

# COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR TAXI AND RIDESHARE DRIVERS

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This information is intended to help taxi and rideshare drivers reduce the risk of exposure to illnesses including COVID-19.

## PROTECTING DRIVERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

### SAFETY PLAN

- A [safety plan](#) must be written by each taxi/rideshare driver and available on request. A copy of the safety plan must be posted in a conspicuous place in each taxi/rideshare where it is most likely to come to the attention of employees/drivers and clients.
- The safety plan shall describe the implementation of public health measures in the location, including screening, physical distancing, masks/face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, and the wearing of personal protective equipment.
- Additional guidance on how to develop your safety plan can be found [here](#).

### SCREENING

- All employees/drivers must be [actively screened](#) before attending work. Please see the letter of [instruction](#) from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) medical officer of health for direction on screening employees/drivers. Employees/drivers must stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms, seek testing, and self-isolate.
- Encourage clients to conduct a COVID-19 [self-assessment](#) before using taxi/rideshare services and follow the direction provided. If individuals have COVID-19 symptoms, they should stay home, seek testing and [self-isolate](#).
- The Province of Ontario has implemented a [website for all categories of screening](#).
- Post [screening signs](#) at all entrances of the workplace and in drivers' vehicles.

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES

- Passengers should only travel in the same vehicle as people they live with.
- Avoid shared rides so passengers are not travelling with individual's unknown to them.
- Ask passengers to sit in the back seat to maintain [physical distance](#).
- When there are four or more passengers, it is recommended that a larger vehicle with more seating be used (such as a mini van), or multiple vehicles so that individuals do not sit next to the driver.
- If for physical reasons a person is unable to sit in the back seat, they may sit in the front seat, but both the driver and the passenger must wear a mask or face covering.
- Consider installing a plexiglas divider between the front and back seats.

### MASKS, FACE COVERINGS AND EYE PROTECTION

- The use of masks or [face coverings](#) is required in all indoor public spaces as per provincial law and SMDHU public health direction. See SMDHU [letter of instruction](#) for more information.
- Owners/operators of taxis and rideshares must have policies in place to restrict people from entering if they are not wearing a mask or face covering. More information is available [here](#).
- Drivers must wear a medical mask and approved eye protection when within 2 metres (6 feet) of a customer not wearing a mask or face covering in a manner that covers that person's nose, mouth, and chin and if not otherwise protected by a physical barrier such as plexiglas.
- Post signs in a visible location that remind people to wear a mask or face covering. Example signage can be found [here](#).

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## HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Encourage individuals to perform proper [hand hygiene](#) and [cough etiquette](#) when entering and exiting taxi/rideshares.
- Make alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content available for drivers and passengers.
- When on the job, clean hands with soap and water for at least 15 second or with alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content:
  - before and after work shifts;
  - before and after work breaks;
  - after handling passengers' personal belongings if unavoidable;
  - between rides and after handling/exchanging money;
  - after putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings;
  - before wearing and after removing cold-weather gloves; and
  - before and after pumping gas.
- Post handwashing, hand sanitizing and [Cover Your Cough](#) posters in areas that can be clearly seen by drivers and passengers. Sample signage can be found [here](#).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

## 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, and seatbelts.
- 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 healthcare settings); and
  - After transporting passengers who display respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing, sneezing).
- Make sure that [environmental cleaning and disinfection](#) of vehicles is performed on a routine and consistent basis.
- 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.
- While the risk of COVID-19 transmission through touching surfaces is low, it does occur. It is important to continue to follow the bundle of infection control measures to reduce the various ways in which COVID-19 is spread. This includes appropriate cleaning and disinfection, as well as proper hand hygiene, masking, physical distancing, and respiratory etiquette.

## TRANSPORTING PASSENGERS TO A COVID-19 ASSESSMENT CENTRE OR HEALTHCARE FACILITY, OR ANY PERSON WHO IS SICK:

- If the passenger is being transported to or from an assessment centre, hospital, or other healthcare setting, and/or is displaying respiratory symptoms, it is recommended they wear a mask or face covering if possible. If the passenger is not able to wear a mask or face covering, the driver must wear eye protection (e.g., face shield) in addition to a mask.

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- Avoid using the recirculated air option for the car's ventilation during passenger transport; use the car's vents to bring in fresh outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows.
- Consider asking passengers to handle their own personal bags and belongings during pick-up and drop-off.
- Thoroughly [disinfect](#) vehicle regularly.

## SUPPORTING EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

We understand that this is a challenging time, but public health measures like this are needed to limit the spread of COVID-19. We thank you for the service that you provide to the community.

Please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Health Connection line if you have any questions at 1-877-721-7520, Monday to Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

*While the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit aims to provide relevant and timely information, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided. This guidance is not intended to nor does it provide legal advice and should not be relied upon or treated as legal advice. Users seeking legal advice should consult with a qualified legal professional. No one should act, or refrain from acting, based solely upon the materials provided in this guidance, any hypertext links or other general information without first seeking appropriate legal or other professional advice. Please visit the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website regularly for updates and additional guidance.*

## REFERENCES

Toronto Public Health. (2020). 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) [Guidance for Taxi/Ride Share Employers, Drivers, Vehicle Owners Fact Sheet]. City of Toronto. Retrieved from <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-reopening-recovery-rebuild/covid-19-reopening-guidelines-for-businesses-organizations/covid-19-guidance-taxis-ride-shares/>

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. (2020). *Interim Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Public Health Ontario. (2020). *Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings*. Retrieved from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en>