

Frequently Asked Questions 2015 Indexing of SunPass Toll Rates

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Why is FDOT indexing SunPass tolls on its facilities?

Florida Statute 338.165(3) mandates that all FDOT-owned toll roads and bridges index tolls on a periodic basis to keep pace with inflation. This statute, which was enacted in 2007, provides for all FDOT owned facilities to adjust SunPass and TOLL-BY-PLATE rates annually based on the year-over-year change in Consumer Price Index (CPI). The current toll rates will be indexed by the 2014 CPI (1.6%), resulting in an extra penny or two at most tolling locations. The new rates will go into effect at 1:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 1. Despite the toll adjustment, the SunPass rate will continue to always be the lowest rate.

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Why is the cash toll still the same?

The law allows FDOT to adjust cash rates once every 5 years, using the cumulative CPI over the five-year period. Because cash is collected in quarter increments for efficiency, indexing cash rates annually results in long lines at the toll plazas to make change for odd amounts. As a result, the next cash toll adjustment is scheduled to take place in 2017.

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We already pay gasoline taxes. Doesn't a portion of those taxes go to the toll roads?

Toll roads and bridges are not eligible to receive funds from gasoline or other transportation taxes. Operation and maintenance of the road or bridge, widening projects, new interchanges, new alignments and all debt service obligations are paid for through the user fees (tolls) collected. On the Turnpike mainline, additional revenue is collected from food, merchandise and fuel sales.

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Some of these roads have been around a long time, so they must be paid for. Why can't the Department just remove the tolls?

Unfortunately the Department cannot remove tolls because there are still ongoing operations and maintenance costs associated with these roads. Gasoline and transportation taxes alone barely cover maintenance of existing toll-free facilities, let alone additional miles of former toll roads that would be added to the toll-free system if tolls were removed. Florida already has a huge shortfall in transportation funding. In an era of more fuel efficient vehicles and the same federal gas tax (18.5 cents per gallon) being collected, motorists may expect that needed transportation projects will take years longer to complete without alternate funding sources.

Tolls guarantee a revenue stream that ensures department-owned toll roads and bridges are maintained to the high standards Floridians and visitors have come to expect. After maintenance, operating costs, and debt service obligations are paid, any remaining revenues are reinvested in other safety and capacity improvement projects on the toll roads. Turnpike revenues may only be used for Turnpike system projects. Revenues from other FDOT roads and bridges, however, may be used to fund transportation projects in that local area.

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Are the tolls on I-95 and I-595 in Miami-Dade and Broward counties going to be indexed in addition to the variable rate we already pay?

No, the I-95 and I-595 Express Lanes are exempt from the toll rate index as customers already pay a sliding scale toll rate. In addition, toll rates on the Mid Bay Bridge/Spence Parkway and the Garcon Point Bridge will not be affected on July 1.

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Where can I go to learn more about this?

*To find out more about toll rate indexing and to see the new SunPass and TOLL-BY-PLATE rates please visit:
<http://www.floridasturnpike.com>*