

Belleville

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Belleville ramp to close Saturday while wedged boat is removed

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The RV Riverwatch is about to make its final voyage.



ROMAN J. USCHAK/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The RV Riverwatch will be extricated from beneath the Route 7 Bridge on Rutgers Street on Saturday.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation announced on Thursday that the Route 21 northbound Exit 6 ramp for Route 7/[Belleville/North Arlington](#) will be closed to traffic on Saturday, Feb. 16, so that the [Passaic](#) Valley Sewerage Commission can remove a capsized boat from underneath the Route 7 Bridge.

The RV (Research Vessel) Riverwatch is a 31-foot-long U.S. Coast Guard training vessel that was first launched in 1968. It was used for rescue work and later for scientific research, before it capsized during Hurricane Irene in the fall of 2011. Rushing waters then wedged it between the bank of the [Passaic](#) River and the Route 7 Bridge on Rutgers Street in [Belleville](#), where it has sat ever since.

The ramp is scheduled to be closed from 7 a.m. until approximately 5 p.m. on Saturday, although it could reopen earlier if the work is completed in advance. Motorists will be directed to continue on Route 21 northbound to Exit 8 for Park Avenue east or west, or

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to Washington Avenue to Rutgers Street while the Riverwatch is removed. The bridge itself is expected to remain in operation and open to motorists during the boat removal work.

The actual schedule will be subject to change, due to weather or other factors. Motorists are also encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website, located at www.511nj.org, for construction updates along with other real-time travel information.

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