

COVID-19 Guidance for Taxi and Ride Share Vehicles

The following interim guidance includes recommendations to help reduce the risk of community exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in taxis and ride shares.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 stands for **Co**rona **V**irus **D**isease – 2019 (year the outbreak began). COVID-19 spreads through the direct contact with the respiratory droplets of someone who is infected with the virus through their cough or sneeze. These droplets can spread up to two metres/six feet. It may also be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. More information on COVID-19 can be found in the [Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#) and [Toronto Public Health Guidance for Workplaces / Businesses and Employers](#).

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 in taxi/ride share vehicles

Recommendations for employers/drivers/vehicle owners and operators to use now include:

- **Actively encourage sick employees/drivers to stay home:**
 - All employers/employees/drivers should be aware of signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including:
 - fever
 - cough
 - muscle aches and tiredness
 - difficulty breathing, and
 - sore throat, headache, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell.
 - Employees/drivers who have any of the above signs and symptoms should stay home or be sent home immediately if they become ill while working. They should not return to work until 14 days from symptom onset and no longer feeling unwell.
 - Employee can call Telehealth, their health care provider or an [Assessment Centre](#) to see if they need testing.
 - Employers should be flexible with requiring healthcare provider's notes for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness. Healthcare provider notes to validate employee illness or to return to work can put unnecessary strain on healthcare provider offices and medical facilities during this busy time.
 - Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees/drivers to stay home to care for a sick family member. During this time, employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members.
- **Emphasize respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by drivers and passengers:**
 - Drivers should clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand rub, or to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. Washing hands with soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Use alcohol-based hand rub after handling money or providing assistance with a passenger's personal items.

- Alcohol-based hand rub, tissues, and no-touch disposal receptacles should be available for driver and passenger use in every vehicle. Ensure supplies are maintained.
- Consider placing signage 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).
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of vehicles:**
 - Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated. Examples of high-touch surfaces in vehicles include car door handles, arm rests, buttons for windows and locks, and seatbelts.
 - Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
 - In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected at the following times:
 - at least twice per day
 - when visibly dirty
 - after transporting medical patients (e.g. to and from hospital and other health care settings)
 - after transporting passengers who display respiratory symptoms (e.g. coughing, sneezing)
 - Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is [approved for use in Canada](#).
 - Disinfectant wipes have combined cleaners and disinfectants in one solution. Disinfectant wipes should be discarded if they become dry and are not recommended for heavily soiled surfaces.
 - Check the expiry date of products you use and always follow manufacturer's instructions.
 - Employers/vehicle owners should provide all drivers with the appropriate cleaning products/disinfectant wipes for their vehicles.
- **Practice additional preventive measures while transporting passengers:**
 - Remind passengers about preventive measures to reduce risk to drivers on your website and outgoing telephone messages.
 - Consider installing plexiglass shields as a barrier between the driver and passenger in the back seat.
 - Ask passengers to sit in the back seat to maintain physical distance.
 - Consider minimizing shared rides so passengers are not travelling with individuals unknown to them.
 - It is strongly recommended that drivers wear a [non-medical mask](#) if physical distancing cannot be maintained. Employers are to train staff on the [proper use](#) of masks, and [how to safely put on and take off a mask](#). Please note, that when worn properly, a person wearing a non-medical mask or face covering can reduce the spread of their own infectious respiratory droplets to others. The effectiveness of non-medical masks in protecting the wearer from respiratory droplets from others is uncertain.
 - If the passenger is being transported to or from a hospital or other health care setting and/or is displaying respiratory symptoms, ensure the windows of the car are open. If the passenger has a mask or face covering, it is recommended to be worn if possible.

Taxi and ride/shares provide an essential service to many people in Toronto. Toronto Public Health is asking individuals with symptoms or who are COVID-19 positive who [need to travel](#) for essential health care appointments to drive themselves or ask a friend or family member to take them if at all possible. If they need to take a taxi/ride share, they should follow the guidance above with respect to physical distancing, wearing a mask or face covering, and opening windows. The option of taking a taxi/ride share, if required, is in compliance with the Medical Officer of Health's [Class Order](#).

More information

For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600.

References

Toronto Public Health. (2020). *Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) [Fact Sheet]*. City of Toronto. Retrieved from https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/8d59-Fact-Sheet_Novel-Coronavirus.pdf

Government of Canada (2020). *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks: About non-medical masks and face coverings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/instructions-sew-no-sew-cloth-face-covering.html>

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. (2020). *Interim Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Public Health Ontario. (2020). *Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings*. Retrieved from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en>