What Transit Workers Need to Know about COVID-19

TRANSIT STATION WORKERS
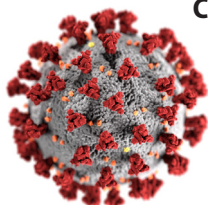
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms often include a fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Our understanding of how the virus spreads is evolving as we learn more about it, so check the **CDC website** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html) for the latest information.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

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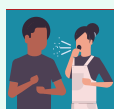
Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

Recent studies indicate that the virus can be spread by people before they develop symptoms (pre-symptomatic) or who never develop symptoms (asymptomatic). It also 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. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at **higher risk for more serious complications** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html) from COVID-19.

CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html) 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.

As a transit station worker, how can I protect myself?

For transit station workers, potential sources of exposure include having close contact with a transit passenger with COVID-19, by touching surfaces contaminated with coronavirus, or by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

- Limit close contact with others by maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet, when possible.

- Avoid touching surfaces often touched by transit passengers.

- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, following the directions on the cleaning product's label.

- Use gloves if required to touch surfaces contaminated by body fluids.

- Proper **hand hygiene** (https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html) is an important infection control measure. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

- Key times to clean hands in general include:
    » Before, during, and after preparing food
    » Before eating food
    » After using the toilet
    » After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

- Additional times to clean hands on the job include:
    » Before and after work shifts
    » Before and after work breaks
    » After touching frequently touched surfaces such as fareboxes and handrails
    » After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

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Which transit station surfaces should be cleaned? What are the best cleaning chemicals to use when cleaning?

Perform routine cleaning and disinfection of all frequently touched non-porous surfaces within the transit station on a daily basis. These include kiosks, ticket machines, turnstiles, benches, handrails, garbage cans, door handles, payphones, restroom surfaces (e.g., faucets, toilets, counters), elevator buttons, and system maps. If the surfaces are visibly dirty, they should be cleaned prior to disinfectant application. For soft or porous surfaces, remove any visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleansers indicated for use on these surfaces.

Appropriate disinfectants include:

- EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19, are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, and contact time). A list of products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims is available at: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2.

- Diluted household bleach solutions prepared according to the manufacturers label for disinfection can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.

Wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) required for using the cleaning and disinfection products according to the product manufacturer's instructions. After removing PPE, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Work uniforms worn during cleaning and disinfecting should be laundered afterwards. If possible, **launder items** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html) using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Clean your hands after handling laundry by washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

What steps should my employer take?

Employers of transit station workers should develop a COVID-19 health and safety plan to protect employees according to **CDC Business Guidance** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html). This plan should be shared with you and your coworkers. Your employer should:

- **Take steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if an employee is sick** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html). Actively encourage sick employees to stay home. Sick employees should not return to work until **the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html), in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

- Provide information on who to contact if employees become sick.

- 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.

- Designate someone to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them.

- Provide employees with correct information about COVID-19, how it spreads, and risk of exposure.

- Conduct worksite assessments to identify COVID-19 prevention strategies.

- Provide training on proper **hand washing** (https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html) practices and other routine infection control precautions. This will help prevent the spread of many diseases, including COVID-19.

- Develop policies for worker protection and training according to OSHA standards (e.g., **hazard communication** (https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1200), **personal protective equipment** (https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.132), etc.) for employees prior to conducting disinfection work tasks, particularly if new chemicals are introduced in the workplace to use.

- Provide employees with access to soap, clean running water, and drying materials, or alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol at their worksite.

What steps should my employer take? (continued)

- Provide employees with appropriate PPE as needed for cleaning and disinfecting and provide training on properly using them.

- Provide disposable disinfectant wipes so that surfaces frequently touched can be wiped down. To disinfect, use **products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2** (https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2), diluted household bleach solutions, or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and are appropriate for the surface. Provide employees training on manufacturer's directions for use.

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.

- Place posters that encourage **staying home when sick** (https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/tools-resources/educational-materials.html)**, covering coughs and sneezes** (https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html) and **washing hands often** (https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html) at the entrance to the workplace and in other workplace 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.

- Follow all applicable federal regulations and public health agency guidelines.

Where can I get more information?

Stay informed. Talk to your employer, supervisor, union representative, or agency personnel 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) website: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic website: www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html

CDC COVID-19 website: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/

OSHA COVID-19 website: www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html

CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | website: https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/ContactUs/Form

cdc.gov/coronavirus