

August 2008

OVERHEIGHT VEHICLES ON EASTLINK

The height limit within the EastLink tunnels is 4.65m, the same as the CityLink tunnels.

Height detectors and warning signs have been installed on the freeway carriageways leading to the tunnels, prior to the exit ramps at Springvale Road and Maroondah Highway. If an overheight vehicle is detected, flashing lights fitted within a warning sign will be activated to warn and advise the driver to leave EastLink at the next exit ramp.

Height detectors have also been installed on Springvale Road, Maroondah Highway and Ringwood Bypass to detect overheight vehicles that may turn onto EastLink and travel towards the tunnels. If an overheight vehicle is detected, flashing lights fitted within a similar warning sign will be activated to warn and advise the driver not to turn onto EastLink towards the tunnels.

A number of secondary detectors have also been installed to detect any overheight vehicle that continues towards the tunnels. If these detectors are activated, the tunnel barrier gates will be deployed to close the carriageway before the overheight vehicle is able to enter the tunnel. Variable message signs located on the approaches to the tunnels will be used to advise motorists that the tunnel is being closed and to direct the driver of the overheight vehicle to pull off the road. Overhead lane use signs will operate to initially indicate the changing status of each traffic lane and then the closed status of each lane, and variable speed limit signs will be used to slow the traffic. Flashing lights at and along the arms of the barrier gates will be activated to warn approaching motorists that the gates are in the process of closing.

Once the traffic has stopped, EastLink incident response personnel will direct the driver of the overheight vehicle to park safely on the side of the carriageway. The roadway will then be re-opened to traffic. VicRoads Transport Safety Services will be contacted to attend the overheight vehicle, interview the driver and examine the vehicle. The overheight vehicle may be required to remain parked for many hours until the traffic on EastLink is light enough to allow both carriageways to be closed and the overheight vehicle turned around onto the carriageway leading away from the tunnels.

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For further information please contact:

JAMES TONKIN
General Manager, Community
Relations & Public Affairs
ConnectEast Group

T 03 9955 1700
M 0413 432 775
jtonkin@connecteast.com.au

**How and when will the EastLink tunnel barrier gates be deployed?**

If a serious incident occurs in the tunnels, it may be necessary to close one or both tunnels to avoid risking the safety of motorists and to facilitate access to, and management of the incident. In these circumstances, the EastLink Traffic Control Room will deploy the barrier gates to prevent vehicles from entering the tunnels. Variable message signs along EastLink will warn drivers of the tunnel closure and direct them to leave EastLink via the appropriate exit ramps.

As detailed above, the barrier gates are also used to close the approach to a tunnel to prevent overheight vehicles from entering the tunnel. An overheight vehicle will cause serious damage to overhead structures and equipment within the tunnels, and risk the wellbeing of other tunnel users.

The barrier gates may also be activated if a vehicle carrying a placarded load is identified as heading for the tunnels. Placarded loads are not permitted through the EastLink tunnels, as is the case for the CityLink tunnels, because in the event of an incident in the tunnels, these loads represent an unacceptable risk to tunnel users, incident response and emergency management personnel, and the tunnel infrastructure.

What alternate routes are available?

VicRoads has defined permit route OD 1 for over dimensional vehicles travelling between the south-east and the north of metropolitan Melbourne. Within the EastLink corridor, the OD 1 route currently includes the Eastern Freeway, Springvale Road and Monash Freeway. With EastLink now open to traffic, the OD 1 route has been redefined to include the section of EastLink between Burwood Highway and Monash Freeway. The redefined permit route OD 1 through the EastLink corridor consists of Eastern Freeway, Springvale Road, Burwood Highway, EastLink and Monash Freeway (see map next page).

Vehicles higher than 4.65m are not allowed in the EastLink tunnels. To bypass the tunnels, drivers of overheight vehicles travelling on EastLink from the south should exit before or at Maroondah Highway and then travel in a westerly direction to Springvale Road. At Springvale Road, drivers should turn right and travel in a northerly direction to Eastern Freeway where they can turn left onto the freeway and continue their journey.



Drivers of overheight vehicles travelling on Eastern Freeway from the city should exit the freeway at Springvale Road, turn right into Springvale Road and travel in a southerly direction to Maroondah Highway. At Maroondah Highway, drivers should turn left and continue along the highway to the EastLink interchange, where they can turn right onto the south bound carriageway of EastLink.

OVER-DIMENSIONAL VEHICLE ROUTES

