



NJDOT TRAFFIC ADVISORY

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Shark River Channel to be closed to all marine traffic intermittently on Tuesday and Wednesday for bridge testing in Monmouth County Route 71 Bridge over Shark River Channel remains closed and detoured

(Trenton) – The Shark River Channel underneath the Route 71 Bridge between Belmar and Avon-by-the-Sea in Monmouth County, is scheduled to be **closed to all marine traffic on Tuesday, August 5 and Wednesday, August 6 between 7:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., and again between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.** for bridge testing. The testing is in preparation for the reopening of the Route 71 Bridge over Shark River, which is anticipated to take place later this month (August).

From 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. and again from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 5 and Wednesday, August 6, the Shark River Channel underneath the Route 71 Bridge will be closed to all marine traffic for testing of the Route 71 Bridge. Marine traffic able to pass under the bridge in the closed position may **NOT** do so during this time, as overhead work on the Route 71 Bridge may pose safety concerns to traffic below. If the testing is completed earlier than expected, the Shark River Channel will reopen sooner.

NJDOT is working closely with the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure that mariners are up to date on both the closure and reopening of the channel. **Mariners should consult the Local Notice to Mariners for detailed information regarding advance notice procedures and should use caution when transiting the area.**

Anyone who has scheduled a trip or chartered a boat from a marina in the area should check with the boat operator for any schedule changes.

Route 71 remains closed and detoured for all vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. The **free shuttle bus service will continue operations** until the completion of interim repairs. Crews have been working around the clock, seven days a week to repair concrete foundations and mechanical components.

An interim repair to reopen the bridge to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians and restore normal operations is expected to be completed by early- to mid-August. The following detours will remain in place until the repairs are completed:

Route 71/Main Street northbound from Belmar to Avon-by-the-Sea Detour:

- Motorists on Route 71/Main Street northbound will be directed to turn left onto 8th Avenue
- Turn right on Route 35 northbound
- Continue over the Route 35/Shark River Bridge and follow signs for Avon-by-the-Sea

Route 71/Main Street southbound from Avon-by-the-Sea to Belmar Detour:

- Motorists on Route 71/Main Street southbound will be directed to turn right onto Sylvania Avenue
- Stay right and take the ramp to Route 35 South/Belmar
- Take Route 35 over the Shark River Bridge into Belmar
- Turn left onto 8th Avenue and follow to Route 71/Main Street

Free Shuttle

To accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists wishing to go between Belmar and Avon-by-the-Sea, a free shuttle bus began running on July 1. It will operate seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during construction. The service will end when the repairs are completed, and the Route 71 Bridge over the Shark River reopens to vehicles and pedestrians. The bus has 20 seats, is ADA accessible, and has bicycle carrying capability.

The free shuttle will follow the same route as last year. It will begin at the Belmar Train Station and run in a continuous loop, traveling on Route 71/Main Street northbound in Belmar and then back down River Road to 8th Avenue before using Route 35 to cross the Shark River. The bus will take the Sylvania Avenue exit and travel down Route 71/Main Street southbound in Avon-by-the-Sea to Washington Street, Station Street, and Jefferson Avenue before going back up Route 71/Main Street northbound to Sylvania Avenue across the Route 35 Bridge over the Shark River back to Belmar.

There are nine bus stops ([map attached](#)), and passengers should look for the "Shuttle Bus" signs ([photo attached](#)) at the following locations:

Stops in Belmar

- 1) West Railroad Avenue & 10th Avenue (Belmar Train Station)
- 2) Main Street & 10th Avenue
- 3) Main Street & 8th Avenue
- 4) River Road & Main Street
- 5) West Railroad Avenue & 7th Avenue

Stops in Avon-by-the-Sea

- 6) Main Street & Sylvania Avenue
- 7) Main Street & Washington Avenue
- 8) Jefferson Avenue & Main Street
- 9) Main Street & Garfield Avenue

Permanent Repair

Parts for a permanent repair are being manufactured. The permanent repair will take place this fall and will require the bridge to be closed to traffic and pedestrians again for approximately two months. Once full functionality is restored and the bridge is reopened in August, **it is expected to remain open through Columbus Day, Monday, October 13**. It will then be lifted into the open position and closed to vehicles and pedestrians at some point after that, while the permanent repairs are made. At that time, the detour will be restored, and the free shuttle bus will resume.

The permanent repairs to the South leaf are similar to the repairs made last year to the North leaf in which a hydraulic piston system was installed to replace mechanical components, which are no longer available.

Background

The Route 71 Bridge over Shark River, built in 1932, was closed to vehicular traffic on June 13 following a mechanical failure on the South Bridge leaf. The North Bridge leaf, which was repaired last year, is operational.

The failure of mechanical components on the 93-year-old Route 71 Bridge over Shark River is similar to last year.

Under federal law, NJDOT is legally obligated to allow marine traffic to pass, as it has the right of way. Consequently, the bridge must remain in the open position to allow all marine traffic to pass until emergency repairs are completed. The North leaf will be lowered and raised periodically each day to maintain functionality and minimize stress to the components from keeping the leaf in the upright position.

NJDOT has a capital project in design to replace the Route 71 Bridge over Shark River, which was built in 1932. Final Design is expected to begin next year, with construction expected to start in 2028 and complete in 2031.

Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website www.511nj.org for construction updates and real-time travel information. For NJDOT news follow us on X (Twitter) [@NewJerseyDOT](https://twitter.com/NewJerseyDOT), on the [NJDOT Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/NJDOT), or Instagram [@NewJersey.DOT](https://www.instagram.com/NewJersey.DOT).

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