



eFlow explained

Barrier-free tolling has almost arrived. We explain how it works.

It may only be three kilometres long but the M50 toll road causes endless chaos and frustration to thousands of motorists on a daily basis. At last in August, the barriers were raised with the advent of eFlow, the National Road's Authority barrier-free tolling system. However, motorists need to know how it works to ensure they don't encounter any nasty surprises.

How it works

The eFlow system works using overhead cameras and detectors close to the old West-Link toll plaza. You must either fit an electronic tag to your windscreen or pre-register your number plate details which will allow your vehicle's details to be recorded as you approach the tolled road. You will then be able to drive through the gates (at the legal speed limit of course) and travel onwards to your destination. If you don't register beforehand you can still use the barrier-free system. Your vehicle registration will be recorded and if payment is not received by 8pm on the following day the toll will be posted to you. However, this will incur an extra cost.

How much will it cost?

Drivers with an electronic tag will pay

€2 per trip to use barrier-free tolling. The tag is free but there is a €1 per month account charge. Motorists who pre-register their vehicle will pay €2.50 while unregistered drivers – who must pay by 8pm on the day following their journey – will be charged €3. If no payment is received a bill will be posted which will incur a further €3 fee. The motorist has 14 days to pay after which a penalty of €40 is imposed. Failure to pay within 56 days results in a €100 fine at which point legal proceedings may follow. Accounts can be pre-paid or post-paid and payment is accepted by cash, debit card or direct debit. Motor bikes are exempt from paying any toll.

Other tag providers

If you signed up for an electronic tag for tolling on any of Ireland's other toll roads your tag will work with the new system on the M50. However, while other tag providers are compatible and will allow users to avail of the lowest toll rates for regular M50 users the eFlow tag is the cheapest service available. The monthly charge is €1 with no deposit or initial set-up fee. However, M50 motorists who do not have a tag but use the registration number plate service instead should remember that this service is only available on the M50 and not other national tolled routes.

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Useful contacts

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choice comment

While there can be no doubt that the introduction of barrier-free tolling is a welcome relief for frustrated motorists the pricing structure is clearly unfair. Users who do not fit an electronic tag or pre-register their number plate are clearly discriminated against. It will cost the occasional user 20% more to use the toll road over registered number plate users and 50% more than electronically tagged motorists. The question has to be why? And if you forget to pay by 8pm the following day the cost doubles. Also, with so many foreign registered cars on our roads, and as yet no system to access their details, how will these tolls be collected? Would it not be sensible to have one cash lane where payment on the day is possible so that using the M50 is fair for everyone?