NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

OFF LIMITS TO SOLO DRIVERS

New rules bar 'single' cars from crossings

By DAN MANGAN

Dramatic regulations, barring most single-occupant cars from entering a large area of Manhattan via river crossings during the morning, go into effect today as the city fights to regain at least some traffic sanity.

When traveling over any bridge or tunnel that connects to Manhattan "below 63rd Street, you need more than one person in a car," Mayor Giuliani announced yesterday.

Private cars with only a driver are banned from the crossings' Manhattan-bound lanes from 6 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday, until further notice.

The crossings are the Queensboro, Williamsburg, Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges, as well as the Queens-Midtown Tunnel.

The same restrictions will apply to the inbound Lincoln Tunnel on Friday.

Cars attempting to get into Manhattan with only one driver will be turned back at those crossings.

Vehicles that are exempted include cars with commercial, government and press plates, city-issued disabled tags, medallion and livery cabs and motorcycles.

Cars that are already in Manhattan will not be affected.

"Within Manhattan, you can get in your car — single person — and drive," Giuliani said, although he urged people to use public transportation or walk instead.

He announced details of the ban after a confusing day in which his administration several times revised information that had already been released to the media.

The new rules come as New York reels from massive traffic jams fueled by police security checkpoints and the closings of the Holland tunnel to all non-emergency vehicles and the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel to non-emergency vehicles, except commuter buses.

"It has taken me almost three hours to make an 18-minute trip," said Bob Mann, a Queens dance-school operator who was waiting to cross the 59th Street Bridge into Manhattan yesterday.

"I think it's worse than it's ever been," said Fred Robins, who was stuck in the middle of the same traffic snarl.

And it could be worse tomorrow, the first non-holiday rush hour for the city's new single-occupant car program.

Giuliani said he chose the normally traffic-light Yom Kippur holiday today as a test run.

Michael Morcinie, a Long Island contractor who does jobs in Manhattan, said he'll bring some of his workers in his car to comply with the order.

"It's going to make my life difficult ... but it's better for Manhattan," said. George Monos, a Brooklyn contractor. "I think traffic needs to be alleviated somewhat."

Transit advocates joined five former city transportation commissioners yesterday to laud the car-pool plan.

"We need to keep our city moving in this time of crisis. New York simply cannot afford the massive gridlock that has been plaguing our area," read a statement from the coalition, which includes the Regional Plan Association, Straphangers Campaign, Transportation Alternatives and the Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

Businessmen say the traffic jams are hurting them while repair work remains undone, and deliveries are delayed. They say it takes some trucks up to three hours to clear police checkpoints set up at city crossings because of heightened security fears.

Bryan Cardinale, manager of the Park Avenue Country Club cafe in Manhattan, said he expected five food and liquor deliveries by noon, but none had arrived by 3:45 p.m.

When he called the delivery companies to inquire, "they said they're [the trucks] right around the block. That was three hours ago. That's a pretty big block," Cardinale said.

To encourage car-pooling and the use of public transportation, the city is setting up a 4,000-vehicle park-and-ride at Shea Stadium in Flushing.

NEW YORK POST, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2001

CITY_21MC100_01183025?

NYC-WTC_000412841