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VIRGINIA PREPARES FOR INAUGURATION TRAFFIC

Motorists urged to plan ahead, expect major delays

FAIRFAX, Va. - Virginia State Police, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation are preparing for thousands of buses and vehicles to travel through Virginia for the Inauguration on January 20, 2009, and urge visitors to know what to expect before leaving home to ensure a safe and less stressful trip.

"We urge motorists – whether traveling by bus, van or car – to plan their route well in advance, know what bridges and roads will be restricted and where they will park, make sure their vehicle is in top operating condition, travel with a full tank of gas and prepare for long delays and a lot of walking," said Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police Superintendent.

Road and Bridge Restrictions

Beginning at 3 a.m. Tuesday, January 20, personal vehicles (cars, SUVs, pickups, vans, etc.) will not be allowed to enter Washington from Virginia. Those driving are encouraged to seek out public transportation to access the District on Inauguration Day. (See **Public Transit Resources** for more information). Personal vehicles will only be able to enter Washington by driving in from designated Maryland routes. Bridge restrictions will end shortly after 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 20.

Beginning at 3 a.m. Tuesday, January 20, only authorized vehicles – *emergency vehicles, buses, taxis, and for-hire limos and car services* – will be permitted to travel northbound on Interstate 395 and eastbound on Interstate 66 inside the Capital Beltway/I-495. All other traffic heading to Washington on Interstate 95 will be diverted at the Springfield interchange (Exits 170B and 170C) onto I-495 North (Inner Loop) or I-495/I-95 East (Outer Loop). All general traffic traveling eastbound on I-66 and toward Washington on the Dulles Toll Road will also be diverted to the Capital Beltway/I-495.

Only authorized vehicles will be allowed to cross the 14th Street Bridge and Roosevelt Bridge, all of which lead from Virginia into Washington, D.C. The Memorial Bridge, Chain Bridge and Key Bridge will be open to pedestrians and bicycles only.

To augment patrols and expedite emergency response along Interstates 95, 66 and 495, Virginia State Police will be bringing in several hundred troopers from around the state to the Northern Virginia region. Increases in manpower and resources will begin Monday, January 19, and continue through Wednesday, January 21.

I-95/395 HOV Schedule

- From 4 p.m. Saturday, January 17 until 3 a.m. Tuesday, January 20, the I-395/95 HOV lanes will be northbound for vehicles carrying three or more people (HOV-3).
- From 3 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, only buses and authorized vehicles will be permitted to use the I-95/395 HOV lanes from Route 234/Dumfries to Washington.
- The I-95/395 HOV lanes will open to HOV-3 traffic at 5 a.m. Wednesday, January 21.
- The I-95/395 HOV lanes will be open southbound for HOV-3 vehicles from 8 p.m. Tuesday, January 20, until 3 a.m. Wednesday, January 21, and from 11 a.m. Wednesday, January 21, until 9 p.m. or later.

I-66, Dulles Toll Road and Dulles Connector Road HOV Schedule

- From 4 p.m. Saturday, January 17, until 3 a.m. Tuesday, January 20, HOV-2 will be in effect eastbound.
- From 3 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, January 20, only buses and authorized vehicles will be allowed to use the eastbound HOV lanes.
- From 6 p.m. Tuesday, January 20, until 9 p.m. Wednesday, January 21, HOV-2 will be in effect westbound.

VDOT will help motorists by:

- **Pre-treating** ramps, bridges and critical locations on highways and major commuter routes with anti-icing chemicals regardless of the forecast. Major commuter lots in Northern Virginia will also be pre-treated.
- **Suspending all lane closures** in Virginia for construction or maintenance work on Interstates 66, 95, 395 and 495. In addition, lane closures will be suspended on heavily traveled roads in Northern Virginia to include Routes 1, 7, 28, 50, 234, 236, the Dulles Toll Road, Fairfax County Parkway and Prince William Parkway. This restriction will be in effect from Friday, January 16, until noon, Wednesday, January 21.
- Providing **portable toilets** at the I-66 and I-95 rest areas in Northern Virginia and Fredericksburg.
- Doubling the number of **safety service patrols** on the interstates on January 20. Forty patrolers will be pre-positioned and available to assist stranded motorists and provide traffic control. The patrol wears bright, highly visible uniforms and drives specially equipped pickup trucks.
- Re-timing **traffic signals** on major routes as needed to keep traffic moving as best possible.
- Staging **seven wreckers** at locations along interstates to remove disabled vehicles.

Motorists can stay informed by:

- Calling **511** from a land line or a cell phone for the latest traffic and travel information. Drivers are reminded to **only** dial 911 or #77 on a cellular phone in emergency situations.
- Tuning into Virginia's **highway advisory radio** for information on delays and possible detours due to accidents or congestion.
- Getting the latest traffic conditions and travel times on overhead and **roadside message signs** on I-95, 495, 66 and 81, and Route 29.
- Carrying an **emergency kit** in their vehicles to include an ice scraper and brush, wiper fluid, blankets, extra warm clothing, a bag of sand or cat litter; flashlight and cell phone, with extra batteries for each; jumper cables; water, snacks, paper towels and a first aid kit.

Public Transit Resources

Metrorail, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and Amtrak are primary transportation choices for travel from Virginia to Washington, D.C., on Inauguration Day. For more information on Metrorail and VRE access and availability, visit their Web sites at <http://www.wmata.com> and <http://www.vre.org>.

Currently, Amtrak trains from Virginia to Washington, DC that will serve the Inauguration Day events are sold out. However, tickets may become available as reservations change. Visit Amtrak's Web site at <http://www.amtrak.com> for information on ticket availability.

The Commonwealth is also working with Virginia transit operators to finalize plans for bus service. Details will be available soon.

Employers in the region are encouraged to consider offering telework, flex time and/or other leave options for their employees on January 20.

Inauguration Traffic/Event Resources

Visitors are encouraged to stay informed of traffic and weather conditions by checking the following Web sites before traveling:

District of Columbia's Inaugural Web site <http://www.inauguration.dc.gov>
Official Inaugural Web site <http://inaugural.senate.gov/2009/planyourtrip.cfm>.

Washington Post <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/inauguration-watch/transportation>
WTOP Radio <http://www.wtopnews.com>

National Weather Service: <http://www.weather.gov>

For Virginia-specific information log onto the Virginia State Police Web site at http://www.vsp.state.va.us/Inauguration_2009.shtm

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