

## Severn Bridge M48

### High winds - know the danger. A guide to traffic filtering

#### Did you know that ...

between 1992 and 1996, 13 vehicles blew over on the Severn Bridge during high winds, resulting in more than 47 hours of closure in total.

From 2003, the Severn Bridge operated under a High Winds Protocol, which dictated that once wind speeds reached 40 knots, the bridge closed to all traffic?

#### Why do we need traffic filtering?

We are aware of the potential dangers to traffic on the Severn Bridge during high winds. We also recognise that closing the bridge to all vehicles during periods of high winds impacts on road users by increasing journey times and, at times, congestion on the M4. Since introducing a traffic filtering system in September 2007, we have been able to keep the bridge open to small vans and cars for longer, while still operating safely during such conditions.

#### How does traffic filtering work?

Once gust wind speeds reach 40 knots, the bridge remains open to vehicles under 6'9" (2.1m). Vehicles over this height and motorcycles are not permitted to use the Severn Bridge, and must use an alternative signed route. If gust wind speeds reach 60 knots, the bridge is closed to all traffic. Filtering operates between 0600 and 2200 hours. Outside of these hours, the bridge is closed to all traffic if the wind is above 40 knots.

#### Diversion Route

During the restrictions, advance warning signs are displayed and traffic diverted onto the following route:

Westbound to Chepstow:

Use M4 Second Severn Crossing, Exit J23a (Magor), M4 eastbound, M48

Eastbound from Chepstow:

M48 westbound, M4 J23a, use M4 Second Severn Crossing

#### What happens if drivers ignore the signs?

Drivers who ignore the signs and attempt to use the bridge will be committing an offence and may face prosecution.

The revised protocol is being monitored by CCTV for compliance and, if drivers do not comply with the signs, we will have to revert to closure of the bridge to all traffic at 40 knots to maintain public safety.

#### Thank you

The M48 Severn Bridge provides a key transport link supporting the local economies in England and Wales, and the Agency recognises the importance of keeping this route safe and open to traffic. We would like to thank you for your understanding and co-operation during restrictions.

#### Further Information

More detailed information on the Severn Crossings, including the high winds protocol is available on the Highways Agency's website at

**[www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)**

For the current bridge status, please visit Severn River Crossings website at

**[www.severnbridge.co.uk](http://www.severnbridge.co.uk)**

For weather conditions visit the Met Office website:

**[www.metoffice.com](http://www.metoffice.com)**

## Diversion map



For real time traffic information:

**08700 660 115**

[www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo](http://www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo)

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0870 numbers will cost no more than 8p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

For general Highways Agency information:

**08457 50 40 30**

email: [ha\\_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk)

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

### Safe driving at roadworks

*Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.*



**During 2006 two workers were killed and 19 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads.**

For the safety of all road users and roadworkers, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.