




Toll Management Software Helps Carriers Save Time and Money



Tolls are here to stay. Over 100 tolling agencies operate more than 300 tolled facilities in the United States, including more than 40 tolling networks. With Congress reluctant to increase the federal fuel tax as the need for infrastructure investment grows, toll roads, bridges and tunnels proliferate. And toll rates are increasing, too. The average cost to truckers of toll roads is nearly four times more per mile than on public highways – plus truckers must still pay traditional state and federal highway use taxes.

Despite the higher cost, motor carriers and professional drivers use toll roads, bridges, and tunnels. Toll roads often provide the most direct or only route to a destination. Time savings on toll roads due to reduced traffic, no stoplights, and higher speeds may outweigh the direct costs.

FOR ALL TRUCK OPERATORS, FROM BIG FLEETS TO OWNER-OPERATORS, TOLL INVOICE MANAGEMENT REMAINS A MAJOR CHALLENGE. FORTUNATELY, THERE IS A SOLUTION

These days, many toll facilities save time and money through “all-electronic tolling” (AET), using license plate readers or transponders to identify users, eliminating the slowdown at manned toll booths. Toll agencies also add conveniences to attract trucking customers, such as truck parking, fuel vendors with discount programs, and the ability to haul higher weights or different trailer combinations or configurations.

Some motor carriers may find that toll road cost and convenience come close to balancing out. But for all truck operators, from big fleets to owner-operators, toll invoice management remains a major challenge. Fortunately, there is a solution.

IMPROVE SAFETY, REDUCE TOLLING HEADACHES WITH INFORM TOLLING

PrePass Plus provides customers with a comprehensive weigh station bypass and toll payment solution using a single transponder. This comprehensive service consolidates all toll charges into a single statement and improves efficiency when traveling on the [numerous toll roads, tunnels and bridges that partner with PrePass](#). No more slowing and stopping at toll booths and trying to merge back into the traffic stream. No more having drivers carry cash and trying to keep track of receipts. No more hassles with multiple agencies, differing enrollment procedures, numerous billing programs and variable discounts.

PrePass Plus customers receive an additional advantage: INFORM Tolling software. INFORM Tolling provides easy-to-use data visualizations and drill-downs that help carriers identify toll discrepancies and streamline the reconciliation process. Whether disputing erroneous tolls, challenging toll violations, or identifying opportunities for driver training, INFORM Tolling takes the overwhelming amount of raw data found in toll invoices and translates it into *actionable* information available at the click of a mouse.

Best of all, INFORM Tolling comes at *no additional cost* for PrePass Plus customers.



TOLL MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AND INFORM TOLLING SOLUTIONS

Here are four toll management challenges and the solutions offered by INFORM Tolling:

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TOLL MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE #1: EXCESSIVE PAPERWORK

Toll agencies send customers printed invoices monthly, listing every transaction. The type of information captured on the invoices remains largely the same – entry date, entry gate or toll plaza, exit date, exit gate or plaza, license plate or transponder number, vehicle class, toll amount charged, and any toll discounts.

Each toll agency, however, lists this information in a slightly different format, making the review of toll transactions more time-consuming and difficult. Multiply that by the number of toll facilities a motor carrier may utilize in a month, times the number of individual toll transactions, and a trucking operation may be looking at huge stacks of invoices.

So, there is no lack of toll road data. And that data, properly analyzed, can help motor carriers improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of their operations. But there is so *much* toll road data that many find it tempting to skip the review and just pay the bill.



INFORM TOLLING SOLUTION

INFORM Tolling is updated *daily* with the latest toll invoice data generated from every tolled facility where individual PrePass Plus customers operate. No more waiting for the *monthly* toll invoices to find out what is happening. With INFORM Tolling, a motor carrier can see up to the minute toll activity, allowing time for the carrier to investigate toll violations and errors and gather evidence to dispute erroneous toll charges, long before the toll agency mails those toll violation notices.

INFORM Tolling conveniently organizes data in a standard format – unlike the multiple formats of printed toll invoices. The carrier can easily sort by data element and by specific toll facility, toll agency, time period and even drill down to a group of trucks or a single transponder. The motor carrier now has a ready tool for the planning, oversight, and management of its fleet operations, as well as for the management of tolls.

Upon logging into its INFORM Tolling account, the motor carrier sees that same data displayed *graphically*, by trends, timelines and on maps – all of which can similarly be sorted to display exactly what the carrier wants to see. Whether graphics or numbers, this is *actionable information*, which downloads directly from INFORM Tolling into common data formats for communication with staff, terminal managers, drivers, and stakeholders. Try doing that with a standard invoice!

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TOLL MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE #2: VIOLATIONS AND BILLING ERRORS

A toll facility may use AET, but that does not mean the transaction shown on the invoice is accurate. License plate readers (LPRs), for example, can have difficulty due to dirty cameras, smudged plates, and reflection from the sun. LPRs typically capture the trailer plate. But that trailer may belong to an interlining carrier, shipper, or a rental company, not to the carrier actually operating on the toll facility. Or a trailer may find its way from one regional operation of the motor carrier to another – without the operating carrier first properly registering it with the local toll agency.

With LPRs, toll authorities can mistakenly assign charges to the *wrong company* or flag a truck as an *unregistered vehicle*. Resolving these LPR issues takes time, and the toll agency may add service fees and penalties if the underlying toll charge goes unpaid during the dispute process.

Toll transponders help avoid some of these problems because they are far more accurate than LPRs. Transponders also cost less because they do not require the manual back-office matching of fuzzy photo images to vehicle registration lists. Toll agencies pass on those LPR costs through significantly higher rates for “plate reads” than for transponder transactions. Plate reads do show up on the monthly toll invoice but finding them requires a close review.

Still, even with a 99.9% dependability rate, transponders can generate misreads – the occasional power outage, power surge or dead battery may disable a toll gate’s readers or create an electrical blip that misses a truck entering or exiting the tollway. Something as simple as placing the transponder in the wrong place on the windshield can create a misread. When the transponder is not read at entry or exit, the toll agency will assess *maximum tolls, also known as max tolls*, as if the truck traveled the entire toll route. Max tolls are very expensive – on the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the New York Thruway, for example, a max toll runs well over \$100!

1-855-748-5485

ONLINE
www.RiverLink.com

MAIL
RiverLink
P.O. Box 70
Perry, NY 14530

IN PERSON
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Closed Saturday
Closed Sunday



As the owner of the vehicle on this invoice you are responsible under Ind. 9-21-3.5-9(a), 9-21-3.5-5, and KRS 175B.040 for payment of tolls on RiverLink operated toll roads.

Failure to pay the amount due by the date specified will result in the declaration of a Toll Violation.

Invoice cycles have resumed. Read more at RiverLink.com.

103 Quartermaster Ct.
Jeffersonville, IN 47130

100 E Main Street

FINANCIAL TRANSACTION SUMMARY					
TRX No.	License Plate	State	Date/Time	Location	Amount

TOLL TRANSPONDERS ACT JUST LIKE ACTIVE CREDIT CARDS – EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT BUT SUBJECT TO ABUSE AND FRAUD.

Carriers can dispute max tolls using data showing the vehicle's actual entry and exit points. However, max toll charges may not appear on the toll invoice under the same date and time as carrier records show the truck combination traveling that route. Similarly, the tolling authority may assign a max toll charge to a license plate number because the transponder was not read. This requires the carrier to match the charge to a trailer plate. So, catching max tolls early is critical, as the trucking company will need time to gather the appropriate data to challenge the assessment.

Motor carriers must also make sure that each transponder matches the proper truck combination. Toll roads assess charges by the number of axles in a truck combination (some facilities also add a height component, while the E-ZPass network also looks at trailer length). That "vehicle class" rate shows on the toll invoice. If the motor carrier assigns a transponder as a 5-axle tractor-semi combination, tolling authorities will charge that vehicle class rate even though the tractor may only be pulling a single pup, a 4-axle combination. *Vehicle misclassification charges* add up so motor carriers must make the proper transponder adjustments. Carriers can find these charges by conducting a line-by-line search of all toll transactions in their monthly printed toll invoices.

Truck operators should review toll invoices for more than just max tolls and vehicle misclassifications. Many toll facilities assess "*peak tolls*" (or "*dynamic tolling*") during the busiest traffic hours of the week. Those peak hours appear on the toll facility's website. The dramatic increase in toll rates during those times jumps off the page when examining toll invoices. Motor carriers will want to educate their drivers and dispatchers to avoid peak hours – but first carriers will want to examine the reams of toll invoice paperwork for any peak hour operations.

Transponders act just like active credit cards – effective and efficient but subject to *abuse and fraud*. Just as we review our personal credit card statements for unauthorized charges, motor carriers should review toll invoices for unauthorized uses. Some locations allow transponders to pay for *airport parking* or for *food purchases*. The E-ZPass network lists those parking charges with the abbreviation "SVC" for "service," while food purchases show up as "E-ZPass Plus" charges.

Carriers can also detect abuse and fraud when toll charges occur during *non-working hours* or on *non-company routes*. Those unauthorized charges could indicate an employee removing the transponder, or taking one from inventory, and using it in a different truck or in a personal vehicle. When someone surreptitiously takes a transponder from the carrier's inventory, the toll invoice may list charges for an "*unassigned device*." In any of these instances, the motor carrier will want to review its transponder management. First, though, the motor carrier must become aware of the unauthorized charges.

INFORM TOLLING SOLUTION

Alerts appear in the upper right corner of the INFORM Tolling Company Snapshot. These provide immediate notifications of suspect toll transactions. The Alert may indicate a *high volume of plate reads* or a *parking charge*, or an *unassigned device*, for example. Clicking on the individual Alert brings up details of that anomaly, allowing the motor carrier to determine if it warrants a challenge to the toll charge. The plate reads may just require an adjustment of the transponder on the truck windshield. The unassigned device, on the other hand, may indicate theft from the carrier's transponder inventory. Similarly, the motor carrier can easily sort data details by toll amount, revealing *max tolls* and *peak tolls*. INFORM Tolling helps uncover violations and errors immediately, without the time-consuming commitment of peering at endless lines of data in multiple toll invoices.



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TOLL MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE #3: COSTLY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If carriers don't pay toll charges promptly, usually within 30 days, the toll agency will send the truck operator a series of notices. Typically, a penalty fee applies beginning with the second notice. That penalty escalates with the third notice. Thereafter, the toll agency can pursue legal action to collect the unpaid tolls and penalties, at which time it can also assess court costs, administrative and legal fees. In the worst-case scenario an inaccurate or incorrect unpaid toll charge may prevent a truck operator from registering its vehicles. All that for an unpaid toll charge assessed in error.

Sometimes the toll agency may waive the service fee if the motor carrier makes contact immediately, and the parties agree on the correct amount. However, the truck operator must first find the toll violation. The notice may arrive in the company mail, among the reams of monthly toll invoice papers. Perhaps carrier staff has tossed the mailed violation notice, thinking it a non-issue. Toll violation notices quickly become an issue – and the costs and ramifications can escalate rapidly.

Most toll agencies have instructions, shown at the bottom of the toll violation notice, as to the specific information and formatting required to dispute a toll charge. Motor carriers must challenge every disputed toll transaction *individually*. Resolution of a toll challenge may take several months.

INFORM TOLLING SOLUTION

The daily INFORM Tolling updates help the PrePass Plus user stay ahead of toll charge dispute deadlines. But INFORM Tolling does more than that. When the carrier decides to challenge a toll charge, INFORM Tolling displays the exact format a toll agency requires for that challenge, with asterisks marking the essential entries. Through INFORM Tolling, carriers can submit toll charge disputes online, with no concern that the agency will reject or ignore them for improper formatting or lack of required data.

Of course, PrePass Plus users can continue to work directly with PrePass staff in challenging toll charges. PrePass remains extraordinarily successful in aiding its PrePass Plus customers. Experience shows the earlier in the process that a carrier contacts PrePass for help, the more likely PrePass will resolve the toll dispute successfully. With INFORM Tolling's daily updates, PrePass Plus users can get a head start on toll activity disputes, even when requesting PrePass to handle the challenges.



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TOLL MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE #4: NO FINAL ACCOUNTING

When a motor carrier successfully resolves a toll charge dispute, and satisfies the toll agency that it has received the correct dollar amount, there will be an adjustment to the motor carrier's monthly toll invoice. However, that adjustment may not occur until several months down the road. Also, the toll agency will often not give any indication as to which toll charge dispute the adjustment applies. The motor carrier cannot "close its books" on toll charge disputes.

INFORM TOLLING SOLUTION

When motor carriers submit toll charge disputes online through INFORM Tolling, the software tracks the status of the challenge and final resolution. A quick click brings up all the toll disputes. No more guessing where things stand or how to record the adjustment made on a toll agency's monthly invoice. With INFORM Tolling, a motor carrier can "close its books" on toll disputes.

ABOUT PREPASS: STRATEGIC CONSULTANTS AT WORK FOR YOU

PrePass Safety Alliance, the provider of PrePass services, works every day to make highways safer and more efficient through innovative data-driven solutions. As a PrePass customer, we take the time to understand your operation before prescribing a solution. This begins with an understanding of your business operation, goals, objectives, and business challenges. Our solutions include a powerful suite of systems—weigh station bypass, toll payment services and data insight tools. You receive a single, comprehensive program that helps you improve safety, reduce compliance risk, and control operating costs.

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