

## Questions from the Florida-Specific Coronavirus Conference Call March 17, 2020 at 4:00 pm

### For a Recording of the Call:

[https://www.freeconferencecall.com/wall/recorded\\_audio?audioRecordingUrl=https%3A%2F%2Frs0000.freeconferencecall.com%2Fstorage%2FsetFCC2%2FRXYZL%2FRtDf&subscriptionId=8131414](https://www.freeconferencecall.com/wall/recorded_audio?audioRecordingUrl=https%3A%2F%2Frs0000.freeconferencecall.com%2Fstorage%2FsetFCC2%2FRXYZL%2FRtDf&subscriptionId=8131414)

1. **Question:** Are agencies evaluating suspending fares?
  - a. **Answer:** Yes, some agencies are suspending fares. This is a local decision. FDOT is collecting this information from agencies. FDOT is in the process of establishing a Transit Agency Emergency Management Listserv for transit agencies. This type of information will be posted to that website. FDOT is hoping to have the website up and running today.
2. **Question:** Are there any transit agencies that have suspended service?
  - a. **Answer:** A daily Situation Report (SITREP) will be posted to the Transit Agency Emergency Management website that FDOT is creating. Agencies will be able to obtain policies changes that other agencies have provided.
3. **Question:** How can we work with the state to get testing kits for front line employees in the first wave of kits to be sent to each county?
  - a. **Answer:** FDOT is communicating with the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) regarding this question. As FDOT receives information from the SEOC, it will be provided to all transit agencies.
4. **Question:** Will STS (Special Transportation Services) passengers continue to be picked up?
  - a. **Answer:** Yes, unless you have applied for a waiver.
5. **Question:** In a state of emergency, may ADA providers reduce or prioritize paratransit services?
  - a. **Answer:** ADA is a federal law, FTA has set up an emergency docket, where you can ask for a waiver for administrative rules or federal law. To do this, use the emergency docket that was attached to the notice that went out on Friday. More information can be found here:  
<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FTA-2020-0001>.
6. **Question:** What about compliance with Title VI compliance with reduction of service, do we need a waiver on this?
  - a. **Answer:** Title VI is a federal law, FTA has set up an emergency docket, where you can ask for a waiver for administrative rules or federal law. To do this, use the emergency docket that was attached to the notice that went out on Friday.  
<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FTA-2020-0001>.
7. **Question:** What actions can or should a paratransit provider take to help prevent transporting individuals who meet the criteria for self-quarantine or isolation? Should screening questions be used? When should service be refused?

- a. **Answer:** Transit Agencies may have a policy to screen passengers prior to them accessing the bus. This is an agency decision and FDOT is acceptable of that decision. FDOT requires that every passenger be treated the same.
8. **Question:** Has anyone been contacted or been made aware by the CDC that a passenger who tested positive rode one of their buses? If so, did agency employees disinfect the vehicle?
  - a. **Answer:** Once a passenger has become infected, it is the responsibility of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to provide the transportation. If it is known that an infected passenger was transported on an agency vehicle, the vehicle must be disinfected.
9. **Question:** Do you know of any agency using a screening tool to identify if riders who may be contagious in order to protect other frail passengers (i.e: those going to dialysis and the elderly)? Would this violate ADA?
  - a. **Answer:** Not at this time. However, as more information is obtained it will be disseminated through the Transit Agency Emergency Management Listserv. As mentioned above, transit agencies may have a policy to screen passengers prior to them accessing the bus. This is an agency decision and FDOT is acceptable to that. FDOT requires that every passenger be treated the same.
10. **Question:** Are agency declining trips based on passenger's condition or questionnaire? for para or fixed?
  - a. **Answer:** As mentioned above, transit agencies may have a policy to screen passengers prior to them accessing the bus. This is an agency decision and FDOT is acceptable to that. FDOT requires that every passenger be treated the same.
11. **Question:** Has there been talk about limiting ridership due to proximity and lack of ridership familiarity? There should be personal space (seat beside and row in front/behind empty for every passenger) to keep social distancing. No standees do to possible contamination on handrails. What is being done?
  - a. **Answer:** Adding personal space on a vehicle is a local decision. Please keep in mind when adding personal space, capacity issues could become an issue. The agency should have a policy in place to ensure all passengers are transported appropriately.
12. **Question:** How are isolation teams being staged for cancer and dialysis treatment transportation? These contaminations are exploding in other states. These should not be handled by transit service with multiple riders throughout the day, nor should TNCs be activated for this service.
  - a. **Answer:** If a client is infected, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is responsible for their transportation. As mentioned above, transit agencies may have a policy to screen passengers prior to them accessing the bus. This is an agency decision and FDOT is acceptable to that. FDOT requires that every passenger be treated the same.
  - b. **Question:** How are the hospitals preparing for the spread of the virus as it relates to transportation between locations as the infected population grows and overwhelms the medical infrastructure? There has to be a system in place to transfer patients.

- c. **Answer:** Once a passenger has become infected, it is the responsibility of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to provide the transportation. If a situation arises where mass movement of infected patients is needed and EMS is overextended, FDOT will assist EMS without putting transit employees at risk.
13. **Question:** How are the hospitals preparing for the spread of the virus as it relates to transportation between locations as the infected population grows and overwhelms the medical infrastructure? There has to be a system in place to transfer patients.
- a. **Answer:** FDOT is communicating with the FDOH and the SEOC should this type of need arise. The state agencies will respond appropriately.
14. **Question:** Is anyone providing masks to passengers who are frail, have underlying conditions? If so do you provide for free or charge them?
- a. **Answer:** There are recommendations from the CDC. This information can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.
15. **Question:** I've been seeing pictures of buses being disinfected with hand pump sprayers. I'm assuming whatever they are spraying is being left to dry. Any idea what they are using that is safe to let dry on upholstery? Our normal disinfection is done with a hand sprayer using an antiviral commercial product and cloth wipe. We are just concerned about damage to the upholstery using the pump sprayer. I haven't found a written protocol in the literature, yet, on this?
- a. **Answer:** FDOT will post the question through the Transit Agency Emergency Management Listserv. Agencies can then respond with their policies. Almost every agency has implemented some type of disinfection protocol. We will try to create a list of those protocols and provide to everyone.
16. **Question:** We are facing a shortage of significant cleaning product available. Do you know of any sources for these products?
- a. **Answer:** FDOT is working with SEOC on this situation. If you're completely out of disinfectant, please let FDOT know.
17. **Question:** With many public meetings being cancelled, we are unable to continue decision making with our board. By state law, a quorum must be present in order to allow any board member calling in to vote on an issue. How can we get a waiver to allow committees and board to operate in the Sunshine, but also take action remotely?
- a. **Answer:** Mark Reichert with FDOT sent an email with a copy of the Governor's Exec Order, Section 4 appears to address this and an opinion from the FDOT General Counsel is expected.
- b. **Answer:** The Governor's Executive Order is attached.
18. **Question:** With many boards not meeting, will there be an extension of the 5310 deadlines related to purchases? The deadline is May 15.
- a. **Answer:** May 15<sup>th</sup> is an FDOT Work Program deadline. Agency award notices have been completed since August 2019 and should have been able to complete orders within the timeframe. However, an agency that cannot meet the May 15<sup>th</sup>, may request their funds be moved to July 2021.
19. **Question:** I've gotten conflicting information in regards to paid sick leave through the Federal Relief Bill. I thought that it covers small private businesses with 500 people and under. But, today I heard it is also for governmental agencies, which transit agencies fall

under. I have asked if that was correct and if there was a cap. I'm waiting to hear back but if you have any info please share.

- a. **Answer:** Provided from APTA: The President signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This Act does two things: (1) Expands the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA); and (2) Creates an Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. Both of these provisions apply to ALL employers employing fewer than 500 employees. Under the expanded FMLA for coronavirus absences, employees are entitled to 2/3rds of their pay up to 12 weeks. Under the Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act, it provides for paid, job protected leave for Coronavirus-related absences up to 80 hours for full-time employees and the average number of hours over a two-week period for part-time employees. The requirements take effect 15 days from enactment (April 2<sup>nd</sup>).
20. **Question:** Any input on handling operators with DOT medical cards that will be expiring soon?
- a. **Answer:** A request for waiver should be submitted to FDOT regarding F.A.C. 14-90 requirements. FDOT understands the crisis we are in and will take that into consideration on any requests that are received. FDOT will expediate any requests for waivers.
21. **Question:** Is the private sector, specifically the NEMT side, being incorporated into the emergency plans? They were not included in past emergencies, and I'm afraid they will be left out again. They are the ideal sector to handle patient isolation and virus containment.
- a. **Answer:** The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) determines who the providers are within the NEMT network. FDOT will share any information received regarding interested providers with AHCA.
22. **Question:** Some suppliers are not considering transit services as a critical need and are not prioritizing their need for cleaning supplies. Is there any type of documentation that can be provided that shows our services are considered critical during this time?
- a. **Answer:** FDOT working with SEOC to resolve this issue.