

Face coverings become mandatory on public transport from today – response and advice from train operating companies

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Face coverings on public transport has become mandatory from today – with train operating companies urging passengers to play their part in stopping the spread of coronavirus.

Under the new rules, operators will be able to prevent passengers who refuse to follow the rules from travelling and police will be able to issue fines of £100.

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director for West Midlands Railway, is among those to stress the importance of adhering to the new rules.

He said: “Covering your face while on board is now as much a part of travelling by train as buying a ticket. Wearing a face covering helps prevent the spread of coronavirus and reduces the risk for everybody.

“We know the idea of wearing a face covering will be new to many of our passengers but we are sure that after the first few journeys it will start to become second nature.

“We are appealing to our customers to avoid the train if they can and – if they do travel – to follow the rules by covering their mouth and nose.”

Face coverings can include masks, reusable cloth coverings and a whole range of other options including

scarves and bandanas – as long as the wearer’s nose and mouth are covered. This government directive is being implemented on all forms of public transport.

Robert Nisbet, Director of Nations and Regions at the Rail Delivery Group, said: “Wearing face coverings on trains and at stations will help protect others and ensure those who need to travel can do so safely.

“If someone isn’t wearing a face covering, they will be reminded of the rules, provided with a free covering or told where they can get one, or as a last resort they could be issued with a spot fine. However we are confident that the vast majority of people will want to do the right thing.”

The government mandate will cover the majority of passengers, although there will be some exemptions for some staff and customers who are not able to wear a face covering for specific medical reasons.

Northern is asking all passengers to be mindful and respectful of this fact and customers should not challenge others who are not able to wear a covering.

Chris Jackson, Regional Director at Northern, said: “We all need to do our bit to help the country recover from the coronavirus pandemic and to help prevent the further spread of the virus.

“Face coverings can reduce the risk to other people and by following the guidance we can all work to keep each other – customers and staff – as safe as possible.

“It also important that customers take their face coverings with them at the end of their journey. Even if masks are disposable, they shouldn’t be left on trains for cleaning staff to deal with.”

On Friday, the Transport Secretary said over 3,000 extra staff will be deployed from Monday to support the travelling public, reminding people about the need to wear face coverings and helping vulnerable passengers.

Andy Heath Managing Director of Merseyrail said “Wearing face coverings at our stations and on our trains will help to ensure that those who need to use them can do so with confidence. The use of face coverings will boost the other measures we have put in place to keep our customers and staff safe, including enhanced cleaning regimes, clear guidance, and marshals at busier stations.

“We will be actively engaging with our passengers as they travel around the network, to ensure they are aware of the new rules and that they are following them. I would ask the people of the Liverpool City Region to continue to support us, as they have throughout this pandemic, by only traveling by train where necessary and wearing a face covering when they do.”

Anthony Smith, chief executive of the independent watchdog Transport Focus, said: “People thinking of returning to public transport have told us they want face coverings to be used by all passengers. The Government’s decision will provide welcome clarity and will boost pressure on others to cover up.

“Passengers will now need clear information on where best to find a face covering, if they will be handed out at stations and if they will be turned away if they aren’t wearing one.”

Advice on how to make a face covering and instructions for using one are available on the government website [here](#).

For more details on the new rules, [click here](#).

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