

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR TAXI AND RIDESHARE DRIVERS

Last revised: February 2, 2022

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 location 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 but not limited to screening, masks/face coverings, and the wearing of personal protective equipment.
- Additional guidance on how to develop a safety plan can be found [here](#).

SCREENING

- All employees/drivers must be [actively screened](#) before attending work and follow the direction provided.
 - Drivers who are showing symptoms of COVID-19 must remain home and self-isolate.
- Encourage clients to complete COVID-19 [self-assessment](#) before using taxi/rideshare services and follow the direction provided.
- 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

- Passengers should be encouraged to only travel in the same vehicle as people they live with.
- 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.

MASKS, FACE COVERINGS AND EYE PROTECTION

- The use of masks or [face coverings](#) is required in all indoor public spaces, including in taxis and rideshares, as per provincial law.
- Drivers are required to wear a medical mask and approved eye protection when within 2 metres (6 feet) of someone who is not wearing a mask or face covering in a manner that covers that person's mouth, nose, and chin if not otherwise protected by an impermeable barrier such as plexiglas.
- It is recommended that all individuals wear a [well-fitted](#) high quality 3-layered non-medical mask, medical mask or respirator (i.e., N95s, KN95).
- Post signs in a visible location that remind people to wear a mask or face covering. Example signage can be found [here](#).

HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Encourage individuals to perform proper [hand hygiene](#) when entering and exiting taxis/rideshares.
- It is recommended that alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content be made available for drivers and passengers.
 - When on the job, frequently clean hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or with alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content.

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR TAXI AND RIDESHARE DRIVERS

- Post [cover your cough](#), handwashing, and hand sanitizing 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

- In addition to routine cleaning and disinfection, surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition, as well as when visibly dirty.
 - Examples of frequently touched surfaces include, but are not limited to hand contact areas, door handles, switches, arm rests, buttons for windows and locks, seatbelts, sneeze guards, and credit card machines.
- Surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected 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).
- [Environmental cleaning and disinfection](#) of vehicles should be performed on a routine and consistent basis.
- Use only disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) given and [approved by Health Canada](#). Ensure products are not expired and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- It is recommended to maintain logs of cleaning and disinfection.
- Employers/vehicle owners should provide all drivers with the appropriate cleaning products/disinfectant wipes for their vehicle.
- More guidance on cleaning and disinfection is provided by [Health Canada](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#).
- While the risk of COVID-19 transmission through touching surfaces is low, it does occur. It is important to continue to follow 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, respiratory etiquette, and immunization.

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 medical mask, respirator or high quality 3-layer cloth mask if possible.
 - If the passenger is not able to wear a mask, the driver must wear approved eye protection in addition to a medical mask.
- Avoid using the recirculated air option for the vehicle's ventilation during passenger transport; use the vehicle'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.
- Vehicles should be thoroughly [disinfected](#) regularly.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2017 COMPLIANCE

- Smoking and vaping, including smoking or vaping of cannabis, is prohibited inside taxi and rideshare vehicles as enforced by the health unit and police.
- Fines start at \$305.00 under the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* for smoking and vaping violations.
- Smoke-free and vape-free signage is required by law to be posted in the vehicle and is available from the health unit.

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.

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR TAXI AND RIDESHARE DRIVERS

Please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Health Connection line if you have any questions at 1-877-721-7520, Monday to Friday, 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/>
- 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>