

Online Rohtang Pass Permits Issuance System: Supporting The Care For Environment

To make it easier for the Rohtang Pass commuters, the payment gateway has been integrated with the system so that all the charges can be paid online and the permit is issued on successful receipt of payment by the Department. This web application is a unique mode of getting permits.



AJAY SINGH CHAHAL
Scientist-F/ SIO
ajay.chahal@nic.in



ASHISH SHARMA
Scientist-B
s.ashish@nic.in

Edited by
VIVEK VERMA

At an elevation of 13,054 ft, the world famous Rohtang Pass serves as the gateway to Lahaul and Spiti valleys in Himachal Pradesh and the motorable road to Leh-Ladakh. Situated at 53 km from the tourist town of Manali, it connects Kullu valley with Lahaul and Spiti.

In the year 2015, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) laid the guidelines for maintaining the eco-system of Rohtang Pass to be enforced by the District Administration for tourists and visitors. As per these guidelines, a cap was placed on the number of vehicles visiting Rohtang Pass for tourism purposes. One of the conditions of these guidelines was to maintain a computerized record of the vehicles visiting the Pass either for tourism or for going to the Lahaul & Spiti valley or beyond.

The task of the software development was assigned to NIC Himachal Pradesh, and the system was developed in the year 2015, without the payment gateway (as , the number of daily permits was fixed but no fees were levied at the time). Later it was integrated with a payment gateway so that the tourists could pay the permit fee online and get permits on a first come first served basis.

In this solution, a user can get a vehicle permit from his/ her desktop from anywhere in the world on first come first served basis without any human intervention. In the year 2016, NGT amended its guideline and declared that each vehicle has to pay a charge to the Transport Department. To make it easier for the commuters, a payment gateway was integrated so that all the charges can be paid online and the permit is issued on successful receipt of payment to the department. This web application is the only mode for getting permits.



“To meet the time-limits and guidelines set by the NGT for restricting the flow of vehicles to the Rohtang Pass, the District Administration could only think of NIC Himachal Pradesh to provide a robust, transparent and citizen friendly software solution and they have done it! The software has been very useful to the citizens, tourists and travel operators as the entire service is provided online.

YUNUS, IAS
Deputy Commissioner, Kullu

OBJECTIVES

Although the basic aim of the software solution is the effective implementation of the NGT guidelines, another important objective is facilitating the tourists and taxi operators to get online permits in an easy manner without visiting any office. Besides, the software helps to monitor the vehicular traffic on the Rohtang pass and enables cashless transactions as fees are paid online only.



Rohtang Permit website homepage



Rohtang permit sample

THE SOFTWARE SOLUTION

The tourists, residents or taxi operators can visit the website of the District Kullu at <http://hpkullu.nic.in> or the Transport/Himachal Pradesh Government websites at <http://hptransport.nic.in/> <http://himachal.nic.in> and apply for the Rohtang permit. They have to enter the vehicle details like registration number, type of vehicle, commercial or personal vehicle, driver name, the number of passengers, mobile phone, email, diesel or petrol fuel, ID proof and date of visit. The system shows the number of permits available for sale and once the user pays the online fee shown by the system, the permit is issued and sent through Email/ SMS too. The user can then print the permit/ reprint the permit or apply for a refund in case the transaction fails.

The permit in printed format or the SMS received on the mobile can be shown at the barrier to proceed to Rohtang pass or beyond. The bar code enables faster scanning and checking of permits at the barrier. The District Administration can block a date for no-issuance of permits, decrease the number of available permits besides generating various MIS reports.

BENEFICIARIES OF THE SYSTEM

Environment:

It is a proven fact that a mountain's ecosystem is about two and half times more vulnerable to environmental change and the impact is felt downstream. With the clean and balanced ecosystem the human beings stand to benefit by achieving a better quality of life and standard of living.

Citizens and Government:

The main beneficiaries are the tourists visiting Rohtang Pass or beyond, residents of Leh and Lahaul areas, taxi/ tour operators of the region, the District Kullu administration, HP Transport Department and the NGT. Some of the benefits are listed below:

- Easy to get permits in advance, as per availability, for common citizen without human intervention
- Online payment of Fees/ Charges using Credit Card/ Debit Card/ Net banking
- Facility to check the availability of permits for desired day
- SMS and Email based information of permits/ payments to citizens so that they don't have to print the permit
- Self-initiation of refund in case excess payment or permit not issued due to technical issues
- Simple, user-friendly and transparent functional system as all data is shown live while making an application for permit issuance
- The residents or tourists visiting places beyond Rohtang have the advantage that although they have to get the permits, they can get these from their homes without visiting the office at Manali.
- Timely and effective implementation of NGT Guidelines
- No parallel manual system of permits
- Printing of Barcode on permit to check

fraudulent permits and for easy checking of permits at the barriers

- Real-time reporting of Vehicular traffic to Rohtang Pass for traffic management
- Lesser stoppage times at barriers result in less pollution and lesser wastage of fuel due to the idling of many vehicles.
- Lesser additional staff required for managing the permits issue
- The software has provision to control the number of vehicles, fuel and types of vehicles to be allowed and to declare a day as no vehicle day through the software itself, which also announces this on the website for the tourists and taxi/tour operators.
- No crowds and queues of people at SDM office, Manali for getting the permits.

WAY AHEAD

The software has been improved so that when the Rohtang pass is opened to tourists in April/ May 2017, the tourists can pay the Manali Green Tax and other related Municipal taxes online along with the Rohtang permit so that they don't have to wait in queues for payment of these fees while visiting Manali.

For further information, please contact:

AJAY SINGH CHAHAL
 State Informatics Officer, NIC
 HP Secretariat, Shimla - 171002
 Himachal Pradesh
 Email: sio-hp@nic.in
 Phone: 0177-2624045