



NMDOT Transit and Rail Division

Guidance for Transit Agencies

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

6/23/2020

New Mexico's transit systems are working diligently to maintain service for their communities while, at the same time, ensuring the safety of their employees and customers.

Public transportation is an essential service –Our transit systems provide vital connections for essential workers and access to basic lifeline services, including healthcare, grocery stores, and food pantries. Public transportation agencies around New Mexico have been working hard to maintain operations and ensure the health and safety of their customers and employees. Some examples of transit agency actions include:

- Regular and extensive cleaning of transit vehicles and facilities
- Elimination of fares to reduce high-touch areas and maintain more social distancing for transit vehicle drivers
- Use of rear-door-only boarding, and spreading out passengers on the bus to help maintain social distancing
- Adding additional vehicles to higher volume routes to reduce the number of passengers on a single vehicle
- Skipping stops if vehicles are already at a capacity to help ensure social distancing
- Adding protective barriers to reduce close contact between drivers and passengers

Recommended guidance:

- Follow the direction of local and State public health and law enforcement agencies. This local and State information generally is coordinated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Homeland Security and is the most accurate assessment of the situation locally.
- Continue to communicate to the public that they should not take transit if they are sick. Message: if you are showing symptoms, stay home, but if you cannot, please use an alternate mode of transportation.
- Transit use should be limited to essential trips only – trips to work for essential workers and to meet essential personal needs (e.g., grocery store and medical trips, but not if you are sick).
- Closely monitor employee absenteeism and direct employees not to come to work if they are sick.
- Suspend fare collection for fixed-route services, where practical, to reduce the interaction with transit drivers and limit contact with high-touch surfaces.
- Use rear-door boarding, where possible, to reduce contact between drivers and passengers.
- Limit vehicle capacity and require passengers to maintain at least 6 feet of spacing between each other. Transit agencies may elect to cordon off seats or portions of vehicles, as well as skip stops if vehicles are already at capacity to help adhere to these guidelines.
- Require passengers over the age of 2 years old and transit agency staff to use face coverings (excepting medical requirements) to protect themselves and other passengers on your vehicles and in the public spaces of your facilities.
- Prioritize routes that serve medical facilities, employment centers that are critical to the supply chain, access to core needs (e.g., grocery stores, food banks, and schools or other places where meals are provided), and lifeline services for the most vulnerable populations. Please contact your NMDOT Transit and Rail Division program manager with the details of your service modifications.
- To the extent possible, provide advance notice of major service interruptions, so system users can make other travel arrangements to meet essential travel needs.
- Transit agencies should provide access to alcohol-based hand sanitizer (or soap, running water, and drying materials) for employees and customers.
- In vehicles, transit agencies should avoid using the recirculated air option for vehicle ventilation. Instead, use vehicle vents and lowered windows.
- Encourage passengers to refrain from shouting during their trip in order to decrease airborne droplets which may contain the virus.

Additional resources:

- [FTA Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Department of Homeland Security – Essential Critical Infrastructure](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Bus Transit Operators](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Rail Transit Operators](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Transit Maintenance Workers](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Transit Station Workers](#)
- [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [APTA Resources on COVID-19](#)
- [CTAA COVID-19 Resources](#)