

**Seattle Department of Transportation
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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SDOT starts application process for people to use Spokane St Swing Bridge to reach lifesaving medical appointments while West Seattle Bridge is under construction

Application will open later this month for restaurants and retail struggling during pandemic, on-call medical workers, additional types of vans and shuttles. Weekend all access hours extended by 3 hours to 8 a.m.

SEATTLE – People seeking lifesaving medical treatment, on-call medical workers, West Seattle restaurants and retail businesses, and people using vans, shuttles or official carpools with a [state-issued rideshare license plate](#) can soon apply to the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) for access to the Spokane St Swing Bridge (low bridge).

This access is on a temporary and limited basis. People must apply, provide their license plate, meet eligibility requirements, and be approved by SDOT before using the low bridge.

SDOT is also changing the low bridge restricted hours to allow more access for everyone on weekends. Recent traffic data shows that volumes are low enough to allow additional access. The low bridge is currently closed to non-authorized vehicles from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day. Starting Saturday, April 10, the low bridge will remain open to everyone for three additional hours, until 8 a.m. on weekends. Weekday restrictions will remain the same as before.

When the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge (high bridge) closed in March 2020, SDOT restricted access to the low bridge to prevent area gridlock from general detour traffic. Daytime use of the low bridge is restricted to ensure that freight, transit, and emergency response vehicles can travel efficiently to and from West Seattle.

Additional information, including a full list of vehicles that may qualify for access, is available on the [low bridge web page](#). Emergency vehicles, buses and freight trucks do not need to provide their license plates to SDOT.

New groups eligible for pre-authorized low bridge access:

- West Seattle residents traveling to and from lifesaving medical treatments (authorization from your medical provider required; form available now on [low bridge access web page](#))
- On-call medical workers (traveling to and from an on-call work shift only)
- All West Seattle restaurants and retail businesses (limited to urgent trips to pick-up equipment or supplies)
- Rideshare vehicles (vans, shuttles or official carpools with a [state-issued rideshare license plate](#); This does NOT include Uber/Lyft)

Existing groups eligible for pre-authorized access:

- International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 members for trips when dispatched from the SODO Union Hall to terminals on the west side of the low bridge
- Maritime and industrial businesses proximate to the low bridge (limited to urgent trips to pick-up equipment or supplies or transport key personnel)
- Government vehicles (limited to urgent/unplanned trips and includes City of Seattle, King County, State of Washington, local law enforcement, and other government vehicles)

By the end of April, SDOT will share application forms online for on-call medical workers, businesses, and rideshare to request access to the low bridge. [Application forms for people traveling to lifesaving medical treatments are available online today](#). People driving must register their license plates and receive SDOT approval before using the low bridge. Unauthorized vehicles will receive a \$75 fine for every trip taken across the low bridge during the day. Applications will be processed on a rolling basis.

New weekend hours start Sat., April 10

SDOT is changing the restricted hours to allow everyone to use the low bridge for three additional hours, until 8 a.m. on weekends only. SDOT reviewed recent traffic data and volumes are low enough during these times to allow for more access to the bridge. This change goes into effect this weekend, Saturday April 10 and Sunday, April 11.

As a reminder, the low bridge is **closed** to non-authorized vehicles from **5 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays, and 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekends:**

- No personal vehicles (cars, minivans, carpools, etc.)
- No motorcycles and motor scooters
- No taxis and ride-hail app vehicles, like Uber and Lyft

Low bridge access policy

SDOT's goal has always been to ensure reliable access for emergency vehicles, freight, and transit on the low bridge. Since automated enforcement began in early 2021, SDOT has monitored traffic volumes on the low bridge and we have taken a hard look at the low bridge access policy, identified goals and objectives, and will continue to adjust the policy as circumstances change.

Health, life, and safety have been at the forefront this past year and SDOT is prioritizing trips that improve patient and provider access to lifesaving medical treatment. SDOT continues to prioritize the movement of emergency vehicles and government vehicles that are responding to urgent situations.

COVID-19 and the West Seattle Bridge closure have affected all people and businesses in West Seattle. SDOT's focus on providing access for restaurants and retail businesses is based on several factors. These sectors have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Through SDOT's ongoing outreach efforts, the city is also hearing how the bridge closure along with COVID-19 have affected businesses, particularly in receiving or transporting supplies.

Most trips on the low bridge (except for emergency vehicles, heavy freight, and transit) are conditional and trip targets (number of trips allowed per month) will be updated based on actual use. SDOT can restrict or revoke access at any time. SDOT will notify people in advance if this is the case. SDOT will reduce or revoke access on the low bridge for many groups in late 2021

before the Port of Seattle's Terminal 5 re-opens so that the bridge has capacity for increased freight traffic. The high-rise bridge is anticipated to reopen in mid-2022.

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