

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

Public health guidance for taxis and ride shares

Guidance for Taxis and Ride Shares

March 17, 2021

Version 2.0

Key Points

- All drivers must complete daily screening for COVID-19 and stay home if they have any symptoms.
- Face coverings that cover the mouth, nose and chin must be worn while in vehicles operating as part of a business or organization – this includes both drivers and patrons.
- Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces.
- Keep windows slightly open whenever possible to improve air flow.

This document reflects the current need for protection from COVID-19 in Ontario. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, this document is subject to change. Please visit the Southwestern Public Health website www.swpublichealth.ca regularly for updates and additional information.

COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

- Under the provincial shutdown, all businesses and organizations that are open are required to have a COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan prepared and available upon request. More information can be [found here](#).

Staff Screening and Self-Isolating

- Screening employees for COVID-19 is currently mandatory. Please see the [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#) for more information. Ensure all staff complete screening before each shift and do not attend work while sick. Before each shift, staff must be **screened** to identify if they:
 - Have **symptoms of COVID-19** such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
 - Have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
 - Have been instructed by public health to self-isolate due to travel or contact history.
- Any staff member that answers “yes” to any of these conditions must be sent home and advised to contact their local public health unit.

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- Staff should be reminded to stay home if they are sick. Symptoms commonly associated with a cold are similar to symptoms seen with COVID-19, and COVID-19 cannot be ruled out unless testing is completed.
- Employees that have a member of their household experiencing [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and/or awaiting COVID-19 test results should also self-isolate at home. For more information on self-isolation requirements, please [visit our website](#).

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- The Province of Ontario has mandated face coverings in indoor areas of businesses or organizations or in vehicles operating as part of a business or organization. This means that all passengers (aged 2 and older) and drivers in taxis must wear a face covering. This should cover the nose, mouth and chin.
- Some exemptions apply and can be found in the regulation [here](#) (Schedule 1, Section 2(4)).
 - Staff working in indoor areas accessible only to employees who can physically distance (at least 2 metres) from all other staff members in that space do not need to wear a face covering while in this area. If there are no passengers in the vehicle, drivers may temporarily remove their face covering.
- If driving a passenger who is not wearing a face covering (i.e. because they claim they are exempt), the driver must wear PPE covering the eyes, mouth and nose (i.e. a medical mask and eye protection) UNLESS there is a plexiglass or impermeable barrier separating the driver from that individual.
- Employers should:
 - Have a policy in place outlining how the provincial face covering requirements will be implemented as per the [Southwestern Public Health Letter of Instruction](#).
 - Provide staff with a sufficient supply of face coverings.
 - Consider having a supply of face coverings for customers.
 - Train staff on how to implement the provincial face covering regulation, including how to manage individuals claiming exemptions.
 - Provide all staff with information on [proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings](#).
 - Post [signs](#) at entrances to remind customers of [face covering requirements](#).

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Clean and disinfect high touch areas like door handles, arm rests, seat belts, buttons for windows and door locks with a disinfectant. Common cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.

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- Vehicles should be disinfected:
 - At least twice per day
 - When visibly dirty
 - After transporting medical patients
 - After transporting passengers who display respiratory symptoms (cough, sneezing, difficulty breathing, etc)
 - If possible, after each client exits the vehicle
- Disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number are approved for use in Canada.
- Disinfectant wipes should be discarded after each use.
- Employers/vehicle owners should provide all drivers with appropriate cleaning and disinfectant products.
- Staff and passengers should be advised to practice good hand hygiene (frequent hand washing, alcohol-based hand sanitizer) and respiratory etiquette (sneezing into a bent elbow or disposable tissue).

Hand Hygiene

- Drivers and passengers should wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (60 – 90% alcohol concentration) provided hands are not visibly soiled. Remind staff to avoid touching their face, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Alcohol-based hand rub, wipes and no-touch disposal containers should be available for driver and passenger use in all vehicles. Ensure that supplies are maintained and disposal trash bags are available in the vehicles.
- Use hand sanitizer after handling money or helping with a passenger's personal items.
- Post signs for cough and sneeze etiquette and hand sanitizing in vehicles where the information can be seen by passengers (e.g. in a clear plastic sleeve).

Transporting Passengers Safely

- Promote prevention measures to passengers on reducing risk to drivers and themselves on your website and through outgoing telephone messages. Posters can be posted in the vehicle.
- Passengers should be screened for COVID-19. This may include reminders to customers on websites and via telephone messages. See the [screening tool for patrons](#) for more information.
- Consider installing plastic screens or plexiglass shields as a physical barrier between the driver and passenger in the back seat. Ensure that these barriers do not create any new safety hazards such as visual obstructions for the driver.

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- Ask passengers to sit in the back seat to create physical distance.
- When there are four or more passengers, use a larger vehicle with more seating, such as a minivan, or multiple vehicles be used so that individuals do not sit next to the driver. Passengers should only travel in the same vehicle with people they live with.
- Emphasize passengers use respiratory etiquette by coughing or sneezing into a tissue or their elbow.
- Encourage alcohol-based hand sanitizer use when entering the vehicle or after coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid handling money if possible.
- Use the vehicle climate control system and windows to improve fresh air intake/air circulation. Keep the windows open, even a little bit, as much as possible. Increased airflow can reduce contaminant build up. Avoid using the recirculated air option during passenger transport.
- If the passenger is being transported to or from a hospital or other health care setting and/or is displaying respiratory symptoms, open the car windows. If the passenger has a mask or face covering, it is recommended that they wear it, if possible.

Additional Resources

[Workplace Safety & Prevention Services Guidance on Health and Safety for Taxi Services, Ride Share and Rental Vehicle Services During COVID-19](#)

Posters:

- [Face Covering Required](#)
- [If Your Sick, Don't Visit](#)
- [Clean your Hands](#)
- [How to Clean your Hands](#)