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MORTH

Barrier-free toll plaza layout set for four-lane and wider highways

NHAI Policy Circular No. 17.5.104/2026 sets the layout, lanes, gantries, lighting and signs for barrier-free toll plazas on four-lane and wider highways.

THE NATIONAL HIGHWAYS Authority of India (NHAI) has issued Policy Circular No. 17.5.104/2026, dated October 30, 2026, on toll plaza layout and infrastructure for barrier-free tolling on future and under-construction four-lane and above National Highway projects. It is signed by S. Sanjay Kumar Patel, Chief General Manager (Coord.) (i/c), and records a decision taken on e-Office File No. IHMCL-14013(12)/39/2026-ITS Cell. It modifies NHAI Policy Circular No. 17.5.82/2021 of May 24, 2021 for these highways; that circular's other provisions stay unchanged, and two-lane paved shoulder highways keep regular tolling under it.

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The circular says the Government of India plans barrier-free tolling on all four-lane and above National Highways. Under it, the user fee is collected at free-flow speed through gantry-mounted ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras and RFID readers, with no physical barrier. The system deducts the fee through FASTag while the vehicle moves. For a vehicle without a valid and working FASTag, it generates an e-Notice under Rule 14 of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008.

Each plaza has two gantries. The Pay Axis Gantry (FOB type), at the plaza itself, is the main system for deducting the fee. The Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) Gantry is the backup, placed after the pay axis gantry, preferably within 200 to 350 m of it. The clear height from the finished road level to the bottom of the cameras or readers must be at least 6.0 m, as set earlier in Policy Circular No. 17.5.96/2026 of March 13, 2026.

Because non-stop tolling moves more vehicles through each lane, the circular says plazas can have fewer lanes than conventional ones. Table 1 sets the lanes at the pay axis gantry on a throughput of 600 vehicles an hour per lane, including the over-dimension (OD) or spare lane. Toll lanes are 3.5 m wide and the OD lane 4.5 m, with spring bollards as lane separators. The pay corridor is 70 m of Pavement Quality Concrete (PQC), 35 m on each side of the pay axis gantry, tapering at 1:20. Plazas go on straight stretches of highway wherever feasible.

Drivers get advance direction signs at a suitable distance before the gantry (500 m is the example given), and a Variable Message Sign (VMS) gantry about 1 km before the plaza, which also helps control OD vehicles. The plaza zone gets high-mast lighting, which the circular says matters for night-time safety and for the cameras and readers, whose performance depends on the light at the gantry. The Administrative Building-cum-O&M Centre is built under Policy Circular No. 17.5.101/2026 of August 27, 2026 and serves as the back office for the plaza.

On public funded EPC, HAM and item rate projects, the highway contractor builds the pay axis gantry, the road works around the plaza, the administrative building, the power supply and high-mast lighting, the advance signs, the plumbing, water supply, sewerage, drainage and water tanks, and a backup generator of at least 125 kVA. IHMCL appoints a barrier-less toll service provider (a bank or system integrator) under Policy Circular No. 17.5.93/2025 of November 26,

2025. That provider supplies, installs, runs and maintains the tolling equipment on both gantries, sets up the control room, builds the MLFF gantry and pays the running power charges. On BOT (Toll), TOT, InvIT and RIIT projects, the concessionaire builds barrier-free plazas under its concession agreement in upcoming projects.

How a project adopts the layout depends on its stage. Projects at the DPR (detailed project report) stage put it in the bid document. Awarded projects still waiting for their appointed date, and projects under construction where plaza work has not started, adopt it through a positive or negative change of scope. Projects under construction that have not yet procured toll equipment, with commercial operation at least 6 months away, adopt it as far as possible the same way. Where the equipment is already installed or procured and commercial operation is within 6 months, the plaza is built under the existing contract and barrier-free tolling comes later through IHMCL. Regional offices, PIUs and DPR consultants must write these provisions into the DPRs, bid documents and schedules of all upcoming four-lane and above projects.

Issued by	National Highways Authority of India
Document	Policy Circular No. 17.5.104/2026
Dated	October 30, 2026
Signed by	S. Sanjay Kumar Patel, Chief General Manager (Coord.) (i/c)
Applies to	Toll plazas on future and under-construction four-lane and above National Highways
Modifies	Policy Circular No. 17.5.82/2021 of May 24, 2021, for four-lane and above highways only
Not covered	Two-lane paved shoulder highways, which keep regular tolling
Main tolling point	Pay Axis Gantry (FOB type) at the plaza
Backup	MLFF Gantry, preferably 200 to 350 m after the pay axis gantry
Fee collection	FASTag, read by RFID readers and ANPR cameras; e-Notice under Rule 14 for vehicles without a valid FASTag
Lane width	3.5 m; OD lane 4.5 m
Lane throughput assumed	600 vehicles an hour
Pay corridor	70 m of PQC, 35 m each side of the pay axis gantry, tapering 1:20
Clear height under equipment	At least 6.0 m from finished road level
Signs	Advance direction signs (for instance at 500 m); VMS gantry about 1 km before the plaza

Tolling equipment	Supplied, run and maintained by a service provider IHMCL appoints
Backup generator	At least 125 kVA, on public funded projects

Number of toll lanes at MLFF toll plazas (Table 1)

Highway configuration	Lanes in the MLFF toll plaza, including the OD or spare lane
4-lane highway	8 (4+4)
6-lane highway	10 (5+5)
8-lane highway	12 (6+6)

The policy circular (PDF, 4.9 MB)

Source: MoRTH's own copy.

Checked against the official copy on November 12, 2026.

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