

Enhanced cleaning regime to make public transport even safer

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An enhanced cleaning regime has been unveiled by Transport for London (TfL) to improve the already-high hygiene levels on the capital's public transport.

Cleaning across the Tube and bus network now includes additional substances that kill viruses and bacteria on contact in order to reduce the risk of coronavirus spreading.

Public Health England has stated that there are currently no specific concerns about using public transport. However, TfL has chosen to make a number of improvements to its well-established cleaning programme, which already sees its trains, stations and buses professionally cleaned daily. TfL began rolling out enhanced anti-viral fluid, which is used in hospitals, at Tube trains and stations on Friday last week to provide added protection. Key interchanges will be cleaned more regularly than usual, including during the day.

TfL is also using the enhanced disinfectant in depots and drivers' cabs, which previously were regularly cleaned with traditional disinfectant.

All buses will now also have regularly touched areas, such as poles and doors, carefully wiped down with a strong disinfectant every day. Boosts to the rigorous cleaning regime will be rolled out across the rest of the TfL network.

TfL is at the final testing stages of a new, longer lasting cleaning agent that would provide anti-viral protection for up to 30 days and hopes to begin using it across the network in the next couple of weeks. TfL is finalising plans to use specialist hygiene back-pack equipment, which will be deployed to spray the new disinfectant across the network safely and quickly.

In the meantime, Public Health England continues to urge everyone to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, before eating and when arriving at work or home. It is believed that the virus can be passed on through contaminated surfaces, which is why washing hands is so important.

Following this advice ensures that using public transport is as safe as the rest of the city but, by using enhanced cleaning fluids with anti-viral qualities, TfL aims to make it even safer.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "I'm doing all I can to work with Public Health England and other experts to keep Londoners safe so I'm pleased that TfL is stepping up enhanced cleaning across the transport network. Along with trialling new longer lasting cleaning fluid, this will help reduce the risk of coronavirus spreading. I want to reassure Londoners and visitors that the advice from experts is to continue with our daily lives as normal, including using public transport."

Lilli Matson, Director of Health, Safety and the Environment at TfL, said: "London's public transport system is one of the cleanest in the world. Public Health England has made it clear that people should go about their daily lives as normal but should wash their hands more regularly and thoroughly, which particularly includes when they arrive at work or home and before eating.

"If people are unwell, they are advised not to travel so as not to pass on illness to others. We want to give Londoners and our staff peace of mind that their safety is our priority, which is why we have enhanced our already rigorous cleaning regime. A lot of our cleaning goes on when stations are closed or trains are out of service, so to provide additional reassurance teams will be cleaning areas that are frequently touched throughout the day, in addition to the enhanced cleaning regime that all bus garages will be carrying out."

Photo credit: Transport for London