

The Turnpike has consulted with medical advisors and studied CDC guidelines.

Each motorist is in a vehicle and the collector is in a booth. The distance between them is through the open air. Any contact is momentary. There is little risk of viral transmission for either motorist or collector---certainly less than where people share the same interior space.

Collectors are at double arms' length from motorists and it takes only a second or two to complete most transactions. Because traffic is down, transaction frequency is reduced. The factors of distance, shorter duration and reduced frequency diminish any risk of person-to-person transfer.

Collectors wear nitrile gloves that are readily available. Each toll is supplied with disinfectant spray and wipes for regular use.

Three-quarters of Turnpike patrons use E-ZPass. Most drivers who enter cash lanes are there because they prefer to pay cash or they need a receipt. A driver without E-ZPass who prefers not to handle cash still has options:

1. Pass through any lane and pay later by calling 1-800-682-7277 from 8 AM to 5 PM.
2. Pass through any lane and pay later at [ezpassmaineturnpike.com](http://ezpassmaineturnpike.com).
3. Use correct change (14 of the tolls are just an even dollar for a passenger car).
4. Use an alternate route.
5. Have the collector fill out a "No funds" slip to pay by mail, phone or internet.
6. Sign up for E-ZPass or borrow a transponder.

The Turnpike has been collecting cash since it opened 73 years ago. Metropolitan agencies that have closed their cash booths typically raise tolls in order to operate large license plate research centers with hundreds of people working in close quarters. It is not a good working environment---especially now.

The Maine Turnpike serves an essential public function. Even during the pandemic, the road is used each day by over 100,000 vehicles, many of them to carry medical supplies, food, and hospital patients.

Recently Turnpike maintenance crews were out for 14 hours to plow snow all night and to reopen the highway when a tractor trailer had overturned, blocking the road and spilling 60 gallons of diesel fuel.

Everyone who works on the Turnpike, including 34 Maine State Police officers, are paid entirely from tolls with no support from state or federal taxes.

These are scary times for everyone. We appreciate public support as the Turnpike continues to provide a necessary service while taking reasonable precautions and providing options to its patrons.