



COVID-19 & PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FAQ

Q1: How can I stop drivers and other passengers from contracting the illness?

A: ODOT recommends that public transit agencies consult the guidance provided by National RTAP in the [“Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Information and Resources for Transit”](#) publication released in March 2020. In the “How can transit agencies help prevent the spread of COVID-19?” section RTAP suggests transit agencies follow several steps to reduce the spread of the disease and to protect drivers and passengers. Transit systems should develop procedures around maintaining clean surfaces, drivers and passengers should clean hands, consider masks, and follow CDC protocol for identifying high risk passengers/staff based on recent travel and current symptoms.

ODOT has included with this FAQ sample infographics (attached at the end of this file) that Transit Systems can post in buses or at stops to remind passengers of important steps in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Q2: What do we do when we receive direction from local hospitals and health agencies to screen drivers and passengers for COVID-19 prior to transport?

A: Public Transit Systems should communicate regularly with local health officials and emergency management on protocols they should take to limit the spread of infectious diseases. ODOT recommends cooperating with local agencies on these protocols. However, public transportation systems need to consider with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) when implementing new service procedures in response to COVID-19.

Q3: Can public transit systems modify schedules due to drivers and staff getting sick and/or dealing with school closings? Are public transit systems allowed to establish tiers of service in response to COVID-19?

A: ODOT encourages public transit systems to consult [Developing a Contagious Virus Response Plan \(APTA SS-S-SEM-005-09 Rev. 1\)](#) to understand best practices in implementing service change in response to COVID-19. APTA suggests developing a plan for phases of service. Appendix A: Example of phases and sub-phases table TABLE 1 “Avian Influenza Pandemic Alert Phases” demonstrates examples of phases during a pandemic. It is recommended that the transit system consider the different phases of COVID-19 and develop service plans based on each phase. ODOT also recommends that transit systems consult the “Providing Services During a Pandemic Checklist” provided in [NCHRP Report 769: A Guide for Public Transportation Pandemic Planning and Response](#), ODOT has included the checklist with this FAQ for your convenience. (NCHRP Report 769 - Providing Services During a Pandemic Checklist.pdf)

Q4: When should public transportation systems refuse transportation?

A: ODOT agrees with the guidance set forth in [NCHRP Report 769: A Guide for Public Transportation Pandemic Planning and Response](#) Chapter 5. Pg 30:

Services for Ill Passengers

It is highly probable that passengers who normally rely on public transportation and who may be exhibiting symptoms of the infectious disease will try to use the services of the transportation organization in order to get to work, school, medical appointments, or other locations. In order to best protect the serviceability of vehicles and the safety of other individuals on board, transportation agencies should establish clear safety protocols for

providing reasonable accommodation to potentially contagious individuals while best protecting uninfected workers and riders.

Safety protocols should:

- Make worker protection the highest priority.
- Be mindful of the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Recognize that pandemics involve relatively untested and unfamiliar tasks.
- Take into account fear, uncertainty, and mental health issues.
- Recognize that there will likely be levels of rider and staff noncompliance.

The following exhibit from NCHRP Report 769 demonstrates how pandemic diseases are spread and preventive actions transit systems can take. Transit systems should consider this table when developing service plans in response to COVID-19.

	DIRECT TRANSMISSION	INDIRECT TRANSMISSION
How it Spreads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airborne/droplet. • Spread by breathing (or other routes of entry such as the eyes) the agent that has been released from someone talking, sneezing, coughing, and (less so) breathing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical contact. • Spread by touching a surface that becomes contaminated with the disease (i.e., fomites) that can remain infectious outside the body.
Examples of illnesses spread this way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacterial meningitis, chickenpox, common cold, influenza, tuberculosis, measles, rubella, whooping cough, SARS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenza, norovirus, clostridium difficile, Staphylococcus aureus, shigellosis.
Preventative Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deny service or provide reasonable accommodation. • Require sick rider to wear a surgical mask. • Transit worker wears N95 or equivalent. • Transit worker wears gloves and/or other PPE. • Social distancing enforced. • Use environmental controls such as physical barriers or stand-off zones. • Hand sanitizer provided. • Vehicle and structure disinfection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deny service or provide reasonable accommodation. • Require sick rider to wear a surgical mask. • Require sick rider to wear gloves. • Transit worker wears gloves and/or other PPE. • Social distancing enforced. • Hand sanitizer provided. • Vehicle and structure disinfection.

Exhibit 24. Services for sick riders: direct and indirect disease transmission.

Q5: Would modifying or shutting down service affect federal funding?

A: This question and answer only applies to subrecipients of ODOT federal funding. During a pandemic, ODOT understands that service implementation will change. ODOT is allowing locals to make recommendations for service based on COVID-19 and the threat to their community. However, ODOT will require that all modifications of service be submitted to ODOT for review and approval. This is to ensure that transit systems are not putting themselves in a position to become ineligible for federal funding during the pandemic. Submissions need to include:

- Indication of if the transit system is recommending service reduction or shutdown
- The reason for the service change
- Communication strategy for internal staff as well as the riding public
- Indicators the transit system intends to use to monitor ridership and employee availability
- Plans for service restoration

Please submit service change requests at the following link:

https://ODOT.formstack.com/forms/covid19_service_change_request

Additionally, as of March 13, 2020 FTA has expanded the Emergency Relief Program to include COVID-19 in states that have been declared in a state of emergency. Transit systems can now submit petitions to FTA requirements via FTA's docket in order to preserve eligibility for funding while responding to community needs for COVID-19. Please refer to question 8 for more information.

Q6: Can public transit prioritize who is transported and to where?

A: NCHRP Report 769 recommends that public transportation define the service they provide and then provide considerations for how service will be utilized during the pandemic. For example, public transit systems may elect to suspend all non-pandemic related community event participation. Transit systems may determine essential functions that, as a result, prioritize certain passenger types and locations however, these considerations should take in to account ADA requirements, communication strategies and be consistently implemented.

Q7: How do the restrictions of Governor DeWine impact public transportation?

A: Governor DeWine and Director Marchbanks understand the important role that transit plays. At this time, public transportation does not meet the threshold for Governor DeWine's ban on mass gatherings. ODOT is aware that the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA) is issuing a statement to the media to ensure that the public is aware that Ohio's public transit systems are open and providing transportation. ODOT will continue to update transit systems on any executive orders that impact public transportation. ODOT recommends that everyone continue to be vigilant in what they do and to monitor Governor DeWine's daily press conferences for updates. Once we know more we will communicate immediately.

Q8: Can we utilize our vehicle for other county services like meal delivery, prescription delivery, well checks, etc.?

A: Rural transit systems are permitted under [FTA C 9040.1G](#) to provide meal delivery:

A rural transit provider may design its Section 5311 funded services to maximize use by members of the general public who are transportation-disadvantaged. Transportation disadvantaged people include seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Transit service providers receiving assistance under Section 5310 or Section 5311 may coordinate and assist in providing meal delivery service for homebound people on a regular basis, if the meal delivery services do not conflict with the provision of transit services or result in a reduction of service to transit passengers.

Under this regulation, transit systems may not modify vehicles to be used solely for meal delivery such as adding heating or refrigeration's units.

FTA considers this service incidental use, and therefore transit systems may provide the service if it does not result in a reduction of service quality or availability of public transportation services.

However, on March 13, 2020 the Federal Transit Administration made an [announcement](#) that the activities under the Emergency Relief Program will be expanded to include COVID-19 for states where the Governor has declared a state of emergency. On March 9, 2020 Governor DeWine signed [Executive](#)

Order 2020-01D declaring Ohio in a state of emergency. As a result, public transit agencies can request temporary relief of FTA administrative and statutory requirements in order to utilize vehicles to provide critical services to members of their communities, including delivery of important resources such as food and medications.

In order to utilize FTA-funded assets for emergency relief efforts, grantees and subgrantees must post a petition for temporary relief to FTA docket FTA-2020-0001. The docket is publicly accessible and can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via the Internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Petitions may also be submitted by U.S. mail or by hand delivery (two copies) to the DOT Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 7th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590.

Any grantee or subgrantee submitting petitions for relief or comments to the docket must include the following:

Include the agency name (Federal Transit Administration) and docket number FTA-2020-0001;

Identify the grantee or subgrantee and its geographic location;

Identify the section of Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code, or the portion of an FTA policy statement, circular, guidance document or rule, from which the grantee or subgrantee seeks relief;

Specifically address how a requirement in Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code, or an FTA requirement in a policy statement, circular, agency guidance or rule, will limit a grantee's or subgrantee's ability to respond to a national or regional emergency or disaster; and

Specify if the petition for relief is one-time or ongoing, and if ongoing identify the time period for which the relief is requested. The time period may not exceed three months; however, additional time may be requested through a second petition for relief

Per FTA guidance, Subgrantees interested in submitting a petition for relief should contact ODOT expressing your intent prior to submission in the docket. ODOT can verify that a petition for relief is necessary and verify guidance cited for the waiver. Direct grantees are encouraged to contact their FTA regional office.

ODOT subrecipients should submit details for petitions for relief via the following link:

https://ODOT.formstack.com/forms/covid19_service_change_request

For more information on emergency procedures for public transportation systems and the requirements of the relief docket please reference 49 CFR 601.42.

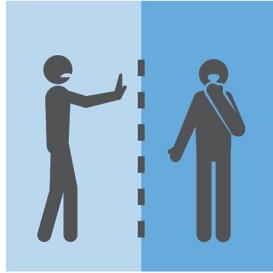
There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ohio.
Please continue to protect yourself from all
infectious diseases by using these precautions.

PREVENTION

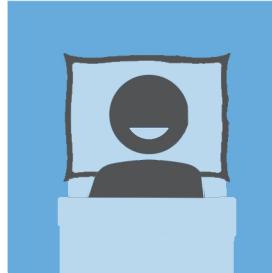
For additional information visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.



STAY HOME
WHEN YOU ARE
SICK



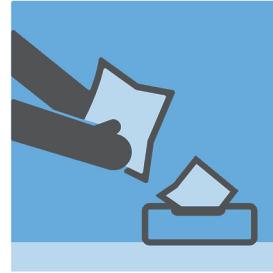
AVOID CONTACT
WITH PEOPLE
WHO ARE SICK



GET ADEQUATE SLEEP
AND EAT WELL-
BALANCED
MEALS



WASH HANDS OFTEN
WITH WATER AND SOAP
(20 SECONDS
OR LONGER)



DRY HANDS WITH
A CLEAN TOWEL
OR AIR DRY
YOUR HANDS



COVER YOUR MOUTH
WITH A TISSUE OR
SLEEVE WHEN
COUGHING OR SNEEZING



AVOID TOUCHING
YOUR EYES, NOSE,
OR MOUTH WITH
UNWASHED HANDS
OR AFTER
TOUCHING SURFACES



CLEAN AND DISINFECT
“HIGH-TOUCH”
SURFACES OFTEN



CALL BEFORE VISITING
YOUR DOCTOR



PRACTICE GOOD
HYGIENE HABITS

CLEAN ALL “HIGH-TOUCH” SURFACES EVERY DAY

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Self-Monitor and Practice Social Distancing



Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for cough or trouble breathing.



Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school for this 14-day period.



Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares.



Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters) and limit activities in public.



Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).



A call center to answer questions regarding COVID-19 is open 7 days a week from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. and can be reached at **1-833-4-ASK-ODH**
(1-833-427-5634).

TAKE EVERYDAY PRECAUTIONS



WASH YOUR HANDS



DON'T TOUCH FACE



AVOID SICK PEOPLE

For more information and updates, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov
1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634)