



# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



## What Long-Haul Truck Drivers Need to Know about COVID-19

Updated Nov. 12, 2020

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**Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)** is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. [Symptoms](#) often include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. Our understanding of how the virus spreads is evolving as we learn more about it, so check the [CDC website](#) for the latest information. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are [in close contact with one another \(within about 6 feet\)](#)
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks


Recent studies indicate that the virus can be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. It may be possible that a person can 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. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about this virus. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at [higher risk for more serious complications](#) from COVID-19.

### As a long-haul truck driver, how can I protect myself and slow the spread?

As a long-haul truck driver, you spend many hours alone in the cab of your truck. However, there are times when you will be at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. For long-haul truck drivers, potential sources of exposure include having close contact with truck stop attendants, store workers, dock workers, other truck drivers, or others with COVID-19, and touching your nose, mouth, or eyes after contacting surfaces touched or handled by a person with COVID-19.

- Notify your supervisor and stay home if having [symptoms](#).
- Make a plan with your employer and your family as to what to do if you become sick while you're on the road. Include where to stop, where and how to seek medical advice and treatment, and plans for freight delivery.

- Follow [CDC-recommended steps](#) if you are sick. You should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Follow [CDC recommended precautions](#) and notify your supervisor if you are well but have a sick family member at home with COVID-19.
- Limit close contact with others by maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet when possible.
  - Limit time spent outside of the truck cab during fueling, loading and unloading, and at rest and truck stops.
  - Use paperless, electronic invoicing for fueling, deliveries, and other tasks, when available.
  - Contact facilities in advance to make an appointment for unloading of cargo. Be aware that some facilities may not grant access to restrooms, and plan as best you can.
  - Use radio/phone to talk with dock managers or other drivers, if possible.
  - Pack food, water, and supplies to limit the number of stops.
  - Avoid shaking hands.
  - Keep your truck well-ventilated.
- CDC recommends wearing [cloth face coverings](#) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Cloth face coverings may prevent people who don't know they have the virus from transmitting it to others. These face coverings are not surgical masks or respirators and are not appropriate substitutes for them in workplaces where masks or respirators are recommended or required.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on a routine basis such as:
  - In the truck cab (driver door handle, steering wheel, seat belt and buckle, arm and head rest, seat cover, turn signal, wiper controls, dashboard, air ducts, radio, and temperature controls).
  - In the sleeper berth (light switches, mattress tray, temperature controls, and other flat surfaces).
  - If a third party must have access to the interior of your truck (for example., mechanics, other drivers, inspectors), request that the third party clean and disinfect the truck before turning it back over to you.
  - For disinfection, use products that meet [EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) [🔗](#) , diluted household bleach solutions, or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and are appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's directions for use and clean hands afterwards; more detailed cleaning and disinfecting guidance is also [available](#) [🔗](#) .
- Practice proper [hand hygiene](#). This is an important infection control measure. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
  - Key times to clean hands include:
    - Before entering and leaving the cab, including deliveries, loading and unloading of cargo, rest breaks, fueling, and other activities;
    - Before eating or preparing food;

- After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings;
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
- After using the restroom.
- Avoid touching surfaces often touched by others when outside of the cab.
- Do not share personal protective equipment (PPE) (such as vests, safety glasses, hard hats), tools, phones, radios, or other personal items.
- Use pre-qualified truck stops or hotels identified by your employer as having appropriate COVID-19 protections.
- Continue to comply with current [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#)  (FMCSA) regulations.
  - Get adequate sleep (7–9 hours) prior to driving. This is critical even when essential supplies and equipment are being transported.
  - Pull over, drink a cup of coffee, or take a 15–30 minute nap before continuing if you feel [fatigued while driving](#).
- When team driving or ride-alongs are required, wear cloth face coverings inside the truck and avoid sharing bedding in the sleeper berth.
- If any directive from your employer or a shipper is unclear, ask questions.

## What steps should my employer take?

Employers should have a COVID-19 response plan to protect drivers, following [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#). This plan should be shared with you and your coworkers. Employers should:

### Reduce transmission among employees

- Take [steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19](#) if a driver is sick.
  - Actively encourage sick drivers to stay home.
  - Sick drivers diagnosed with COVID-19 shouldn't return to work until [the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met](#), in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Provide drivers with accurate information about COVID-19, how it spreads, and risk of exposure.
  - Be aware that some drivers may be at [higher risk for severe illness](#), such as older adults and those with underlying medical conditions. Put in place specific policies to minimize face-to-face contact between these drivers, or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers, and visitors.
  - Provide training to drivers on proper [handwashing](#) practices and other routine preventative measures. This will help prevent the spread of many diseases, including COVID-19.
- Provide drivers with all PPE (including vests, safety glasses, hard hats) that they might need while on the road so that the driver does not need to borrow PPE from shippers.

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol for truck cabs.
- Provide tissues and small trash cans for truck cabs.
- Take additional precautions to address risks associated with ride-alongs or team driving (two drivers in the cab on a long-haul run) when they cannot be avoided. For example, install a removable barrier between the driver and passenger that does not obstruct the task of driving and/or to separate sleeper berth.

## Maintain a healthy work environment

- Conduct worksite assessments to identify COVID-19 prevention strategies.
- Institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between drivers, other coworkers, and customers, such as:
  - Develop policies and technology options that allow and encourage contactless deliveries, such as no-signature delivery. These options limit contact, provide space, and avoid the sharing of items like pens and electronic signature pads between drivers and individuals at the delivery location.
  - During driver training situations, use virtual training methods and in-vehicle monitoring systems where possible. Limit ride-alongs and in-person classroom-based training. Follow all applicable federal motor carrier regulations and public health agency guidelines.
- Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and proper [hand hygiene](#) practices on the dock and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Provide disposable disinfectant wipes so that surfaces commonly touched can be wiped down. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) [🔗](#), diluted household bleach solutions, or alcohol solutions with at least 60% alcohol, and are appropriate for the surface. Provide drivers training on manufacturer's directions for use; more detailed cleaning and disinfecting guidance is also [available](#) [🔗](#).
- Pre-qualify truck stops, rest areas, and hotels to ensure such facilities are open, supplied, and follow recommended COVID-19 safety practices, such as:
  - cleanliness and disinfection (such as routine cleaning, available hand-sanitizing stations, and private showers);
  - proper food handling and food service (such as replacing self-service with full service);
  - contactless fuel payment.
- Follow all applicable local, state, and federal regulations and public health agency guidelines.

## Maintain healthy business operations


- Follow the CDC guidance for [critical infrastructure workers who may have had exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#).
  - Reintegrating exposed, asymptomatic workers back to work, while discussed in the guidance, should not be misinterpreted as the first or most

appropriate option.

- Home isolation may still be the most preferred and viable option for exposed workers.
- Designate a person who is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Drivers should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Consider using a hotline for employees to voice concerns anonymously.
- Make a plan with your employees as to what to do if they become sick while on the road. Include where to stop, where and how to seek medical advice and treatment, and plans for freight delivery.
- Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices. Consider drafting non-punitive emergency sick leave policies if sick leave is not offered to some or all employees. Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work.
- Provide information on who to contact if employees become sick. If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Reach out to local public health officials to establish ongoing communications to facilitate access to relevant information before and during a local outbreak.
- Schedule driver routes to allow for adequate sleep, and use [fatigue management strategies](#).
- Understand that the current environment could elevate stress levels among drivers. Provide resources to help manage stress.

## Where can I get more information?

Stay informed. Talk to your employer, supervisor, or union representative who are responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. See these sources for more information on worker exposures to COVID-19:

- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic](#)
- [CDC COVID-19](#)
- [OSHA COVID-19](#) 
- CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | website: [cdc.gov/info](https://cdc.gov/info)

Last Updated Nov. 12, 2020

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