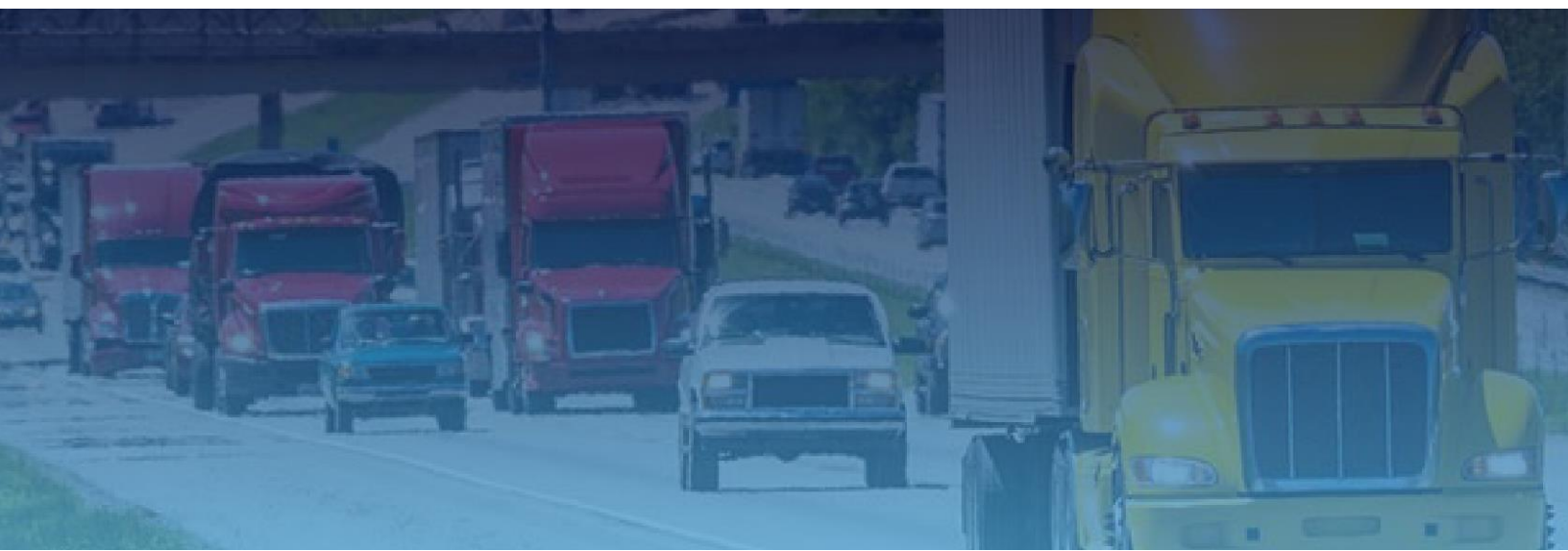




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Toll Management Recommended Practices Motor Carriers



The problem

Electronic tolling is now standard across U.S. highways, and when transponders fail, a \$3 toll becomes a \$60+ violation. Motor carriers typically overpay by 30-50% on tolls due to preventable mistakes.

The most expensive problems include:

- Transponder read failures triggering 50% higher plate toll rates
- Unregistered plates turning toll into a \$10-25 violation
- Traveling with out-of-state transponders missing local discounts
- Poor device maintenance causing guaranteed system failures
- Unit-transponder pairing mismatches causing billing errors
- Duplicate toll charges from system processing errors
- Unassigned tolls that can't be matched to specific trips
- Personal use of company transponders during off-duty time

Example:

- New York Thruway: NY-issued E-ZPass gets in-state discounts; failures trigger a \$10 "V-toll."
- Port Authority Bridges/Tunnels: Special local rates apply only to in-state tags; wrong tag = no discount + plate toll.

Five essential solutions

Smart transponder management

Below are key best practices around managing transponder most effectively to avoid overpaying in tolls:

- Use correct transponder types for your corridors to capture in-state discounts.
- Mount behind windshield mirror, never on dashboard.
- Clean weekly and replace every 3-5 years before failure.
- Keep spare units for immediate replacement.

- Track which transponder is assigned to which vehicle to prevent billing attribution errors.

Complete plate registration

Register every tractor plate, and every owned or leased trailer and chassis plate for which the motor carrier is responsible, with the applicable toll account before the dispatch. Keep registrations current when tractors, trailers, chassis, or leased equipment are added, removed, or reassigned. Proper registration helps prevent plate-based tolls from becoming violations when a transponder is not read.

Monthly statement audits

Review invoices systematically, flagging plate toll charges, violation notices, duplicate transactions, and unassigned tolls that can't be matched to trips. Challenge questionable charges within 30-60 day dispute windows. Track recoveries to demonstrate ROI.

Advanced toll reconciliation

Implement systematic reconciliation of agency invoices against actual vehicle routes using GPS data. Many carriers discover significant discrepancies between what they're billed and what trips actually occurred.

- For interchanged equipment, retain timely and accurate out-gate EDI or interchange records linking the equipment plate, motor carrier, location, and timestamp.
- Use GPS data, where available, to confirm the equipment's location and custody when delayed toll charges are received.
- Track unit-transponder pairings to ensure tolls are attributed to correct vehicles and resolve unassigned tolls that create accounting gaps.

Driver training & monitoring

- Educate drivers on proper mounting, care procedures, and immediate reporting of malfunctions.
- Provide clear toll lane guidance and establish policies for transponder use.

- Monitor for personal use during off-duty time, which can create unexpected charges and complicate expense allocation.

Financial impact

10-truck fleet example: \$3,000 monthly toll spend with 35% overpayment equals \$1,050 monthly waste, or \$12,600 annually. Implementation requires minimal cost beyond audit time, with most carriers seeing immediate reductions.

Advanced reconciliation often reveals additional 5-10% in billing errors, duplicate charges, and unassigned tolls that standard audits miss.

Quick action steps

Weekly:

- Audit transponder inventory and replace damaged/aging units
- Verify that all tractor plates, and all owned or leased trailer and chassis plates for which the carrier is responsible, are registered with the applicable toll account.
- Review last 3 months of statements and dispute any violations
- Check unit-transponder assignments for accuracy

Monthly Actions:

- Clean and inspect transponders during routine maintenance
- Audit toll statements for plate charges, violations, duplicates, and unassigned tolls
- Update accounts immediately for any fleet changes
- Challenge questionable charges within dispute deadlines
- Confirm that interchange and out-gate records are complete, timely, and accessible for toll validation.
- Reconcile toll invoices against GPS-tracked routes

Success Target: Keep plate charges under 5% of total toll transactions and resolve 100% of unassigned tolls monthly.

Bottom line

Toll mismanagement creates a silent profit drain that compounds monthly. Smart carriers who implement systematic practices gain competitive advantages through lower costs, while others continue bleeding money on preventable mistakes. Start with plate registration and transponder maintenance, then add advanced reconciliation to catch billing errors that basic audits miss - these actions eliminate 80% of toll overpayments.