

Ohio River Bridge tolls: What you need to know

The Clark-Floyd Counties Convention & Tourism Bureau staff attended a public briefing about the bridge tolls on Nov. 10. Below is information from the briefing.

When will bridges begin the tolls? Tolling will begin in late 2016.

Have bridge tolls been used before in the Louisville area? Yes. About 70 years ago, a 35-cent toll was assessed for people who wanted to cross the Clark Memorial Bridge. It ended in 1946. (The 35-cent toll of 1946 is the equivalent of a \$5 toll in today's dollars.)

What will Tolls Cost for Various Bridge Users?

The table below shows the costs of the tolls according to various categories of vehicles and methods of payment.

	Transponder	Registered Video	Unregistered Video
Frequent User – Non Commercial Vehicle	\$1	N/A	N/A
Passenger Vehicle	\$2	\$3	\$4
Medium Truck	\$5	\$6	\$7
Heavy Truck	\$10	\$11	\$12

What is a “Frequent User,” “Passenger Vehicle,” “Medium Truck,” or “Heavy Truck”? These terms were not defined at the briefing. The Clark-Floyd Counties Convention & Tourism Bureau has asked that question. We'll update the information when we find out.

Why are bridges using tolls now? Tolling is the only way the states can afford to build the bridges.

How were the bridges funded? Three main funding sources:

- Federal highway funds
- State highway funds
- Tolling

What are the benefits of the bridges to Louisville and Southern Indiana? The bridges are a vital part of our infrastructure. Infrastructure improvements will help the Louisville area continue the growth it has enjoyed over the past few years. In addition, the Ohio River Bridges Project and the transportation departments of both Indiana and Kentucky have cited that the region may gain 15,000 job opportunities because of the bridges.

How will the bridges help me? The new bridges will create:

- Safer, smoother roads
- 9 new lanes of traffic
- Improved Kennedy Bridge
- New east end access
- Shorter commute times (and more certainty in commutes)

How will the tolls be collected? Do I have to have cash with me? Toll will be all electronic. No cash will be collected at the tolling stations.

Won't tolls create more traffic delays? No. All tolls will be collected electronically using cameras and transponders or license plate information. In fact, you won't even have to stop at the tolling stations. There will be:

- No coin machines
- No lines
- No stopping
- No toll booths

How does toll collection work? There will be no toll booths. Bridges will be equipped with sensors and cameras that read either transponders or license plates (see below for further details). Drivers will pass the sensors at highway speeds. Drivers have 3 choices in how they pay tolls. They also have 2 choices in transponders. Transponders are devices installed in vehicles that sensors will communicate with in the tolling process. See below for information on transponder choices.

Payment Choices

Payment Choice #1	Payment Choice #2	Payment Choice #3
Get a transponder (no cost for the 1 st tag); the transponder is a small adhesive tag attached to the upper left of the car's windshield	Obtain an E-ZPass-compatible transponder (can be moved from one vehicle to another (15 other states use the E-ZPass system)	No prepaid account
Establish a prepaid account	Establish a prepaid account	License plate is photographed as you pass sensors
Sensors recognize the transponder at the crossing	Sensor reads the transponder	
Toll is deducted from your account	Toll is deducted from customer account	Invoice is sent to vehicle's registered owner
Note: offers the lowest cost and is the most convenient	Note: offers convenience, but rates are higher than a transponder	Note: This offers the highest rates due to increased administrative costs

Transponder Choice #1	Transponder Choice #2
Local use only	E-ZPass transponder, usable in 15 states
Adheres to the windshield	Portable from vehicle
Non-transferable	Proposed cost: \$15
First transponder is FREE	

Is there any way to avoid tolls? Yes. You can take other routes besides the I-65 or East End bridges. Specifically, you can take:

- Sherman Minton Bridge on I-64
- Clark Memorial Bridge

What is the name of the new system? The system devised to collect tolls is called River Link.

How do I get a transponder or establish an account? River Link will conduct outreach sessions to acquaint people with how the system works starting in February 2016. Some of those ways include:

- Hold Open Houses during Thunder Over Louisville, Kentucky Derby Festival
- Online at RiverLink.com (site not active at press time)
- Participate in Community Special Events
- Attend local meetings (Develop NA, Jeff Merchants Meeting, SITC meeting)
- Customer service centers
 - Downtown Louisville
 - Southern Indiana (at East 10th Streets and Quartermaster Court)
 - Other locations
- Mobile service centers – to be scheduled throughout 2016
- Retail partnerships are also being developed

When will transponders be available? May 2016 at RiverLink.com (website will be active in 2016)

When will tolling begin? Late 2016 when all construction is complete