

## Link your FASTag to a prepaid card, not a savings or current account

Since FASTag is mandatory, it's better to understand its risks; linking it to your savings will lead to balance being deducted from your bank account

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*A car approaching a toll plaza*

America has it, China has it, Australia has it, and even Thailand has it. And, from December 1, India, too, will join the list of 40-plus countries that have an electronic toll-collection system.

The toll-collection system based on Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) card technology is named FASTag.

Shailendra Singh, head, digital banking, Bank of Baroda, said, “It is a reloadable electronic toll-collection card that you have to paste on your car’s windscreen. You then don’t need to stop for toll payment, so it eases movement of vehicles.”

The government is so serious about FASTag that individuals not using it will be charged double the toll. Here are a few essential things you need to know about it.

Buying a FASTag is akin to buying a prepaid SIM. Go to the point of sale, submit Know Your Customer (KYC) documents and your vehicle's registration certificate (RC), fill the registration form, and then activate the tag. Unlike a SIM that you place in your mobile, paste the FASTag on your car. Every time you pass a toll plaza, the toll charge will be deducted from the balance automatically.

As in a SIM, you will have to recharge it if it's linked to a prepaid account. If it is linked to your savings or current account, the charge will get deducted from the balance in your account.

Sudipta Roy, head, unsecured assets, ICICI Bank, said: "The customer will receive text alerts on their registered mobile numbers for all the transactions done in their tag account. Money can be reloaded on FASTag instantly using a bank's digital channels such as UPI, credit and debit cards, internet, and mobile banking."

<b>WHAT IF...</b>	
<b>I want FASTag for two-wheelers?</b>	No, you can't get one
<b>I want to sell my car?</b>	Remove tag and delink account
<b>I have two cars?</b>	Get separate FASTag for each one
<b>I have a dispute/incorrect amount deduction?</b>	Contact bank's call centre
<b>I live within 10 kms of the toll plaza?</b>	Buy FASTag, submit address documents at that particular toll plaza, and get concession there
<b>My FASTag has balance but does not work at a toll plaza?</b>	Pay cash and inform the bank

Several banks are currently linked with FASTag — State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Bank of Baroda, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, Paytm Payments Bank, and Equitas Small Finance Bank. They are also available at over 28,500 point-of-sale locations set up by various banks, and by the Indian Highways Management Company Ltd (IHMCL) or the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), like RTOs and petrol pumps.

Singh said, "FASTag is account and bank agnostic."

This means you don't need to go to a bank with which you have a pre-existing relationship to get the tag. A one-time tag deposit amount is charged, which starts at Rs 200 (for cars, jeeps, and vans), and the minimum recharge is for Rs 100. The tag has a validity of five years. Car, jeep, and van owners will have to maintain a minimum balance of Rs 160.

Since FASTag is mandatory, it's better to understand its risks.

Ritesh Bhatia, a Mumbai based cyber-security expert, said, "To obtain a FASTag, one has to provide or upload personal information such as KYC documents, photograph, and mobile number. Such information needs to be protected strongly by all the stakeholders in the ecosystem. A data breach could result in identity thefts. Moreover, it seems that the toll booths will take photographs of the cars and drivers passing by. This information, too, needs to be strongly protected. The entire

technology is like an Aadhaar for vehicles. Hence, data privacy should be the top concern for all involved.”

The above point, of course, needs to be kept in mind by the institutions that are part of the ecosystem. What can you do? Remember, you can link your FASTag to your existing savings or current account, or to a prepaid account. No technology is 100 per cent secure, hence it is better to be safe than sorry. A prepaid card will be a better choice than linking your FASTag to a bank savings or current account to the. You can load up to Rs 1 lakh in a prepaid card with full KYC.