



New Jersey Turnpike Authority

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Turnpike Authority details steps to improve customer service

WOODBIDGE -- New Jersey Turnpike Authority officials today announced that toll plaza employees will receive annual training in customer service, one of a series of steps being taken toward the elimination of public complaints about rude toll collectors.

The steps were outlined during a presentation at the regular public meeting of the Turnpike Authority Board of Commissioners this morning.

The Turnpike Authority receives a relatively small number of complaints – about one complaint for every 540,000 transactions -- but the issue has received public scrutiny in the four weeks since a news organization posted several dozen of the complaints on its Web site.

Turnpike Authority Chairman and Transportation Commissioner James Simpson met recently with Turnpike Authority senior staff and the leaders of the two unions that represent toll collectors on the Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway to develop an action plan to reduce the number of complaints.

The steps outlined at today's meeting include:

- Greatly increasing the frequency of customer service training for toll collectors. An annual training program will be instituted over the next six weeks. Previously, employees received training when they were hired and were retrained only if there were specific complaints about their performance.
- Retraining toll supervisors about their role in ensuring quality customer service. Their effectiveness at enforcing customer service policies and procedures will be given added weight in their evaluations.
- Tracking complaints monthly to determine if a disproportionate number come from any particular location or any particular time of day or day of the week. Those results will be posted on employee bulletin boards at all tolls facilities.
- Creating an "Integrity Compliance Team" to perform random, surprise inspections at all toll plazas.
 - Recognizing individual toll collectors and entire toll plazas for exemplary customer service.
 - Exploring ideas for creating a greater sense of professionalism among toll collectors.

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