrak.

