



Note: This guidance is no longer in effect. Most businesses now follow the [COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards](#). Visit the California Department of Public Health's [COVID-19 website](#) for the current COVID-19 public health guidance. This document is provided only for historical purposes.



COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE:

Public and Private Passenger Carriers, Transit, and Intercity Passenger Rail

October 20, 2020

This guidance is designed to address sectors and activities opening statewide. However, local health officers may implement more stringent rules tailored to local epidemiological conditions, so employers should also confirm relevant local opening policies.



OVERVIEW

On March 19, 2020, the State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health issued an order requiring most Californians to stay at home to disrupt the spread of COVID-19 among the population.

The impact of COVID-19 on the health of Californians is not yet fully known. Reported illness ranges from very mild (some people have no symptoms) to severe illness that may result in death. Certain groups, including people aged 65 or older and those with serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk of hospitalization and serious complications. Transmission is most likely when people are in close contact or in a poorly ventilated area with an infected person, even if that person does not have any symptoms or has not yet developed symptoms.

Precise information about the number and rates of COVID-19 by industry or occupational groups, including among critical infrastructure workers, is not available at this time. There have been multiple outbreaks in a range of workplaces, indicating that workers are at risk of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19 infection. Examples of these workplaces include hospitals, long-term care facilities, prisons, food production, warehouses, meat processing plants, restaurants, and grocery stores.

As stay-at-home orders are modified, it is essential that all possible steps be taken to ensure the safety of workers and the public.

Key prevention practices include:

- ✓ physical distancing to the maximum extent possible,
- ✓ use of face coverings by workers (where respiratory protection is not required) and customers/clients,
- ✓ frequent handwashing and regular cleaning and disinfection,
- ✓ training workers on these and other elements of the COVID-19 prevention plan.

In addition, it will be critical to have in place appropriate processes to identify new cases of illness in workplaces and, when they are identified, to intervene quickly and work with public health authorities to halt the spread of the virus.

PURPOSE

This document provides guidance for public and private passenger carriers (e.g. shuttle providers, taxis, and rideshare operators), transit agencies, California state-supported intercity passenger rail operators (Capitol Corridor, San Joaquins, and Pacific Surfliner), and passenger vessel operations. The guidance is intended to support a safe, clean environment for workers and customers. Businesses in this industry are open across all tiers but must follow the modifications in this guidance.

For the most updated information on county tier status, visit [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). Please note that local health departments can have more restrictive criteria and different closures. Find [your county's local information](#).

The guidance is not intended to revoke or repeal any worker rights, either statutory, regulatory or collectively bargained, and is not exhaustive, as it does not include county health orders, nor is it a substitute for any existing safety and health-related regulatory requirements such as those of Cal/OSHA.¹ Additionally, it is not intended to conflict with federal or state requirements for rail or transit vehicles or facilities. Stay current on changes to public health guidance and state/local orders, as the COVID-19 situation continues. Cal/OSHA has more comprehensive guidance on their Cal/OSHA Interim General Guidelines on Protecting Workers from COVID-19 [webpage](#). CDC has specific guidelines for the transit industry:

- [Bus Transit Operators](#)
- [Rail Transit Operators](#)
- [Transit Maintenance Workers](#)
- [Transit Station Workers](#)
- [Rideshare, Taxi, Limo and Other Drivers-for-Hire](#)

Required Use of Face Coverings

On June 18, CDPH issued [Guidance on the Use of Face Coverings](#), which broadly requires the use of face coverings for both members of the public and workers in all public and workplace settings where there is a high risk of exposure.

The [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#) is subject to additional updates based on the current scientific understanding of transmission of the virus causing COVID-19. Please check the CDPH website for any revisions.



Worksite Specific Plan

- Establish a written, workplace-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every location, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas and work tasks, and designate a person at each establishment to implement the plan.
- Incorporate the [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#) into the Workplace Specific Plan and include a policy for handling exemptions.
- Identify contact information for the local health department where the operation is located for communicating information about COVID-19 outbreaks among workers or customers.
- Train and communicate with workers and worker representatives on the plan and make the plan available to workers and their representatives.
- Regularly evaluate the establishment for compliance with the plan and document and correct deficiencies identified.
- Investigate any COVID-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.
- Implement the necessary processes and protocols when a workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with [CDPH guidelines](#) and orders or guidance from the local health department.
- Identify close contacts (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected worker and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive worker(s) and close contacts.
- Notify all employees in writing, and employers of subcontracted employees, who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and report workplace outbreaks to the local health department. For additional information on employer responsibilities under [AB 685](#) (Chapter 84, Statutes of 2020), refer to the [Enhanced Enforcement and Employer Reporting Requirements](#) from Cal/OSHA and the [Employer Questions about AB 685](#) from CDPH.
- Adhere to the guidelines below. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause operations to be temporarily closed or limited.



Topics for Worker Training

- Information on [COVID-19](#), how to prevent it from spreading, and which [people are at higher risk](#) for severe illness or death.
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using [CDC guidelines](#).
- The importance of not coming to work:
 - If a worker has symptoms of COVID-19 as [described by the CDC](#), such as a fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, OR
 - If a worker was diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not yet been released from isolation, OR
 - If, within the past 14 days, a worker has had contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is considered potentially infectious (i.e. still on isolation).
- To return to work after a worker receives a COVID-19 diagnosis only after meeting [CDPH Guidance on Returning to Work or School Following COVID-19 Diagnosis](#).
- To seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on [CDC's webpage](#).
- The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol (preferred) or 70% isopropanol (if the product is inaccessible to children) when workers cannot get to a sink or handwashing station, per [CDC guidelines](#)). Never use hand sanitizers with [methanol](#) due to its high toxicity to both children and adults.
- The importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work time (see Physical Distancing section below).
- Proper use of face coverings, including:
 - Face coverings are not personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - Face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing.
 - Face coverings must cover the nose and mouth.

- Workers should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Face coverings must not be shared and should be washed or discarded after each shift.
- The importance of passengers wearing face coverings and that the operator has the right to cancel reservations for passengers not wearing them.
- Information contained in the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#), which mandates the circumstances in which face coverings must be worn and the exemptions, as well as any policies, work rules, and practices the employer has adopted to ensure the use of face coverings. Training should also include the employer's policies on how people who are exempted from wearing a face covering will be handled.
- Ensure any independent contractors, temporary or contract workers, and volunteers at the facility are also properly trained in COVID-19 prevention policies and have necessary supplies and PPE. Discuss these responsibilities ahead of time with organizations supplying temporary and/or contract workers.
- Information on paid leave benefits the worker may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information on [government programs supporting sick leave and workers' compensation for COVID-19](#), including workers' sick leave rights under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#).



Individual Control Measures and Screening

- Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and any vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the establishment. Make sure the temperature/symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible.
- If requiring self-screening at home, which is an appropriate alternative to providing it at the establishment, ensure that screening was performed prior to the worker leaving the home for their shift and follows [CDC guidelines](#), as described in the Topics for Worker Training section above.
- Encourage workers who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.

- Workers should provide and ensure workers use all required protective equipment, including eye protection and gloves where necessary.
- Workers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for workers who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.
- Individuals entering a facility should be restricted to only those classified as essential by management and they must complete a temperature and/or symptom screening before entering.
- Public and private passenger carriers, transit, vessel, and/or rail agencies and entities must take reasonable measures to remind the public that they must use face coverings (unless exempted per the [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#)), practice physical distancing, and avoid directly facing other passengers when physical distancing is difficult. They should also communicate any updated ridership practices and any changes to the frequency of service timetables to the public. Public communication could include those listed (above) and may also include updates to text messaging or transit apps.
- Taxis, rideshare, shuttle, limousine, and other passenger transit operators should take steps to ensure customers are fully aware of the company's new policies and procedures when using the riding service. Passengers must be notified before booking a ride that they must use face coverings (unless exempted per the [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#)) and that the operator has the right to cancel reservations for passengers not wearing them.
- Where feasible, taxi and rideshare drivers should be provided a supply of face coverings to give to passengers who arrive for a ride service without them.



Ventilation, Cleaning, and Disinfecting Protocols

- Where possible, install portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrade the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and make other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in vehicles, offices, break areas, and other indoor spaces.
- Check the [CDPH website](#) periodically for updates on indoor air quality and ventilation guidance for airborne diseases in indoor settings.
- Perform thorough cleaning on high traffic areas within transit and rail stations, in transit and rail vehicles, and water transport vessels like ferries

and boats, on a regular basis. Areas could include break rooms, restroom surfaces, lunch areas, changing areas and areas of ingress and egress, including stairways, handrails, and elevator controls, etc. Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces, including kiosks, ticket machines, turnstiles, benches, elevator buttons, system maps, doorknobs, toilets, handwashing facilities, equipment handles, maintenance equipment, and tools.

- Perform routine cleaning and disinfection of all frequently touched surfaces within all vehicles used to transport passengers, including but not limited to, seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, walls and windows, grab handles, pull-cords and buttons used by riders to request a stop.
- Clean all areas of drivers' cabs between shifts or users, whichever is more frequent. Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices during their shifts. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the worker's job duties.
- When assisting passengers using a wheelchair or other mobility device, or who require operator assistance, operators must sanitize their hands before and after the interaction.
- Avoid sharing phones, other work tools, or equipment wherever possible. Never share PPE.
- When choosing disinfecting chemicals, use products approved for use against COVID-19 listed on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved](#) list and follow product instructions. Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol that are appropriate for the surface. Provide workers training on the chemical hazards, manufacturer's directions, ventilation requirements, and Cal/OSHA requirements for safe use. Workers using cleaners or disinfectants must wear gloves and other protective equipment as required by the product. Follow the [asthma-safer cleaning methods](#) recommended by the California Department of Public Health and ensure there is sufficient ventilation.
- To minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other diseases associated with water, [take steps](#) to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
- Equip stations, transit and rail offices, transit and rail vehicles, and passenger vehicles with proper sanitation products, including hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes, and provide personal hand sanitizers to all frontline staff (e.g., operators and drivers).

- Ensure that sanitary facilities stay operational and stocked at all times and provide additional soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer when needed.
- Where possible, do not clean floors by sweeping or other methods that can disperse pathogens into the air unless all persons in the area have appropriate PPE. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter wherever possible.



Physical Distancing Guidelines

- **WARNING:** physical distancing alone is insufficient to prevent transmission of COVID-19.
- Reduce maximum occupancy onboard transit and rail vehicles and vessels to support physical distancing. Remove or space seats to support physical distancing or use colored tape to mark the seats that riders are allowed to use or block off seats that are not to be used. Where possible, use additional buses or transit vehicles to support excess capacity on busy lines and ensure physical distancing of passengers.
- Implement measures to ensure physical distancing of at least six feet between transit and rail operators and passengers. This can include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, taking passenger seats or spaces out of service, or signs to indicate to passengers where they should not sit or stand near the bus operator). If seating is taken out of service, be mindful of ensuring compliance with minimum requirements for handicapped-accessible seating.
- In public transit vehicles, for example city busses, seats within six feet of the operator should be blocked off and unavailable to passengers if it does not impact the requirements for handicapped-accessible seating. Operators will have the option to request passengers avoid standing or sitting within six feet of them. Where possible, install Plexiglas or other appropriate barriers in transit and rail vehicles to minimize exposure between operators and passengers.
- Consider offering workers who request modified duties options that minimize their contact with customers and other workers (e.g., managing administrative needs through telework).
- Stagger worker breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to maintain physical distancing protocols.
- Ensure workers can maintain physical distance in breakrooms, using barriers, increasing distance between tables/chairs to separate workers, etc. Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade coverings and seating arrangements that ensures physical distancing. Discourage

workers from congregating during breaks and ensure they are not eating or drinking without face coverings within six feet of each other.

- Place additional limitations on the number of workers in enclosed areas to ensure at least six feet of separation to limit transmission of the virus.
- Require passengers to purchase tickets and add value to transit and rail cards online to minimize the need for use of machines at the station.
- Develop a passenger entry and exit plan to minimize physical contact and crowding with other passengers during entry and exit of the transit vehicle.
- When traveling by a water transport vessel, such as a ferry or boat, ask the passengers to indicate to a crew member if they are traveling together as party, if feasible. The crew will help passengers queue for boarding and disembarking the vessel in physically distanced small groups.
- Track the routes on which physical distancing is a challenge due to ridership. Adjust bus or transit routes and scheduling to account for the need for additional busses, trains, and other transit vehicles during peak ridership hours on busy routes.



Additional Considerations for Passenger Carriers (Taxis, Rideshare Vehicles, Shuttles, Limousines, etc.)

- **Pooled rides offered by ridesharing companies**, which includes providing a carpool type of option for different parties traveling in a similar direction, **should be suspended until further public health guidance is provided for restarting such rides.**
- Taxi and rideshare operators and private transit companies should develop a process that permits both drivers and riders to cancel rides without penalty if the other party is not wearing a face covering. This policy should be communicated to passengers before they book a ride.
- Provide drivers with an adequate supply of materials required to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces of the vehicle. Drivers should have cleaning and disinfecting spray and/or disposable wipes in their vehicles. Drivers should follow manufacturer's directions for proper cleaning and disinfecting in the vehicle, including using cleaning techniques appropriate for the surface. Drivers should be instructed on the hazards of the product(s) and any necessary protective measures. Ensure adequate ventilation when cleaning/disinfecting vehicles. The

steering wheel, gear shift, signal levers, and other commonly-touched vehicle parts should be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Provide lined trash receptacles to be placed in the vehicle to properly dispose of disinfectant wipes and other items.

- High-touch areas within the vehicle frequently touched by passengers should be frequently cleaned and disinfected at the beginning and end of each shift, and between transporting passengers. This includes the door frame, handles, windows, seatbelt buckles, and trunk latch. Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices between transporting passengers. If cleaning is assigned to the driver they must be compensated for that time.
- Consider installing an impermeable barrier between the front and rear seats.
- Drivers should consider asking passengers to handle their own personal bags and belongings during pick-up and drop-off, if possible. If providing such services, request that the passengers maintain a minimum of six feet distance. After touching passenger belongings, drivers should use hand sanitizer.
- Riders should sit in the back seat to maximize distance between the passenger and the driver. Rideshare apps should remind passengers of this updated requirement and the number of available seats when making a request for a vehicle and through emails, texts, or other customer communication tools.
- Rideshare and taxi apps and taxi phone operators should remind passengers to wear face coverings and notify them that the ride may be cancelled if they do not wear a face covering.
- Avoid using the recirculated air option for the vehicle's ventilation during passenger transport; where possible, use the vehicle's vents to bring in outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows.

¹Additional requirements must be considered for vulnerable populations. Public and private passenger carriers, transit agencies, and intercity passenger rail operators must comply with all [Cal/OSHA](#) standards and be prepared to adhere to its guidance as well as guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#). Additionally, these entities must be prepared to alter their operations as those guidelines change.