

## COVID-19: General Guidance for Vehicle Operators

*This document provides guidance to vehicle operators to help slow person-to-person transmission of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This guidance may be updated as new information becomes available since the situation is rapidly and constantly changing.*

There is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 in New York City. Community transmission means that COVID-19 is circulating in NYC and that we should act as if we are all exposed. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness (which affects breathing) caused by a new coronavirus. Symptoms can range from mild, such as a sore throat, to severe, such as pneumonia. Most people will not need medical attention for their symptoms. Together we can slow the spread and prevent those at higher risk of severe illness and our health care workers from getting sick.

### **General precautions for vehicle operators:**

Vehicle operators should take the following precautions to keep themselves and their passengers protected:

- **Monitor your health more closely than usual for COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.**
  - **Stay home if you are sick.** If you had or may have had COVID-19, stay home until all the following are true:
    - It has been at least seven days after your symptoms started.
    - You never had fever or you have not had a fever for the past three days without the use of fever-reducing medicine such as Tylenol or ibuprofen.
    - Your overall illness has improved.
- **Practice healthy personal hygiene.**
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve. Do not use your hands. Immediately throw out tissues and wash your hands afterward.
  - Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Have tissues and hand sanitizer available in your vehicle for your passengers.
  - Do not shake hands. Instead, wave.
  - If you do physically interact with a customer, remember to wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer after every transaction.
- **Clean and disinfect your vehicle routinely. When cleaning and disinfecting:**
  - Pay special attention to surfaces and objects that are touched often by passengers, such as door handles, window buttons, locks, payment machines, arm rests, seat cushions, buckles and seatbelts. Also wipe down surfaces that you frequently touch, such as the steering wheel, radio buttons, turn indicators and cup holders.
  - Use regular disinfectant products (for example, Clorox, peroxide or alcohol-based multi-purpose products) that are appropriate for the surface.

- Keep the vehicle doors open while cleaning and disinfecting.
  - Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and only use them once. Throw gloves in the trash after use and wash hands immediately with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Wait until all surfaces have dried before giving a ride to a passenger.
  - For additional information about cleaning and disinfecting, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) and look for “General Cleaning/Disinfection Guidance for Non-Health Care Settings” on the “Businesses and Other Facilities” page.
- **Maintain social (physical) distancing.**
    - Create more personal space. Keep at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and others, whenever possible.
    - Ask passengers to sit in the back to create physical distance. If the vehicle has a partition, close the partition before picking up passengers. If the vehicle does not have a partition, consider putting up a clear plastic barrier between the front and back of the vehicle (*note: barrier should not affect rear view mirror visibility*). For vehicles licensed by the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), drivers should follow TLC guidance on partition installation.
    - Only transport passengers who are in the same party. Group rides (also known as “shared” or “pooled” rides) are not permitted. (*note: the ban on group rides does not apply to paratransit vehicles*).
    - Essential workers are required to wear a face covering at work if they have direct contact with customers or others.
    - Staff must wear a face covering when transporting passengers, or when otherwise within 6 feet of customers or others. A face covering is any well-secured paper or cloth (like a bandana or scarf) that covers your mouth and nose. Employers must provide face coverings to employees at employers’ expense. See Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order No. 202.16, available at [governor.ny.gov/executiveorders](https://governor.ny.gov/executiveorders). It is essential that staff continue to practice physical distancing and good hand hygiene even when wearing a face covering — including keeping 6 feet of distance between themselves and others whenever possible. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) and look for “FAQ About Face Coverings.”
    - Whenever possible, set ventilation to “non-recirculated air mode” in both the driver and passenger compartment. Open windows if this is not an option.
  - **Medical facility contractors providing transport for patients should follow their company’s guidelines.**

#### **Separate facts from fear and guard against stigma**

- The outbreak is absolutely no excuse to spread racism and discrimination. It is illegal to discriminate against passengers or prospective passengers due to race, nation of origin or other identities.
- If you are being harassed or discriminated against due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, contact the NYC Commission on Human Rights by calling **311** and saying “human rights,” or by visiting [nyc.gov/cchr](https://nyc.gov/cchr) and clicking on “Report Discrimination.”

### **Take care of yourself and your family**

- It is natural to feel overwhelmed, sad, anxious and afraid, or to experience other symptoms of distress, such as trouble sleeping. Visit the “App Library” at [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell) for online tools to help you manage your health and emotional wellbeing.
- NYS COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline at 844-863-9314 is staffed 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week. The phone line is staffed with specially trained volunteer professionals who are there to listen, support and refer if needed.
- If symptoms of distress become overwhelming, you can connect with counselors at NYC Well, a free and confidential mental health support service. NYC Well staff are available 24/7 and can provide brief counseling and referrals to care. For support, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or chat online at [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell).
- If you need a health care provider, NYC Health and Hospitals provides care to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, insurance status or ability to pay. Call 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692) or 311.

### **Stay informed**

- A lot of information about coronavirus on social media and even in some news reports is not based on facts. Get your information about COVID-19 from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department at [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) .
- For real-time updates, text "COVID" to 692-692. Messages and data rates may apply.
- Print and post information for passengers in your back seat. Visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for posters and flyers.

**The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.**

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