



NEWS RELEASE

VirginiaDOT.org

RELEASE: **IMMEDIATE**
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TEMPORARY WEIGHT LIMIT TO BE POSTED AT ROBERT O. NORRIS BRIDGE

Vehicles weighing more than 15 tons will be prohibited from crossing the bridge over the Rappahannock River starting at noon Wednesday, Oct. 25, following recent bridge inspection results

FREDERICKSBURG – A temporary vehicle weight limit of 15 tons will be posted on Route 3 at the Robert O. Norris Bridge over the Rappahannock River starting at noon Wednesday, Oct. 25.

The weight limit is being lowered temporarily for an estimated 30 days to allow the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to replace two pins in one of the bridge's spans.

An annual inspection of the Norris Bridge this month identified potential abnormalities in two of the bridge's pins, which help to support the bridge beams.

Ultrasonic testing is done annually on pins associated with the fracture critical bridge elements. An abnormality was discovered in two of these pins. VDOT has secured a contractor using emergency procurement methods to rapidly replace the two pins.

The posting should not affect most passenger vehicles, ambulances and school buses. Heavier-weight vehicles and overloaded vehicles such as tractor-trailers will not be permitted to cross Norris Bridge until

the weight posting is removed. Travelers should consult their vehicle registration card to check the maximum gross weight of their vehicle which includes the weight of the vehicle and manufacturer's recommended load carried.

Detour signs and message boards are being posted tonight and tomorrow morning to guide heavier weight vehicles through the 85-mile detour route to cross the Rappahannock River at the Downing Bridge on Route 360 at Tappahannock. The Norris Bridge crosses the Rappahannock River between Lancaster and Middlesex counties.

"The bridge remains safe for travel," said Annette Adams, P.E., VDOT Fredericksburg District Structure and Bridge Engineer. "We are temporarily restricting heavier-weight vehicles, such as tractor-trailers, from crossing the bridge until two new pins are installed to reduce the stress on the bridge. We regret the inconvenience and delays this detour will cause for residents and businesses on the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. We are evaluating all options to schedule and announce dates for the pin replacement as soon as possible."

VDOT is coordinating with Virginia State Police and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to enforce the 15-ton weight posting at the bridge until the pins are replaced.

The affected pins are located in the bridge's dual girder section, which is located between the center spans and the bridge approach in Middlesex County.

An average of 8,208 vehicles cross Norris Bridge each day on weekdays, and an average of 6,326 vehicles cross the bridge each day on weekends, according to a 2017 traffic count.

Pin Replacement Schedule

When the pins are ready to be replaced, VDOT anticipates an overnight bridge closure will be needed for two evenings.

VDOT will announce these dates in advance to notify travelers and will coordinate this work zone with emergency service providers in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula.

Norris Bridge Painting Project

An ongoing maintenance project to paint the three center spans of the Norris Bridge will continue to proceed. All painting equipment, platforms, materials and vehicles fall below the 15-ton weight limit.

Temporary traffic signals will continue to control one-way, alternating traffic at the center spans of the Norris Bridge.

(END)