

HOV Lane Eligibility and Hours of Operation

- **Motorcycles** - Federal law requires HOV lanes to be open to motorcycles, regardless of the number of riders.
- **Emergency Vehicles** - Emergency vehicles include any vehicle of a law enforcement agency or other governmental agency or public service corporation, including ambulances and identified vehicles of a police or fire department, when responding to an emergency.
- **Public Transportation Vehicles** - Public transportation vehicles with only the driver can use the HOV lanes. This allows empty buses to travel in the HOV lane to the start or end of a transit route.
- **Privately Owned Buses** - Any bus designed to carry 15 or more passengers.

Vehicles with more than three axles, regardless of the number of occupants, are prohibited from I-77 HOV lane use. Commercial trucks are not allowed to use any designated HOV lane in North America. This restriction is applied to the I-77 HOV facility for safety reasons and because allowing trucks does not encourage ridesharing during peak commute periods.

The I-77 HOV lanes are open only to eligible vehicles 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This restriction ensures safe operation of the HOV lanes, particularly near the I-77/I-85 interchange. Twenty-four hour operation also simplifies signing, enforcement, and driver understanding.

About half of the nation's HOV lanes operate part-time with HOV lanes reverting to general traffic use when they are not restricted. The remaining half of the HOV facilities operates on a 24-hour basis. Each area has developed an HOV operation policy that works best for their commuters. Both operating approaches are found in proximity to Charlotte. Nashville, Norfolk-Hampton Roads and Memphis operate HOV lanes on a part-time basis while Atlanta and Dallas operate their HOV lanes on a 24-hour basis.

During emergency situations when incidents disrupt one or more lanes along I-77, NCDOT's Metrolina Regional Transportation Management Center (MRTMC) will determine if the HOV lanes may be opened to all traffic around the scene of a major incident. When this happens, MRTMC staff will advise motorists through media releases and changeable message signs along the corridor.