

TfL reminds Londoners of need for face coverings from Monday 15 June

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- Customers reminded of need to wear face coverings for their entire journey from Monday to protect other passengers
- All occupants in taxis or private hire vehicles should also wear face coverings
- Customers should continue to avoid public transport except for essential journeys that cannot be made by other means

Transport for London (TfL) has set out the arrangements for the use of face coverings on the transport network, ahead of the Government's new guidance that they must be worn on public transport from Monday.

From Monday, customers must wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth for their entire journey, including in stations, unless they are exempt. These include people who have trouble breathing, children and anyone who finds it difficult to manage them correctly. Additionally, face coverings should be worn by everyone in taxi and private hire vehicles for the duration of their journey.

Transport for London has been helping Londoners adjust to the new rules by piloting the temporary

distribution of face coverings at targeted Tube and bus stations, as well as providing advice on how to make your own and encouraging in-station retailers to make them available. Since Monday around 30,000 face coverings have been distributed during the morning peak and TfL has seen an increase in their usage across the network.

From Monday, hundreds of officers from the Met and British Transport Police, as well TfL's own enforcement officers will be helping customers to comply with the new requirement, explaining what they are and helping them to access one of the free face coverings TfL is providing during the introductory period. They will also explain to customers how everyone on the network benefits from the widespread use of face coverings. Once TfL is confident customers understand the new requirements, enforcement, which may include being refused entry or being fined, will start. This is expected to be a last resort as Londoners will want to do the right thing and keep themselves and others safe.

Customers are reminded to treat everyone on the network with respect and compassion, and to understand that some customers and staff will be unable to wear a face covering for medical reasons that may not be immediately obvious. Staff are not required to wear a face covering when they are not in public areas, which could include the driver's cab, control rooms or working in maintenance areas.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "From this Monday, it will be mandatory for Londoners to wear a face covering when travelling on public transport. This will make our network safer for everybody – particularly when maintaining a social distance is not always possible.

"As restrictions on non-essential retail are gradually eased and more Londoners return to their workplaces, next week we can expect a small increase in footfall across the network. To meet this additional demand, TfL has been working extremely hard to build services back up to where they were before many of their staff were affected by the coronavirus. This week more than 90 per cent of peak weekday services have been operating and this will continue to increase as more staff return from illness or isolation.

"However, it's clear life simply won't return to how it was before. Even when public transport returns to a full pre-pandemic service it will still only be able to carry 13-15 per cent of the typical number of Tube passengers to enable social distancing. I'm urging Londoners to continue avoiding the transport network and continue working from home wherever possible to keep it free for those who need it. When journeys need to be made, consider whether they can be cycled or walked."

Mike Brown MVO, London's Transport Commissioner, said: "It's extremely important for everyone to wear a face covering when on the transport network to protect fellow passengers and staff.

"Coronavirus has changed our lives in many ways. Our staff and police colleagues will be out on the network to help customers comply with this requirement.

"Making face coverings mandatory comes in addition to other measures designed to maintain social distancing, such stickers and signage, limits on the number of people carried by buses, hand sanitisers and extensive and enhanced cleaning of all vehicles.

"Please continue to work from home if possible and avoid public transport to create space for those who

have no other means of travelling. Please also consider walking or cycling all or part of your journey.”

TfL has been engaging with the retail industry in advance of its reopening and working hard to increase its service levels. It has been running more than 90 per cent of its peak weekday Tube services, including reaching normal service levels on some lines, and 87 per cent of its bus services this week. It will continue to work towards increasing that further as it works to return a full pre-pandemic service as soon as possible.

However, it is clear life simply won't be swiftly returning to what it was before. Even when TfL operates a normal service it will still only be able to carry about 13-20 per cent of the typical number of Tube and bus passengers to enable social distancing.

To make it easier for people to walk and cycle, TfL and the Mayor continue to deliver the Streetspace for London programme to create extra space for cycling and walking across the capital.

Temporary changes are being made to roads to support safe walking and cycling and enable social distancing. A number of changes, including a new cycle lane on Park Lane, extra pavement space at 17 high streets across London and changes to residential roads are already in place and TfL is working closely with boroughs across London to quickly deliver much more.

People who have no choice but to use public transport should avoid the busiest times and locations. These are from 05:45 to 08:15 and from 16:00 to 17:30.

Passengers are urged to take the most direct route and avoid busy interchanges. TfL has also published a list of the 20 busiest stations to help people avoid hotspots and maintain social distancing. This can be found at tfl.gov.uk/status-updates/busiest-times-to-travel

Photo credit: Transport for London