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**Pa. Turnpike Reminds Motorist to Drive Safely During Busiest Travel Holiday**  
*Travelers advised to download free smartphone app to hear what's ahead on the road.*

More than 2.6 million drivers will be traveling the Pennsylvania Turnpike over the Thanksgiving holiday. The five-day period from Nov. 21-25 will be the busiest travel holiday of the year on the Turnpike system, and turnpike officials are joining with Pennsylvania State Police to encourage motorists to drive safely.

"Thanksgiving is when family and friends are all traveling during the same timeframe to enjoy the holiday, so it's imperative that everyone drives safely," said Acting Pa. Turnpike CEO Craig Shuey. "With such high volumes of traffic, drivers need to keep their eyes on the road, be aware of roadway conditions and drive accordingly this Thanksgiving."

To keep the highway safe, all construction and maintenance work will be modified to allow full use of the roadway; all lanes will be available beginning at 3 p.m. on Nov. 20 until 6 a.m. on Nov. 26, except in case of emergencies. Some construction activity that does not impact lanes may continue behind barriers in limited areas, reducing shoulder widths.

Traffic volumes will be heaviest Wednesday from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m. and Sunday from noon until 8 p.m. Motorists should be aware of the probability of slow-moving and periodic stopped traffic throughout the holiday, especially on Wednesday and Sunday. Turnpike maintenance crews, State Farm Safety Patrols, and the Pennsylvania State Police are increasing forces to assist stranded motorists, keep traffic moving and respond to emergencies.

Thanksgiving congestion is an ideal reason to take advantage of the award-winning turnpike smartphone app, called TripTalk, available for Droid and iPhone users. TripTalk informs users what's ahead on the turnpike letting them keep their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel while steering clear of delays caused by holiday backups or accidents.

Safety is being stressed by the turnpike's state police troop which will be looking to make sure motorists are wearing seatbelts. Troop T patrols will be participating in a statewide "Click it or Ticket" campaign of heightened seatbelt-law enforcement.

"Seatbelts save more than 13,000 lives each year, and buckling up is the most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash," said Captain Gregory M. Bacher, Commanding Officer of State Police Troop T, the division in charge of Turnpike patrols. "Unfortunately, the number of deaths that resulted from people involved in crashes and not wearing their seatbelts doubled last year."

Safe driving tips, including driving in winter weather, will be offered to turnpike motorists on Nov. 21 at the Blue Mountain Service Plaza at milepost 203 westbound during a Safety Break from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Pa. Turnpike travelers can get real-time roadway information via the Turnpike Roadway Information Program, or "TRIP," by visiting [www.paturnpike.com](http://www.paturnpike.com) or calling 1-866-976-TRIP (8747). Officials advise motorists headed for the turnpike to check conditions before they leave; the commission reminds drivers to avoid unnecessary distractions behind the wheel.

In case of an accident, breakdown or other emergency, motorists can summon assistance by calling \*11 or 1-800-332-3880 or deploying one of the yellow callboxes on the shoulder. Be prepared to give the milepost location and direction of travel, and move the vehicles involved out of active travel lanes if possible.

As an extra precaution, over-dimensional commercial vehicles (trucks exceeding 8-1/2 feet wide, 85 feet long, 13-1/2 feet high or 100,000 pounds gross weight) will be restricted from traveling the Pennsylvania Turnpike beginning sundown Nov. 22 to sunrise Nov. 28.

Two turnpike service plazas remain closed for reconstruction. The South Midway Service Plaza for eastbound motorists is one mile east of the Bedford Exit (#146) and the Highspire Service Plaza for eastbound motorists is about one mile east of the Harrisburg East Exit (#247). Motorists are reminded to plan refueling stops accordingly by using earlier plazas or fueling up at off-turnpike stations. The plazas are being rebuilt and are scheduled to reopen in May 2013.

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