

Saltash Tunnel Technology Upgrade - Update Autumn 2024 to Autumn 2025

National Highways is starting the next phase of a major modernisation upgrade of the A38 Saltash Tunnel in Cornwall this autumn. This represents a £25 million investment from National Highways to improve journeys between south east Cornwall and Plymouth, and maintain the safe operation of the tunnel for many years to come.

The tunnel and its 'reversible' lane, which allows traffic to travel in either direction depending on the time of day or conditions, rely on specialised technology to operate and keep drivers safe. The current 'tunnel & lane control system' is over 20 years old, approaching the end of its life and is being replaced and upgraded as part of an extensive programme of work. This will keep everyone using the tunnel safe, provide more reliable journeys and reduce the risk of unplanned closures.

Forming a key route between Plymouth and south east Cornwall, any work on the tunnel has to be carefully planned. National Highways is liaising with local stakeholders and its construction team to refine how these essential renewals are delivered with the least disruption to the south east Cornwall community and drivers.

Work is currently due to start at the end of November with weeknight closures of the tunnel. These will continue until the work is finished. There will be speed restrictions and narrow lanes being installed west-bound between St Budeaux and the Tamar Bridge from early 2025 to allow work to be carried out in the verges. In early to mid-2025, the current control system will need to be turned off and removed to allow installation of the new system. This means there will only be one lane open in each direction for A38 traffic through the tunnel, which will be fixed as the traffic can no longer be dynamically controlled. The Tamar Bridge will retain its four traffic lanes. There will be one lane fixed in each direction for A38 traffic, a lane dedicated for Saltash Town only in the westbound direction and the eastbound cantilever open for local and 'tag only' traffic. This work should finish in autumn 2025.

More details around the work and closures, including dates, will be available on the National Highways webpage as the scheme progresses: nationalhighways.co.uk/SaltashTunnel. And for any questions, you can contact the National Highways Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 (open 24/7), who will direct your enquiry to the team, or email: info@nationalhighways.co.uk.

20 September 2024