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Progress Continues as Test Pile Program Set to Begin for Key Bridge Rebuild

BALTIMORE (September 24, 2025) — The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) today announced the Test Pile Program for the rebuilding of the Francis Scott Key Bridge is expected to begin on or about September 27, weather permitting. Six test piles have arrived in Baltimore via barge. The test piles were fabricated with American-made steel, are eight feet in diameter and more than 220 feet in length.

“The Test Pile Program marks another major milestone in the Key Bridge Rebuild project,” said MDTA Executive Director Bruce Gartner. “Some of the test piles will be evaluated for the potential to be incorporated into the permanent foundations for the new bridge.”

Test Pile Program Sequence

1. The piles will be lifted into position using a crane and tripping barge.
2. The piles will be placed in a template and stabilized with a vibratory hammer.
3. The piles will be driven into the riverbed with a hydraulic hammer.
4. The load frame will be placed on the six piles and exert vertical and horizontal pressure.
5. The equipment and piles are equipped with instruments which will report out data to ensure the design models are accurate.

What Nearby Communities Should Expect During the Test Pile Program

Over the course of 6-8 weeks, twelve test piles will be driven into the riverbed. Two piles will be driven per week, each pile is expected to be hammered for approximately two hours, sounding similar to a large bell in the distance. Construction activity will typically occur Monday through Saturday during daylight hours within a 12-hour window.

Noise and vibration monitors were installed around the project area and surrounding communities which have been collecting baseline data prior to the start of demolition, the test pile program and construction. The monitors will provide the team with real-time data which will be compared against the baseline data to ensure pre-construction and construction activities stay within acceptable limits.

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This [video](#), featuring MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness, provides more information on the test pile activities and their role in rebuilding the Key Bridge. Click here to watch the [video](#). The MDTA is serious about safety, transparency and public communication throughout the Key Bridge Rebuild.

As a reminder, boaters should review the [Smooth Waters Initiative](#) information online to help protect other boaters, marine workers, and construction personnel during the rebuilding of the Key Bridge on the Patapsco River.

For the latest project information and to receive project updates through email alerts:

- Visit: www.KeyBridgeRebuild.com
- Email: info@keybridgerebuild.com

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