

Day 3: Bay Bridge Work To Continue Through Friday Evening

The Latest: Here's what we know...

- Bay Bridge emergency repair continuing through Friday night
- Still unlikely bridge will be open in time for Friday PM commute traffic
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Speaking at a hastily arraigned late-evening press conference Thursday, Caltrans officials said, should all repairs and testing be completed ahead of Friday morning, there is a slight chance the **San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge** could go into service in time for the Friday morning commute.

Dale Bonner, the Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, announced Thursday evening that Caltrans does not expect repairs on the Bay Bridge to be completed until Friday morning, with structural testing to be conducted by Caltrans following the completion of the repair.

However, hours after that press conference ended, Caltrans Public Information Officer Bart Ney told reporters that Bonner misspoke and meant to say the bridge work should be finished by 10pm Thursday, not 10am Friday.

"At the point that that work finished, we're going to bring in our third-party testers to take a look at the system as it is in place," Ney told reporters. "If we have the ability...we will try and open the bridge for the morning commute. "

That ability will depend on when Caltrans and **Sacramento**-based MCM Construction complete the repair of several eyerods that fell during Tuesday evening rush hour commute, and when inspectors can test the new repair and design of the replacement eyerods Caltrans and MCM have erected.

"There is a possibility that we may be able to finish," Ney said cautiously, "But this is a situation where you should plan that the bridge will not be available."

If inspectors say Caltrans must make additional repairs or adjustments, the Bay Bridge could be out of action for an undetermined, but lengthier, period of time.

For the past two days, commuters who would normally frequent the Bay Bridge have had to find alternate routes into the city. Some chose to take advantage of the Bay Area Rapid Transit, which saw a record number of passengers traveling on BART trains.

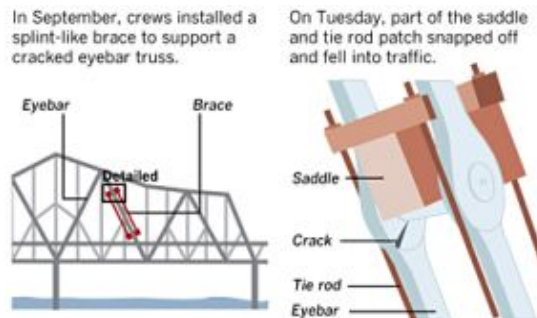
BART officials announced more than 25,000 passengers rode BART trains during the first day of the Bridge's decommission alone, or about a 50% increase in ridership. BART's limited parking lot, which can accommodate about 46,000 vehicles, have been filling up fast.

"We have called in extra personnel to help us make sure we operate with every available train car we have in order to provide as much capacity as possible," BART Assistant General Manager of Operations Paul Oversier said in a statement released by the agency on Tuesday. Trains have been running earlier in the morning and later in the evening to shuttle passengers into and out of San Francisco and the surrounding areas.

Alternatively, some are choosing to take advantage of several other bridges leading in to the **San Francisco Bay Area**. Officials with the **California** Highway Patrol said some of the worst traffic during rush hour could be found on the crowded **San Mateo-Hayward** Bridge, which links Foster City in the San Francisco Bay Area with Hayward in the East Bay along State Route 92, linking Interstate 880 in the east with US Route 101 toward San Francisco.

Traffic delays have been reported to increase by fifteen minutes to an hour in some areas.

As for the Bay Bridge, it's still anyone guess when the artery linking San Francisco and **Oakland** that shuttles more than 200,000 drivers daily will re-open. Caltrans also doesn't have an estimate as to how much the repair and testing



will cost.

The bridge was abruptly closed Tuesday evening after a large chunk of the bridge fell onto the west-bound lanes, or upper-deck, of the bridge. The 5,000 piece of metal caused damage to three vehicles, resulting in at least one minor injury. Caltrans says they're working with the property owners of those vehicles to "restore their property."