Motorists Urged to Slow Down, Stay Alert and Travel Off-Peak If Possible During Memorial Day Weekend

Posted by TBN[Staff] On 05/23/2020

With warmer weather and sunshine forecast for the Memorial Day holiday weekend, more travelers are expected in Maryland now that the state’s COVID-19 Stay at Home restrictions have been replaced with a Safer at Home advisory. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is urging travelers to stay “safer at home” if possible, but if traveling, use caution, obey speed limits and plan ahead for a safe journey.

“Whether we’re driving, flying, biking or walking, it’s critical that we make smart decisions for ourselves, our families and our neighbors,” said Transportation Secretary Gregory Slater. “If you are traveling for the holiday, please use extra caution, slow down, stay alert and allow plenty of time to reach your destination.”

Congestion is expected beginning Friday afternoon and continuing throughout the day along routes including US 50 toward Ocean City, I-70 and I-68 toward western Maryland and I-95 north toward Delaware. Saturday and Sunday travel over Memorial Day weekend is traditionally heavy as well, and delays are likely Monday, May 25, as travelers return home.

MDOT SHA has suspended non-emergency work on state roadways from noon Friday, May 22, to 9 a.m. Tuesday, May 26. Emergency patrols will be placed along metropolitan-area interstate routes to assist disabled vehicles and to clear incidents, and motorists can visit roads.maryland.gov for real-time traffic information.

MDOT is also providing the following tips to keep travelers safe during the Memorial Day weekend:

• Buckle up. It’s the law. Make sure all passengers, including those in the back seat, are buckled up.
  • Slow down. Observe all posted speed limits.
  • Don’t drive impaired. Never drink and drive.
  • Pay attention. Avoid avoiding distractions such as cell phone use.

• Be patient. Travel during off peak hours and allow extra time for unexpected delays.

• Be prepared. In case of emergency, drivers with cell phones can dial #77 to reach Maryland State Police.

• See and be seen. If it rains, remember state law requires headlight use when windshield wipers are used.

All-electronic tolling at the Bay Bridge
For those traveling the Bay Bridge or other toll facilities over the Memorial Day weekend, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) is reminding drivers that all-electronic (cashless) tolling remains in effect statewide during the COVID-19 emergency. There’s no stopping to pay tolls. Drivers without an E-ZPass will be mailed a Notice of Toll Due. Additional details about the MDTA’s COVID-19 response can be found at mdta.maryland.gov/covid-19-response.

At the Bay Bridge, drivers should be aware of new traffic patterns approaching the former toll plaza area and a new overhead tolling gantry over eastbound US 50 on the Eastern Shore. Weather and traffic volumes permitting, the MDTA will implement two-way traffic operations to help alleviate eastbound delays at the Bay Bridge. Drivers must obey all overhead lane signals, signs and speed limits.

For 24/7 Bay Bridge traffic information call 1-877-BAYSPAN (1-877-229-7726) or visit Baybridge.com to view real-time traffic cameras. For real-time updates on major incidents follow MDTA at twitter.com/TheMDTA.

Public access to BWI Marshall terminal remains for ticketed passengers only
Even though the Safer at Home advisory remains in effect, an uptick of passenger traffic is expected this weekend at BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) reopened the BWI Marshall’s Checkpoint C with limited hours during peak periods, a move intended to accommodate increased traffic and assist with social distancing in security checkpoints.

For those using BWI Marshall Airport, the MDOT Maryland Aviation Administration (MDOT MAA) is reminding passengers that due to the COVID-19 emergency, the airport terminal remains closed except for ticketed passengers, badged employees and those providing assistance to passengers in need. Those picking up passengers are asked to park in the garage to await the flight arrival.

In addition to regular cleaning, several protective measures are in place at BWI Marshall, including protective shields at document checking podiums and promotion of social distancing. Airport restaurant service is limited to carryout with no sit-down dining. The use of face masks and coverings is recommended throughout BWI Marshall. Most airlines now require face coverings in-flight, as well as in airline ticketing and boarding areas.

Transit service available for essential travel
The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), which operates trail, subway, light rail and local and commuter bus service, is reminding riders that travel during the COVID-19 emergency should be for essential purposes only – trips to essential work sites, hospitals, healthcare providers, pharmacies, grocery stores, banks,
food distribution centers, the homes of family members who need care, and similar destinations. Those needing to use transit must wear a mask or other face covering.

MTA continues to operate on reduced service levels due to COVID-19. For a list of service modifications and details of measures being taken to protect riders and operators, go to mta.maryland.gov/coronavirus.