

**Dartford – Thurrock Crossing
Revised Operational Arrangements – 6 Month trial from 1 July 2011
- Operational Instruction for Charging Suspension Protocol**

To: HA Traffic Officer Service SE and Connect Plus (Operator)

Charges may be suspended on a case by case basis when an emergency exists or is imminent. Such suspension is to enable or facilitate any action taken in response to the emergency.

An emergency may exist in a range of circumstances including when severe congestion occurs and may be caused by one or more of the issues below or by issues not mentioned below. It is for this reason that the decision to suspend the Charge must be taken on a **case by case** basis.

An emergency exists when there is severe congestion. For the purpose of this Protocol only and for the guidance of decision makers, “Severe Congestion” is defined as:

queuing traffic (stationary or slow moving traffic, travelling < approx. 10 mph) which extends continuously from the Dartford Crossing to M25 J28 centre (A12 junction) for southbound traffic or to M25 J4 centre (A224) for northbound traffic.

Severe congestion may be caused by one or more of the following issues.

1) Issues arising at the Dartford Crossing:

- i) a Critical Incident (as defined in the HA’s procedures) at the Dartford Crossing, as defined as the “Road” in the 2008 Charging Order: the A282 in both directions from M25 J1A to just before M25 J31, including the East and West Tunnels and the QE2 Bridge;
- ii) a major failure in the Charging system/software or collection process; or
- iii) the unplanned closure of the Bridge or Tunnels, due to infrastructure failure or weather related incidents.

2) Issues arising other than at the Dartford Crossing:

- i) a Critical Incident on the Strategic Road Network (as defined by that operated by the HA) outside the extent of the Dartford Crossing (“Road”) and/or the Local Highway Network (as defined by that operated by local authorities) of adjoining or neighbouring boroughs;
- ii) a national crisis or emergency (as defined by or directed by the appropriate authorities); or
- iii) the planned or unplanned closure of infrastructure, e.g. of the Blackwall Tunnel or rail services etc.

There may be issues other than those listed above, that arise and which may result in severe congestion or may otherwise result in an emergency.