



## Tips/Information for Using 511

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#### **I. General/System**

##### **A. Interacting with the System (Using Voice/Keypad Commands)**

- You can get information from the 511 System by using your voice or your phone's keypad (from a touch-tone phone). Simply follow the menu prompts with voice commands, or to use keypad commands, just respond to the prompts by using your keypad. If you use the keypad, you can return to using your voice with the next menu selection if you'd like.

##### **B. Voice Recognition**

- The voice recognition is very sensitive to background noise. This may cause the system not to recognize what you tell it. We suggest that you reduce background noise such as radio, TV, talking, open windows, etc., while using 511. If you can't reduce or avoid background noise when calling and you have trouble with 511 recognizing your voice commands, we suggest that you use your keypad.
- Sometimes you may hear "I'm sorry, I didn't understand you" for other reasons than background noise. The 511 System is set so you have to respond to the menu prompt in a certain amount of time. If you do not respond in the time allowed, the voice will say, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand you" to let you know it did not receive your selection. You may also hear this message if the system does not recognize your selection. If the system does not prompt you to select again, say "Back" and it will take you back to your last menu selection to repeat your request.

### C. Responding to System Prompts

- As soon as you hear the road segment you want, you can select it and not wait until you have heard all the segment prompts. This shortens your call time and prevents you from listening to information you don't need or want.

**NOTE:** The only exception to this is when an Amber, Homeland Security or General Transportation Alert message is active. You must listen to the full Alert information. When there is an Alert, you will hear the information right after the opening message.

### D. Selecting Routes/Segments

- It helps to know the route(s) you would like information about before calling. Kansas 511 gives route-specific information for Interstates, US, and Kansas highways and the Kansas Turnpike. Since most routes (highways) have a number of segments, once you request a route, you will be asked to select the segment(s) for which you want information. For example, Interstate 70 segments include Kansas City to Lawrence, Lawrence to Topeka, etc. Segments are about sixty (60) miles long.
- The 511 system menu provides the options of **#1 – Kansas Turnpike** (which reports only Turnpike routes/segments) or **#2 – Kansas Highways** (which reports all Interstate routes, including the Turnpike). Therefore, to obtain full interstate information, you should select option **#2** (Kansas Highways).

### E. Using 511 if you are Hearing Impaired

- If you are hearing impaired, call 711 and a relay operator will assist you.

## II. System Menu (user interface)

511 is designed to be as simple for you to use as possible. Here is what you will hear and use to request information:

1. Opening/Welcome Message for Kansas 511
2. Alert Information (Active as needed): 511 provides information as needed for AMBER Alerts, General Transportation Alerts (such as weather/storm advisories) and Security Alerts (such as hazardous spills). You will only hear Alerts as they are happening. When an Alert is active, you must listen to it and cannot interrupt it.  
**NOTE:** Storm advisory alerts will only provide you information for highway routes affected by the storm. If you want to know about other routes/segments, stay on the line and you can choose the route/segment you want by following the steps below.
3. Selecting a Route (highway):
  - For **Kansas Turnpike System**, press or say **1** (includes turnpike segments only)
  - For **Kansas Highways**, press or say **2** (includes interstate segments and the turnpike)
  - For **Nebraska Highways**, press or say **3**
  - For **road/weather information in other neighboring states**, press or say **4** (you select from the options)
  - Say the highway number or press the highway number followed by the # sign (you select)
4. Selecting a Route Segment—you will hear a list of the segments on your chosen route and you can select your segment by following the prompts as follows:
  - a. When you hear your segment described, **select it by pressing or saying 1**. You will **hear** road condition, construction and weather information for your selection(s)
  - b. If the highway has only one segment, you will hear the information in “a” above

5. When your report is finished, you will hear one of two different menus:
- a. For Single Segment Highways, you will hear:
    - To **repeat** the message, press or say **1**
    - To begin a **new road/weather information search**, press or say **2**
    - To leave a **comment**, press or say **8**
    - To **end this call**, press or say **9** or simply hang up
  - b. For Multiple Segment Highways, you will hear:
    - To **repeat** the message, press or say **1**
    - To begin a **new road/weather information search**, press or say **2**
    - To select **another segment from this route**, press or say **4**
    - To leave a **comment**, press or say **8**
    - To **end this call**, press or say **9** or simply hang up
- Make your selection—follow the system prompts*

**NOTES:**

- If you do not respond within a certain time, you will hear, “I’m sorry, I didn’t understand you” to let you know your selection was not received.
- Be sure to follow the voice prompts to get the information you want. 511 can’t understand sentences if you try to talk to it.
- 511 is designed for you to ask for the information you want by specific route and segment. By following the menu prompts you can receive the information you want immediately. If you request information on the comment line, you will not receive information for at least a day (see next bullet).
- If you request help or information on the Comment Line, it will be at least a day before we can listen to your request and respond. Please leave your name and phone number if you want us to call you. 511 does not know your phone number.

**III. Navigating 511**

Just say one of these simple commands at any time to navigate 511:

- **“Main Menu”** – takes you back to the main menu
- **“Back”** – allows you to navigate backward through the system
- **“Repeat”** – to repeat your menu options
- **“Help”** – to get help in using the system

**IV. Help Menu**

The Help Menu has been divided into different sections that follow the system menu.

**A. If you say “Help” before selecting a route, you will hear:**

“For Kansas Turnpike system, press or say 1.

For Kansas highways, press or say 2.

For Nebraska highways, press or say 3.

For road weather information in other neighboring states, press or say 4.”

*After you’ve made your selection, you will hear:*

“The Kansas 511 System was designed to provide you with information about various conditions that could affect your travel decisions. To make a menu selection, say or press the appropriate zero through nine. To provide everyone with an opportunity to access this information, you are restricted to eight reports during a call. The system includes voice

commands to ease your navigation. You may say “help” at any time to receive instructions for your current menu. To hear your current menu’s options again, simply say “repeat.” Saying “back” will allow you to go backwards through the menu. Saying “main menu” will return you to the beginning menu. At the end of each report you will be provided an opportunity to leave a question or comment for the system administrators.”

**B. If you say “Help” when selecting a route, you will hear:**

“You are asked to select a specific highway for this menu. Currently, Interstates, U.S., and State highways are included. You may say the highway number or enter the highway number on your telephone keypad followed by the pound sign. To improve understanding when speaking your request, you may include road descriptions, such “Interstate,” “U.S.,” or “Kansas,” followed by the highway number.”

**C. If you say “Help” after hearing a report, you will hear:**

“You are offered the opportunity to repeat the last report, access another report, leave a question or comment, or end the call. On multiple segment highways you are also offered an option to select another segment along the same highway. Please select one of the options provided by saying or pressing the appropriate zero through nine to make your selection.”

**D. If you say “Help” at any other time, you will hear:**

“Please select one of the options provided by saying or pressing the appropriate zero through nine to make your selection.”

**V. Message Formats**

Once you have selected a segment, you will hear a message or “report.” Be sure to listen to the entire road condition report for your segment, in case there are varying conditions along the segment that you should know about. The message will repeat the route and segment to confirm your selection. If it is not correct, say “back” and make a new selection.

Each message or “report” includes the following:

**A. Road conditions\***—refers to the weather-related condition of the road surface:

- As of (Time)—you will hear the road conditions as of the most recent time they are available on the day you are calling. For example, “*road conditions as of 9 am, . . .*” ***Since the report is near real time, you won’t hear the date.***
- Condition reported by exception—*since the 511 segments include multiple highway reporting segments, multiple conditions may actually exist within a 511 segment. Reporting by exception means you will hear the primary condition first, followed by the other road condition reports within the segment selected. For example, 511 Segment on I-35 between Kansas City and Ottawa: “road conditions as of 9:00 a.m. are normal, seasonal, except between Ottawa to Williamsburg, conditions are icy.”*

- This is followed by a general advisory that drivers should be alert to changing conditions.

**B. Construction, Detours, Projects, or Roadway Events\*:** In the event any of these activities are occurring, you will hear, “The following construction projects and/or events are in place:”

- A listing of the activities follows that includes: location, travel effects (for example, detour, lane closures, width restrictions, traffic management, such as pilot car, temporary signals, temporary roadways, etc) and expected time delays through the work zone.

- Currently, reports are listed for construction or maintenance events, flooding events, and some emergency incidents only and do **not** include those due to traffic congestion.
- Activities that do not affect traffic flow through the work zone may not be reported. Also, short-term projects lasting 1-2 days are generally not reported.
- **Note:** You must listen to the road condition report before you will hear this information. If you do not hear any of this information after the road condition report, it means there is no current activity on the route/segment you selected.

**\*NOTE:** Road condition information will be reported first during winter months (October through March) and Construction/Detour/Roadway Events will be reported first during other months (April through September). Weather information will always be reported last (see below).

### C. Weather Forecast

- You will hear current weather conditions and a forecast that is valid until the expiration time given. Forecasts are provided for 6-hour blocks of time and are updated at least hourly. They include:
  - **Sky cover** (For example, “Overcast changing to partly cloudy.”)
  - **Visibility** (For example, “Visibility will be five miles changing to one mile.”)
  - **Precipitation** (For example, “Light rain changing to freezing rain.”)
  - **Winds and Temperatures** Since the winds and temperatures can vary along your segment, they are given as a range:

Winds and wind gusts (For example, “Winds will be 10-12 miles per hour from the northwest changing to 15-18 miles per hour from the north/northwest with gusts to 25 miles per hour.”)

Temperatures (For example, “Temperatures will range from 20-23 degrees changing to 45-49 degrees.”)

As types of weather information are added, the format of the weather messages may change.

- **NOTE:** You must listen to the road condition and construction/detour information provided before you will hear this information

## VI. Route/Segment “Reports”

- The beginning and end points for routes and segments are described by landmarks (for example, city, town, junctions, etc)
- Most route segments are listed in order from west to east and from south to north. So, the first segment you hear will be the segment that is farthest west or south. Segments are reported in consecutive order. Due to state geographics and population, there are some exceptions as follows:
  - I-70 segments are listed from east to west.
  - I-35 from Kansas City to Emporia, I-135, and Turnpike I-35 from Topeka to Emporia are reported from north to south.
- **Concurrent Routes:** Some routes have two numbers, such as US-50/US-400, so information is listed for both highways. You can request one or both routes to hear the information you want.

- **Entire Routes:** Interstate routes also give you the option to select the “entire route” and it is the first choice in the menu. Road conditions and weather for entire routes will be reported in less detail than smaller segments.
- **Turnpike Segments:** You can select **Kansas Turnpike** routes separately from **Kansas Highway** routes. The **Turnpike** menu contains only those routes operated by the Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA). For routes, such as I-70 and I-35, that contain both Turnpike and highway (or toll-free) segments, all segments are reported in **both** the **Turnpike** and **Highways** menus.)

**User Tip:** If you want information about turnpike routes only (such as I-35 or I-70, you should request the **Turnpike** menu. If you want to know about Turnpike routes and other highways, you should request the **Kansas Highways** menu.

## VII. System Comment Line

We want to hear your comments and questions about 511. Please say your name and phone number if you would like a return call. For emergency help, call 911. **Do not leave emergency calls for help on the comment line.**

Your comments are recorded and sent to KDOT the following morning. After that, we try to return calls as soon as possible. If a large number of comments have been received, it may take a few days.

