



NJDOT TRAFFIC ADVISORY

For Immediate Release:
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I-80 westbound closed until further notice following new median sinkhole in Wharton, Morris County Area has been stabilized and testing is ongoing

(Trenton) – I-80 westbound remains closed and detoured at Exit 34B until further notice following a new sinkhole that formed in the median on Wednesday in Wharton, Morris County. In addition, **NJDOT has created a [web page](#) to keep the public informed about the progress of repairs.**

Shortly after 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 19, an approximately 15-foot by 15-foot hole opened in the median in the I-80 eastbound work zone. Out of an abundance of caution, NJDOT closed and detoured all lanes on I-80 westbound at Exit 34B/Route 15 northbound.

Crews worked overnight to stabilize the area around the median sinkhole and will continue working around the clock until repairs are complete and the highway reopened. Testing on I-80 westbound is ongoing to confirm the roadway's integrity and to determine what steps are necessary to reopen I-80 westbound as safely and quickly as possible. It has not yet been determined when I-80 westbound may be safe to reopen.

“As we assess the impacts of this new sinkhole on I-80, we will continue to work around the clock so that New Jersey commuters and families get their lives back on track,” said **Governor Phil Murphy**. “Two weeks ago, I declared a State of Emergency in Morris County so the State could access federal funding to help us repair this damage. We understand the significant disruption that this has caused and remind everyone that the safety of New Jerseyans continues to be our top priority.”

“To ensure public safety, I-80 westbound was closed and detoured Wednesday after a new sinkhole opened up in the median in the I-80 eastbound work zone,” **NJDOT Commissioner Fran O’Connor** said. “We have stabilized the area and are testing I-80 westbound to determine what needs to be done to ensure we can safely reopen the roadway as soon as possible.

“We understand the additional challenges this has for motorists, businesses, and residents in the neighboring communities and appreciate the cooperation and support we have received from our local partners and the New Jersey State Police. We are working together to improve mobility in the areas as best as possible as repairs continue.”

“Wednesday night, NJDOT crews discovered another sinkhole on I-80, and out of an abundance of caution, Commissioner O’Conner made the difficult but necessary decision to close I-80 westbound for further assessment,” **Senator Anthony M. Bucco (R-25)** said. “I understand the significant disruption this has caused and urge all residents and travelers to follow detour signs, allow extra travel time, and stay updated on developments. Public safety remains the top priority, and my office stands ready to assist residents and businesses however we can until this issue is resolved.”

“I understand the frustration this extended closure is causing for residents, commuters, and local businesses,” **Assemblywoman Aura K. Dunn** said. “While the NJDOT continues its work to address this critical issue, I am pushing for swift action to minimize disruption and ensure a safe resolution. I will continue to work closely with local officials and NJDOT to address the challenges and advocate for our community’s needs.”

“With the terribly unfortunate news about a new sinkhole in the median on I-80, we now have one of the most important interstates in the U.S. completely closed. The impact of this news is devastating for our region, our State and our Country,” **Assemblyman Christian Barranco** said. “Please be extra cautious about your needs for food and medical care. Now is the time to start locating sources away from I-80 and make sure you have a plan for emergencies. I will be working every day on communications with NJDOT and NJ State Police. I am pushing to be sure we have State and Federal monies for repairs.”

TRAFFIC MITIGATION

The Department is continuing to work closely with local officials and the New Jersey State Police to improve mobility along the detour and alternate routes in the region. As the Department did when I-80 eastbound was first closed, NJDOT continues to adjust the timing of signals on Route 15, Route 10, and Route 46 to minimize the impact of the I-80 westbound detour. NJDOT and New Jersey State Police will continue to monitor traffic conditions and make adjustments as necessary to mitigate delays.

Due the significant impact of the closures, GPS and other map services may reroute traffic onto local roads that are not designed to handle commercial vehicles or increased traffic volume. This is particularly important for trucks as there are low bridges and weight restrictions on many roads in the area.

Please remain on the designated detours or alternate routes. Follow all posted signs and regulations, and if you are approaching an intersection, please “Don’t block the box.”

In addition, NJDOT is using technology to send messages to commercial truckers to provide information about the closure, detour, and alternate routes. The Department is also using digital messaging signs and working with our regional transportation partners to share information so drivers can make informed decisions about potential alternate routes to take.

DETOURS AND ALTERNATE ROUTES

Motorists are asked to avoid the area, seek alternate routes, plan extra travel time, and be patient while repairs are ongoing. The following detours are in place until further notice:

I-80 westbound Exit 34B Detour:

- Motorists on I-80 westbound will be directed to take Exit 34B to Route 15 north/Jefferson/Sparta
- Keep left on Route 15 northbound
- Use the left two left lanes at Pondview Drive to make a U-turn onto Route 15 southbound
- Stay right to take the ramp to I-80 westbound

I-80 eastbound Exit 34 Detour:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are being directed to take Exit 34 to Route 15/Wharton/Dover/Sparta
- At the end of the ramp, stay right following signs for Route 15/Jefferson/Dover/Sparta/Picatiny Arsenal
- **Stay in the right lane on North Main Street** following signs for Route 15 North/Jefferson/Sparta
- **Bear right toward Route 15 northbound/Picatiny Arsenal**
- At the traffic signal, merge onto Route 15 northbound
- Stay left, following signs for Pondview Drive/U and Left Turns
- Using both lanes, make a U-turn at the Pondview Drive traffic signal and merge onto Route 15 southbound
- Stay left to take the exit to I-80 eastbound

Traffic is advised to use Exit 28 to take Route 10 eastbound or Route 46 eastbound as an alternate route to avoid the area. This exit is several miles before the closure:

Route 10 eastbound Alternate Route:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are advised to take Exit 28/Route 46 eastbound to Route 10/Ledgewood/Lake Hopatcong, which is several miles before the closure
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound
- Stay right to take Route 10 eastbound
- Take the exit to I-287 northbound
- Stay right to take the ramp to I-80 eastbound

Route 46 eastbound Alternate Route:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are advised to take Exit 28/Route 46 eastbound to Route 10/Ledgewood/Lake Hopatcong, which is several miles before the closure
 - Continue on Route 46 eastbound
 - Stay in the two left lanes to turn left at the traffic signal to continue on Route 46 eastbound
 - Turn left onto Route 15 northbound in Dover, back to I-80
- or
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound for about 12 miles and stay left for I-80 eastbound

NJDOT has created an I-80 [web page](#) to keep the public informed about the progress of repairs.

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](#), or Instagram [@NewJersey.DOT](https://www.instagram.com/NewJersey.DOT).

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