

COVID-19 Public Transportation Safety

Included here: those who receive direct funding from state or federal government to deliver public transportation services. Public Transportation is transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but not including school buses, charter, tribal transportation or sightseeing services. Fixed route transit and fixed guide railways are included.

Employee Safety and Health Requirements

1. Each public transportation agency in Washington State must adopt a written plan for employee safety and customer interaction that is at least as strict as these requirements and complies with the safety and health requirements. This plan must be retained onsite and made available to regulatory agencies upon request.
2. Adhere to the Secretary of the Department of Health [Face Coverings Order](#), and current DOH orders specific to higher education, and any other relevant DOH guidelines regarding hygiene, cleaning, ventilation, transportation, and records and contact tracing. [Department of Health Resources and Recommendation can be found here.](#)
3. Per Washington Secretary of Health's [order](#), "every person in Washington State must wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when they are outside of their house, mobile home, apartment, condominium, hotel or motel room or other dwelling unit" subject to exceptions noted in the order. Therefore, passengers on all public transportation and in public transportation facilities are required to wear face coverings. Exemptions to this requirement are noted in the order.
4. Ensure operations follow the Labor & Industries COVID-19 requirements to protect workers. COVID-19 workplace and safety requirements can be found [here](#).
5. Require different households or travel parties to maintain at least three feet of physical distance but ideally six feet by blocking out or closing some seats to facilitate distancing and adding buses on busy routes where possible. Encourage physical distancing at transit stops, stations and other waiting areas through use of signage, directional flow decals or other markers. Riders should board and exit through rear doors when possible.
6. Maintain a minimum of six-foot separation between transit operator and passengers except when transit operator must assist a passenger with boarding or exiting the bus. Install plexiglass or similar barrier and block off seats closest to driver to ensure six foot physical distance between driver and passenger or develop an approved alternative transit operator safety plan. ADA accessible seating must remain available.
7. Provide hand sanitizer supplies, wipes or towelettes to facilitate hand sanitizing.
8. Establish, post and regularly update a housekeeping and bus or rail car cleaning schedules that include frequent cleaning and sanitizing with a particular emphasis on commonly touched surfaces including equipment, digital interfaces such as touchscreens and fingerprint scanners, vehicles, and facilities to reduce the risk of COVID-19 among employees and passengers. At a minimum follow CDC and [APTA guidelines](#) for cleaning.

9. Screen employees for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 at the start of their shift or implement a program to ensure employees self-screen before entering the workplace. Make sure sick employees stay home or immediately go home if they feel or appear sick. Cordon off any areas where an employee with probable or confirmed COVID-19 illness worked, touched surfaces, etc. until the area and equipment is cleaned and sanitized. Follow the cleaning guidelines (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html) set by the Centers for Disease Control to deep clean and sanitize.
10. Post signs at high volume transit stops, transit shelters, transit stations, on buses and in other areas where passengers gather to inform customers that face coverings are required per the Governor's order and the [Department of Health order](#). In addition, signage should include direction to passengers and customers to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and to practice proper physical distancing while on the bus or other vehicle.
11. A site-specific COVID-19 plan monitor shall be designated by the employer to monitor the health of employees enforce the COVID-19 safety plan.

Additional Safety Recommendations: In addition, public transportation agencies are strongly encouraged to implement recommendations found in the [FTA COVID-19 Advisory](#) and the following:

- Provide face coverings for passengers.
- Provide hand sanitizer near entrances and exits of vehicles.
- When possible, minimize ticketing exchanges by implementing online ticket sales, passes, fare free riding and electronic fare options.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly, increase air circulation and ventilation as much as possible, and implement methods to create fresh air-flow through buses where possible.
- Provide communications such as intercom announcement and signage for customers in languages representative of the region (e.g., Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Somali) that explain facial covering, physical distancing and other safety requirements
- Provide on-board announcements or post signage about precautionary safety measures the transit agency is taking to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Include signage on buses and at transit stations to discourage passengers from boarding full transit vehicles.
- Include updated and revised policies, procedures and measures developed and implemented pursuant as new or revised LNI, DOH, CDC and OSHA guidance becomes available.
- Consider developing a system to report transit-overloading conditions to the public, especially when passenger demand outpaces vehicle capacity. Transit staff should monitor and report trends and passenger demand.