Lane Rental Scheme

Questions and Answers



East Sussex Lane Rental Scheme

Frequently asked questions

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to anyone wishing to find out more about the East Sussex Lane Rental Scheme. The scheme was established in April 2025 to help minimise disruption from roadworks and improve the efficiency, safety and effectiveness of the highway network across East Sussex.

1. What is a Lane Rental scheme?

Lane rental is scheme introduced by the UK government which aims to discourage utility companies, contractors and developers from occupying busy roads with roadworks at peak times.

It does this by charging companies when they use busy roads during peak periods, such as rush hour. This encourages work to be done more quickly and at less busy times. The scheme works alongside the East Sussex Highways Permit Scheme.

2. What are the aims of the scheme?

The scheme aims to:

- reduce disruption from roadworks
- improve journey reliability
- shorten the time works are on site
- improve planning and coordination
- encourage work outside peak times
- ensure roads are properly reinstated

3. Who can introduce Lane Rental schemes?

Any local highway authority in England can start a scheme once they have approval from the Secretary of State for Transport.

4. How are charges calculated?

Charges depend on how long the road is occupied and how busy it is.

In East Sussex, the daily charges are:

- £1,500 for a lane closure
- £2,500 for a road closure

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The council may reduce or waive charges in some cases, for example where works:

- improve the highway network
- extend the life of an asset
- reduce the need for future roadworks

5. How do I apply?

There is no separate application.

The street works system will automatically find which roads fit the scheme. You should include all relevant details in your permit application. S50 and S278 applications follow the usual process.

6. What are the benefits?

The scheme helps to:

- reduce how long roadworks last
- encourage work at quieter times
- improve coordination between organisations
- reduce disruption for residents and road users

7. Which roads does it apply to?

The scheme only applies to selected, high traffic roads.

You can find the full list here.

8. Where does the money go?

The scheme is designed to change behaviour, not raise money.

Where charges are applied, the income is reinvested in the highway network.

- at least 50% is spent on maintenance, including potholes
- the rest supports projects that reduce disruption and improve the network

This can include new technology, trials, infrastructure improvements and congestion reduction measures.

8. Why isn't all the money used for potholes?

After covering operating costs, 50% of the funds will go to highway maintenance, as agreed with the Department for Transport. The leftover funds will go towards projects that stop future disruptions. This includes improving work methods and cutting down on the need to dig up the road again.

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9. What works are included?

All works are included, including those by East Sussex Highways and developers.

10. Will this affect council tax?

No. Lane rental charges are paid by organisations carrying out works.

11. Does this reduce funding for repairs?

No. Overall, the scheme increases the amount of money invested in the highway network.

12. Where else does Lane Rental operate?

Lane rental schemes are already in place in London, Kent, Surrey and West Sussex. Other local authorities around the country are starting to introduce lane rental schemes.

13. Will there be more night works?

Some works already take place in the evening or overnight.

There may be more out-of-hours work to reduce disruption. This will only be approved where impacts on nearby residents are properly managed.

14. Which roads does it apply to?

Emergency work may happen during chargeable times. This is to manage safety risks. It also helps prevent serious damage. In these cases, no charge applies for the first 48 hours. After this, normal charges may apply.

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