

Ben Franklin Bridge Track Rehabilitation Project



Why is this project important?

The PATCO tracks over the Ben Franklin Bridge are approximately 30 years old and require replacement. This two-year, \$103 million project involves replacing the entire PATCO track system across the bridge including all related signal, power and communications cables that are part of the system. Structural and site repairs will also be performed.

THERE WILL BE SCHEDULE CHANGES, SERVICE DELAYS, CROWDED TRAINS AND LANE CLOSURES ON THE BEN FRANKLIN BRIDGE.

Train schedules will change because one bridge track will be continuously closed for extended periods. During these periods of track outages, there will be service delays and crowded trains. Motorists traveling across the Ben Franklin Bridge will also be impacted during these periods since there will be lane closures that are necessary to allow work crews access to the site.

What is going to happen and when?

- Work on this project has been underway since January with track outages occurring primarily on Fridays and weekends.
- Unfortunately, this work cannot be accomplished only during nights and weekends. While the majority of the track rehabilitation will be completed during the continuous 50 and 60 day track outages, the supporting electrical systems must be replaced in stages, separate from the two continuous outages.
- Shortly after Memorial Day, the PATCO tracks on the south side of the Ben Franklin Bridge will be continuously closed (24-hours a day, 7-days a week) for approximately two months for rehabilitation.
- During this time, two outside travel lanes on the south side (eastbound direction) of the bridge will be continuously closed to allow crews access to the site. While the two closed lanes will be reduced to one closed lane during peak hours, severe traffic congestion is expected. Motorists are advised to consider alternatives to the Ben Franklin Bridge during peak hours.
- Shortly after completing work on the south track, construction crews will continuously close the north track across the bridge for approximately 50 days to perform the same rehabilitation work that was done on the south track.
- During this time, two outside travel lanes on the north side (westbound direction) of the bridge will be closed during off-peak hours to allow crews access to the site. However, impact to motorists during morning peak hours should be minimal since all lanes will remain open.
- Although the work for these extended track outages is expected to be completed in the fall of 2014, the overall track rehabilitation project is not expected to finish until early 2016. During 2015, commuters can expect extended weekend track outages and intermittent bridge lane closures as we completely replace the PATCO signal, power and communication systems across the bridge.



PATCO

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What this means for PATCO passengers:

- During each track closure, PATCO will run alternating eastbound and westbound trains across the bridge on one track instead of two tracks. This will result in delays, extended gaps in service and increased time intervals between departures and arrivals at all stations.
- Additional trains will be available to move rush-hour passengers westbound toward Philadelphia in the morning and eastbound toward Lindenwold in the evenings.
- The first one or two trains following a scheduled gap in service will be crowded and likely to become more crowded as it approaches its final destination.
- Rush-hour trains are expected to be filled to capacity and the scarcity of available seats will mean that many passengers will have to travel while standing.
- During gaps in service, rush-hour commuters may have to stand and wait for as long as 30 minutes for the next train.

What this means for Ben Franklin Bridge motorists:

- During the first two-month outage, two outside travel lanes on the south side (eastbound direction) of the bridge will be continuously closed to allow crews access to the site. The lane closures will be reduced to a single lane closure during peak hours.
- The closed lane will cause severe traffic congestion during evening rush hour.
- Motorists are advised to consider alternatives to the Ben Franklin Bridge during peak hours.
- During the second outage, two outside travel lanes on the north side (westbound direction) of the bridge will be closed during off-peak hours to allow crews access to the site.
- All four lanes will remain open to motorists traveling westbound to Philadelphia during the morning peak hours (6 a.m. – 10 a.m.).

What can you do to prepare in advance?

- We recommend all passengers and motorists allow extra time for their commutes.
- Check our websites (www.drpa.org and www.RidePATCO.org) and Twitter and Facebook accounts (@RidePATCO) for schedule changes, lane closures and service updates.
- Motorists should consider alternatives to the Ben Franklin Bridge during peak hours.
- Train passengers should check the schedule and adjust their arrival times at stations to allow for additional boarding and commuting time.
- If possible, avoid rush-hour travel so trains and platforms will be less crowded.
- Remember that the first train after a gap in service will be very crowded, but the following train (2-3 minutes later) should be less congested.
- The first and last train cars are generally less crowded than the middle cars, so please try boarding those cars.

**We regret any inconvenience and thank you
for your patience during this project.**

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