

COVID-19

Guidance for Taxi and Ride-Share Vehicles

The following interim guidance includes recommendations to help reduce the risk of community exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in taxis and ride shares.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new type of coronavirus. COVID-19 can present as an acute respiratory illness in humans. More information on COVID-19 can be found at

www.lambtonpublichealth.ca.

General COVID-19 guidance for workplaces can be found at

<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/workplaces/>.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 in taxi/ride share vehicles

Recommendations for employers/drivers/vehicle owners and operators to use now include:

Actively encourage sick employees/drivers to stay home:

- All employers/employees/drivers should be aware of signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including:
 - fever
 - cough
 - muscle aches and tiredness
 - difficulty breathing
 - and less commonly: sore throat, headache, diarrhea.
- Employees/drivers who have any of the above signs and symptoms should stay home or be sent home immediately if they become ill while working. They should not return to

work until 14 days from symptom onset and/or continue to feel unwell.

- Employers should be flexible with requiring healthcare provider's notes for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness. Healthcare provider notes to validate employee illness or to return to work can put unnecessary strain on healthcare provider offices and medical facilities during this busy time.
- Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees/drivers to stay home to care for a sick family member. During this time, employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members.

Emphasize respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by drivers and passengers:

- Drivers should clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand rub, or to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Washing hands with soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty.
- Use alcohol-based hand rub (with at least 60% alcohol) after handling money, refuelling vehicle or providing assistance with a passenger's personal items. Alcohol-based hand rub, tissues, and no-touch disposal receptacles should be available for driver and passenger use in every vehicle. Ensure supplies are maintained.



- Consider placing signage for cough and sneeze etiquette and hand sanitizing in vehicles where the information can be seen by passengers (e.g. in a clear plastic sleeve).

Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of vehicles:

- Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated. Examples of high-touch surfaces in vehicles include car door handles, arm rests, buttons for windows and locks, seatbelts and debit machines.
- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
- In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected at the following times:
 - at least twice per day
 - when visibly dirty
 - after transporting medical patients (e.g. to and from hospital and other health care settings)
 - after transporting passengers who display respiratory symptoms (e.g. coughing, sneezing)
- Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
- Disinfectant wipes have combined cleaners and disinfectants in one solution. Disinfectant wipes should be discarded if they become dry and are not recommended for heavily soiled surfaces.

- Check the expiry date of products you use and always follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Employers/vehicle owners should provide all drivers with the appropriate cleaning products/disinfectant wipes for their vehicles.

Practice additional preventive measures while transporting passengers:

- Have clients pay in advance using a credit card. Alternatively encourage use of tap payment in vehicles.
- When credit card payment is not possible, try to calculate costs in advance so that there is no need to provide change to the client (exact payment).
- Remind passengers about preventive measures to reduce risk to drivers on your website and outgoing telephone messages.
- Consider installing plexiglass shields as a barrier between the driver and passenger in the back seat.
- Ask passengers to sit in the back right seat to maintain physical distance.
- Consider not allowing shared rides so passengers are not travelling with individuals unknown to them.
- If the passenger is being transported to or from a hospital or other health care setting and/or is displaying respiratory symptoms ensure the windows of the car are open. If the passenger has a mask or face covering* (see [link](#) for info re face coverings), you may suggest it be worn if possible.

- Taxi and ride/shares provide an essential service to many people. Lambton Public Health is asking individuals with symptoms or who are COVID-19 positive who need to travel for essential health care appointments to drive themselves or ask a friend or family member to take them if at all possible.
- If they need to take a taxi/ride share, people with COVID-like symptoms should follow the guidance above with respect to hand washing, physical distancing, wearing a mask or face covering*, (see [link](#) for info. re face coverings) and opening windows.

Keeping Accurate Records

Due to the time it takes for symptoms of COVID-19 to develop, it is important to track where employees have stopped or delivered during their work day. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the local public health unit will ask employers to provide information on where the employee worked as well as the contact information of any other employee or passengers who may have been exposed.

References / Additional resources:

Toronto Public Health Fact Sheet: [COVID 19 Guidance for Taxi and Shared Ride Vehicles](#).

[Safety guidance – COVID-19 in commercial vehicle operations](#) – Government of Canada

[Guidance on cleaning and sanitizing your vehicle during COVID-19](#) – Infrastructure Health & Safety Association

Public Health Ontario. [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).

[Infrastructure Health and Safety Association, Transportation services health and safety during COVID-19](#)

Information on Face Coverings: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread#section-2>