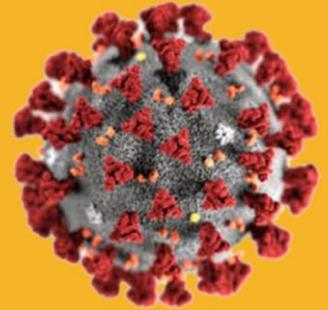




TEAMSTERS

SAFETY & HEALTH

Coronavirus



Transit Operators

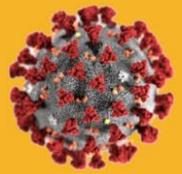
Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2)

(Updated March 25, 2020)

This is a rapidly evolving situation. This fact sheet will be updated online as needed. See links at the end of this fact sheet for the most up-to-date information.

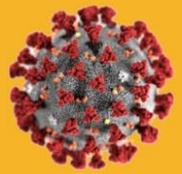
The IBT Safety and Health Department is continuously monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and is committed to providing Teamsters locals and affiliates with the information they need to protect our members and the communities they serve.

Unions have a key role in standing up for the right of workers to a safe and healthy workplace. Local union representatives can use a variety of means to accomplish this, including making information requests and demanding to bargain on occupational health preparedness plans, infection control protocols, training for workers, and the supply and sufficiency of personal protective equipment.



SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR TRANSIT OPERATORS

- **Regularly perform proper hand hygiene:**
 - **Hand hygiene** is one of the single most important infection control measures.
 - Wash your hands with **soap and water**, when available, for 20 seconds, particularly when hands are visibly soiled.
 - If soap and water are not available regularly, use **an alcohol-based hand sanitizer** containing at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. ○ **Key times to clean** hands include:
 - Before beginning a work break and at the end of the shift.
 - After touching other commonly touched surfaces, such as fare boxes and handrails.
 - After assisting a passenger.
 - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - After using the restroom.
 - Before eating or preparing food.

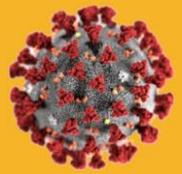


- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands or when wearing gloves.
- **Avoid close contact** (i.e., within 6 feet) with transit passengers; consider allowing transit passengers to enter and exit the bus through rear entry doors, requesting passengers to avoid standing or sitting within 6 feet of the bus driver.
- **Avoid touching surfaces** often touched by **transit passengers**.
- **Do not touch surfaces** contaminated by **body fluids**.
- **Use gloves** if touching surfaces contaminated with body fluids or if required to physically contact a transit passenger. Gloves should be carefully removed and discarded after each use, and you should immediately wash your hands.
- **Use disposable disinfectant wipes** on surfaces in the driver cockpit commonly touched by the operator.

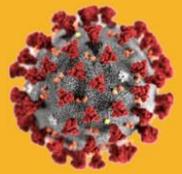
What Steps Should My Employer Take?

Your employer should develop a COVID-19 **health and safety plan** to protect employees. This plan should be shared with you and your coworkers and should:

- Actively encourage **sick employees** to stay home. Employees should stay home until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38° C] or greater), and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). If sick, call your primary care physician before visiting their office.
- Provide information on **who to contact** if you become sick.



- **Designate a person** who is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. You should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Providing you with the **right information** about COVID-19, how it spreads, and your risk of exposure.
- Conduct **worksite assessments** to identify COVID-19 prevention strategies.
- To keep riders and operators at a safe social distance, consider establishing a rear-door boarding policy that would require passengers to enter and exit through rear doors.
- **Provide gloves** if you may touch surfaces contaminated with body fluids or if you are required to physically contact a transit passenger. Gloves should be carefully removed and discarded after each use, and you should immediately wash your hands.
- Provide **training on good hand-washing practices** and other routine infection control precautions. This will help reduce the spread of many diseases, including COVID-19.
- Show you where you can **access soap** and clean running water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Provide **disposable disinfectant wipes** so that surfaces commonly touched by the bus operator can be wiped down.
- Provide **tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles** for use by employees.
- Place **posters** that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette and good hand hygiene practices at the entrance to the workplace and in other work areas where they are likely to be seen.



- Reach out to **local public health officials** to establish ongoing communications to facilitate access to relevant information before and during a local outbreak.

What Are the Requirements for the Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

Transit agencies and workers should follow the **WorkSafeBC** recommendations for personal protective equipment (PPE).

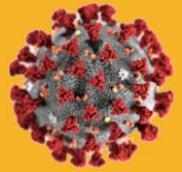
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/tools-machinery-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-ppe/responsibilities>

Gloves should be provided and worn if touching surfaces contaminated with body fluids or if required to physically contact a transit passenger. Gloves should also be worn if there is a risk of exposure to chemical hazards from using products for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces. Gloves should be carefully removed and discarded after each use, and you should immediately wash your hands.

Are There Any Protections Against Retaliation for Health and Safety Activities?

Answer: YES

Your Union Representative will assist any member in the event an employer carries out unjust discipline after receipt of a workplace safety complaint or concern.



Law & policy

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation and Part 3 of the *Workers Compensation Act* contain legal requirements for workplace health and safety that must be met by all workplace parties under the jurisdiction of **WorkSafeBC**. Some sections of the ***Workers Compensation Act* and OHS Regulation** have associated policies and guidelines.

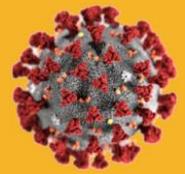
Steps to Follow When Work Seems Unsafe

1. Report the unsafe condition or procedure:

- As a worker, you must immediately report the unsafe condition to a supervisor or employer.
- As a supervisor or employer, you must investigate the matter and fix it if possible. If you decide the worker's concern is not valid, report back to the worker.

2. If a worker still views work as unsafe after a supervisor or employer has said it is safe to perform a job or task:

- As a supervisor or employer, you must investigate the problem and ensure any unsafe condition is fixed.
- This investigation must take place in the presence of the worker and a worker representative of the joint health and safety committee or a worker chosen by the worker's trade union. If there is no safety committee or representing trade union at the workplace, the worker who first reported the unsafe condition can choose to have another worker present at the investigation.



If a worker still views work as unsafe, notify WorkSafeBC

- 3. If the matter is not resolved, the worker and the supervisor or employer must [contact WorkSafeBC](#). A prevention officer will then investigate and take steps to find a workable solution.*

WORKER FRIENDLY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

As a union, the rights and benefits we have fought for can help to prevent disease and help people who do become ill, including:

- Adequate, non-punitive sick leave policies that encourage sick workers to stay at home without the loss of pay, benefits, seniority or other benefits.
- Family leave policies that allow people to stay home to take care of household members.
- Financial remedies for unemployment scenarios, where people are not able to work or are required to work overtime to take care of patients.
- Access to quality and affordable health care.
- Protection from stigma and discrimination.
- A rapid response system to share communications with employees.

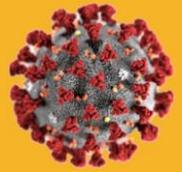
HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

New research has indicated that SARS-CoV-2 may spread by respiratory droplets, environmental contact, as well as by fecal-oral transmission. A person starts being contagious during the “incubation period,” the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease, which is up to 14 days.

Person-to-person spread

COVID-19 is transmitted most efficiently from direct person to person contact, through:

- Respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes:

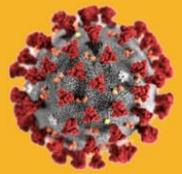


- These droplets can land in the mouths, noses or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs;
- Spread is most likely among close contacts (about 6 feet);
 - Close contact is defined as -
 - being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case; or
 - Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on, sneezed on).
 - Contact with saliva and fecal matter may also be a route of transmission for the COVID-19 virus as well as viral aerosolization.

SARS-CoV-2 virus has been detected in upper and lower respiratory tract samples from patients, with high viral loads in upper respiratory tract samples. Therefore, virus transmission via respiratory secretions in the form of droplets (>5 microns) or aerosols (<5 microns) appears to be likely.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get indirect transmission of the COVID-19 virus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.



A recent laboratory study by researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other academic institutions found that viable SARS-CoV-2 virus could be detected:

- in aerosols up to 3 hours post aerosolization,
- up to 4 hours on copper,
- up to 24 hours on cardboard, and
- up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Most patients (80%) experienced mild illness...approximately 14% experienced severe disease and 5% were critically ill." Older people and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, lung disease, or cancer are more likely to develop serious illnesses.

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually:

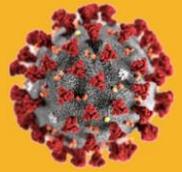
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Emergency warning signs include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

IS THERE A VACCINE, DRUG, OR TREATMENT FOR COVID-19?

To date, there is no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-2019. Possible vaccines and some specific drug treatments to prevent and treat COVID-19 are under investigation but will take months of clinical trials to become safely



available. Antibiotics do not work against COVID-19 because antibiotics only work on bacterial infection. People with serious illnesses should be hospitalized where supportive care (IV Fluids) is administered to support the body's immune system.

WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PROTECT WORKERS?

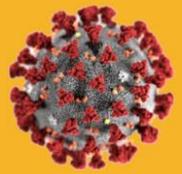
Measures for protecting workers from exposure to, and infection with, the novel coronavirus, depend on the type of work being performed and exposure risk, including potential for interaction with infectious people and contaminated environments (e.g., worksites) or materials (e.g., laboratory samples, waste) that are contaminated with the virus.

Guidance

Employers should determine if the tasks being performed could expose workers to fomites (objects or materials which are likely to carry infection) harboring the COVID-19 virus.

Employers should adopt infection control strategies based on a thorough hazard assessment. These controls include using appropriate combinations of:

- **Engineering controls** involve isolating employees from work-related hazards. Where they are appropriate, these types of controls reduce exposure to hazards without relying on worker behavior and can be the most cost-effective solution to implement.
- **Administrative Controls** require action by the worker or employer. Typically, administrative controls are changes in work policy or procedures to reduce or minimize exposure to a hazard, such as:
 - Protocols to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



- Training and education.
- **Safe work practices** are types of administrative controls that include procedures for safe and proper work used to reduce the duration, frequency, or intensity of exposure to a hazard, such as:
 - Emphasis on personal hygiene practices, hand-washing, and respiratory etiquette.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** includes gloves, goggles, face shields, face masks, and respiratory protection, when appropriate. During an outbreak of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, recommendations for PPE specific to occupations or job tasks may change depending on geographic location, updated risk assessments for workers, and information on PPE effectiveness in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Employers should check the WorksafeBC websites regularly for updates about recommended PPE.”

Information attained at: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en>



LOCAL 31
TRANSIT OPERATORS

SAFETY
- AND -
HEALTH

