

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



Wear Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs

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Traveling on public transportation conveyances increases a person's risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 by bringing persons in close contact with others, often for prolonged periods, and exposing them to frequently touched surfaces. Air travel often requires spending time in security lines and busy airport terminals. Travel by bus, train, and other conveyances used for international, interstate, or intrastate transportation poses similar challenges. [Social distancing](#) is often difficult on public transportation. People may not be able to distance themselves by the recommended at least 6 feet from individuals seated nearby or those standing in or passing through the aisles on airplanes, trains, or buses.

Transmission of the virus through travelers has led to—and continues to lead to—interstate and international spread of the virus which causes COVID-19. Appropriately worn [masks](#) reduce the spread of COVID-19—particularly given the evidence of pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission of the virus.

CDC strongly recommends appropriate masks be worn by all passengers and by all personnel operating the conveyance while on public transportation conveyances (e.g., airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis, ride-shares) and at transportation hubs and other locations where people board such conveyances (e.g. airports, bus or ferry terminals, train stations, seaports).

- People should wear masks that cover both the mouth and nose when waiting for,

traveling on, or departing from public conveyances. People should also wear masks at an airport, bus or ferry terminal, train or subway station, seaport, or similar area that provides transportation.

- People should wear masks when traveling into, within, or out of the United States on public conveyances.
- Conveyance operators transporting people should refuse to board anyone not wearing a mask and require all people onboard, whether passengers or employees, to wear masks for the duration of travel except in the following circumstances:
 - for brief periods while eating, drinking, or taking medication;
 - if unconscious, incapacitated, unable to be awakened, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance; and
 - when necessary to temporarily remove the mask to verify one's identity such as during Transportation Security Administration screening or when asked to do so by the ticket or gate agent or any law enforcement official
 - for children under the age of 2 years old

Public transportation conveyance operators should ensure that any person on the conveyance wears a mask when boarding, disembarking, and for the duration of travel. Depending on the circumstances, conveyances operators should take the following actions:

- provide information to people purchasing tickets or otherwise booking transportation (in advance or on the day of departure) about the need to wear a mask on the conveyance and that failure to comply will result in denial of boarding. Operators should provide this information again at the time of boarding;
- board only those people who wear appropriate masks;
- monitor the conveyance for any person who does not wear a mask and seek compliance from such person; and
- at the earliest opportunity, disembark any person who refuses to comply
- if possible, have masks available for those passengers who do not have a mask

Mask use may be exempted for the following categories of people:

- a child under the age of 2 (masks should NOT be worn by children under the age of 2);
- a person with written instructions from a licensed medical provider to not wear a mask;
- a person with a disability, mental health condition, or sensory sensitivity that prevents that person from wearing a mask;
- a person who is hearing impaired, or communicating with someone who is hearing impaired, when the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
- a person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations; or
- a person operating or essential to operating a conveyance for whom wearing a mask would interfere with that person's ability to safely operate the conveyance.

Many countries, states, territories, tribes, and local authorities have implemented mask requirements within their jurisdictional boundaries, including on public conveyances and associated boarding terminals, to protect public health and reduce the spread of COVID-19 within and between communities. Transportation partners, including airlines, train and bus operators, and taxi and ride-share companies, have also issued mask requirements on their conveyances.

Broad and routine utilization of masks on our transportation systems will protect Americans and provide confidence that we can once again travel safely even during this pandemic. Therefore, CDC is providing this guidance to further support state and local health authorities, transportation partners, and conveyance operators who have implemented requirements for masks to support passenger and crew safety, maintain safe and operational transportation systems, mitigate further introduction and spread of COVID-19, and help safely re-open America's economy.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a public transportation conveyance? –

A public transportation conveyance is a mode of transportation other than a private vehicle. Types of public transportation conveyances are airplanes, trains, subways, buses, taxis, ride-shares, ferries, ships, trolleys, and cable cars.

What is a transportation hub? –

A transportation hub is a location where people gather to board or disembark public transportation conveyances. These include airports, bus and ferry terminals, train and subway stations, seaports, and ride-share pick-up locations.

Do I still need to stay 6 feet apart if passengers are wearing masks? –

Yes. Wearing a mask should be practiced in combination with other [everyday preventive actions](#) to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing. If taking public transport or waiting in a transport hub, you should keep at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and people not from your household whenever possible and wear a mask to keep your mouth and nose covered.

What happens if I don't wear a mask on a public transportation conveyance? –

CDC is asking that operators of public transportation conveyances refuse to board anyone not wearing a mask and to require everyone on board to wear a mask for the duration of travel. If a passenger refuses to comply, the operator should disembark the person at the earliest opportunity.

What if I need to take my mask off during travel?

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There are some circumstances when taking your mask off would be necessary, including brief periods of time while eating, drinking, or taking medication. Other reasons include medical emergencies, to verify identity during security screenings, or if asked to do so by ticket/gate agents or law enforcement.

What if another passenger near me refuses to wear a mask?

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If a passenger near you refuses to wear a mask, alert personnel working on the conveyance (e.g., crew member, driver, conductor) for assistance.

Who is an operator of a public transportation conveyance?

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The operator of the conveyance includes the transportation company, as well as crew, drivers, conductors, ticket takers, and other workers involved in the operation of the conveyance.

What is an appropriate mask?

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People should wear masks that cover the mouth and nose. For more information on masks, visit: [How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Mask](#)

Why is CDC recommending this now?

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Broad and routine use of masks on our transportation systems will protect Americans and provide confidence that we can once again travel safely even during this pandemic.

Does CDC have resources that transportation providers can use to inform customers on mask selection and how to put on and take off your mask?

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Yes, CDC has resources on the [Use of Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#) and downloadable print materials.

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)