



Lyttelton Tunnel Fire Protection Upgrade Project

PROJECT UPDATE

MAY 2017



Work starts soon on installing a modern fire deluge system in the Lyttelton Tunnel to improve safety for motorists, and reduce the risk of a lengthy fire related tunnel closure.

This \$28.7 million project being delivered by the NZ Transport Agency on behalf of the government, is the largest project undertaken at the tunnel since it opened over 50 years ago. This significant safety investment is necessary to bring it into line with other major highway tunnels around the country.



Protecting an essential route

It will also increase the reliability of this lifeline for Canterbury and the South Island that is critical for getting fuel supplies to Christchurch and beyond, and for exporters to get their goods to markets. With the alternative route to Lyttelton, Evans Pass, closed since the 2011 earthquakes and not due to re-open until 2018/19, the tunnel is the only viable route for freight vehicles to and from the Lyttelton Port of Christchurch.

While Dyers Pass Road can be used by some trucks, it is not an ideal route because it is steep, narrow and windy, posing greater safety issues for larger vehicles and other road users.

As the main road link to Lyttelton Port of Christchurch, the South Island's major freight and distribution hub, a significant tunnel fire could close the tunnel for some time. This would have a huge impact on Christchurch, Canterbury and the South Island. Because the tunnel is an essential transport link experiencing increasing volumes of traffic, the fire risk is too high to delay installing a new fire deluge system until Evans Pass-Sumner Road re-opens in 2018/19.



Why install a fire deluge system?

A fire deluge system is the most effective means of managing fire risk in the Lyttelton Tunnel. The system is designed to control and contain a fire until fire services reach the scene. Work on the new deluge system won't be visible to tunnel users, as it will be installed in the exhaust and air duct corridors above the tunnel.

Around 9km of pipe will be used for the deluge system.

Other safety improvements will be carried out in addition to the fire protection deluge system.

These include:

- » a new radio broadcast system, in-tunnel PA system
- » upgrades of all tunnel cameras – some of these will feature technology capable of detecting when a vehicle has stopped inside the tunnel.

Managing tunnel traffic

This challenging and complex job will take up to 17 months to complete, making some traffic delays for tunnel users inevitable. To reduce these, work will be largely carried out late at night and during the early hours of the morning when tunnel traffic is at its lightest. Disruptions will be publicised well in advance of these occurring. It is expected that there will be up to a maximum of 15 full night closures and a maximum of 60 night single lane operations during the 17 month contract.

The Transport Agency is working with Lyttelton Port Company, the local community and other key stakeholders, including transport operators, to minimise disruptions for tunnel users especially truck operators servicing the port. Trucks account for an estimated 20% of tunnel traffic.

Tunnel access for emergency services will be maintained at all times.



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Find out more about this project at:

- www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/lyttelton-tunnel

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