



Coronavirus – update 11

This Notice provides an update, following confirmation that London will move to Tier 2 (Local Covid Alert Level: High) on Saturday 17 October. It also provides guidance for managing passengers not wearing a face covering, the NHS COVID-19 Track and Trace App, face covering exemption badges and vehicle signage related to coronavirus.

This Notice supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, TPH Notices [13/20](#), [11/20](#), [10/20](#), [09/20 \(Consolidation\)](#) and [08/20](#), all of which contain information and practical advice for licensees relating to coronavirus – including guidance on face coverings, personal and vehicle hygiene and social distancing.

Licensees should also continue to familiarise themselves with updated Government guidance and advice. Specific [guidance for taxi and private hire services](#) is provided, on the wearing of face coverings, maintaining a two metre distance where possible and the use of contactless payment where possible.

London Local Covid Alert Level

The Government has introduced a three-tiered 'Local Covid Alert Level' system to inform local authorities, residents and workers what to do and how to manage the outbreak in their area.

The Government has confirmed that from 00:01 on Saturday 17 October London will be moved to the second tier (Local Covid Alert Level: High):

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know#local-covid-alert-level-high>

We do not anticipate this will mean any significant changes to the operation of taxi and private hire services in London, however we will provide further information if the Government's guidance changes.

Guidance for managing a passenger not wearing a face covering

London has been moved to the second tier of the Government's Local Covid Alert System due to an increase in the number of coronavirus cases in London. It is important, now more than ever that taxi and private hire drivers and passengers wear face coverings at all times when in taxi or private hire vehicles, unless they are exempt from doing so.

In addition, from 22 September 2020, it became a legal requirement for passengers travelling in taxi or private hire vehicles (PHVs) to wear a face covering for the duration of their journey. More information on these legal requirements can be found [here](#).

Transport for London (TfL) Compliance Officers continue to carry out engagement and enforcement of this legal requirement across the transport network including taxi and private hire vehicles. There is also a role for licensees to play in helping to improve compliance, keeping themselves and their customers safe.

Some passengers could become frustrated or confrontational if you refuse to take them or you insist they wear a face covering before you start the journey.

The following advice may help you in these circumstances:

Can a taxi or PHV driver refuse a job if a passenger refuses to wear a face covering?

The regulations (see the link above) enable taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to deny access to their services if a passenger is not wearing a face covering, or to direct them to wear one or leave a vehicle if they are not wearing a face covering. Drivers are reminded that some passengers may have an exemption to this regulation. These are set out by the Government [here](#).

Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others. This includes (but is not limited to):

- children under the age of 11 (Public Health England does not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others – including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity
- police officers and other emergency workers, given that this may interfere with their ability to serve the public

What if the passenger gets in the vehicle and then removes their face covering?

If the passenger has already got into the vehicle and then takes off the face covering, the driver should encourage the passenger to wear the face covering and remind them that it is a legal requirement. In most cases, the passenger will comply. However, in the small number of cases where the passenger fails to comply with the driver's encouragement and request, without a legitimate exemption, the driver has the option of asking the passenger to leave the vehicle. If TfL and/or the police identify a passenger not wearing a face covering – and they don't have an exemption – they could receive a fixed penalty notice (£200 fine) for not complying with the regulations.

What if the passenger becomes aggressive?

If the passenger becomes aggressive or refuses to pay, then the driver should contact the police on 101 or 999 depending on the severity of aggression displayed.

Please note that the driver cannot demand that the passenger remains in the vehicle until the police arrives.

The Government has provided [guidance using a 6 step process](#) for escalation which you should consider for these situations.

Does the passenger have to provide any evidence to show that they have an exemption?

Passengers do not have to provide any proof of an exemption.

Face covering exemption badges

As explained above, there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. We ask that drivers be mindful and respectful of such circumstances.

Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card or badge, both of which are available from TfL: <https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/face-coverings>.

The Government also distributes face covering exemption cards (some of which can be displayed on a mobile phone) and badges, further details can be found on the [gov.uk website](#).

Face covering stickers for vehicles

We are developing signage in the form of stickers to remind passengers that they must wear a face covering unless they have a valid exemption, and that the driver can refuse to carry them if they do not wear one.

NHS COVID-19 Track and Trace App

We encourage all licensees to download and use the NHS COVID-19 Track and Trace App. The app ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus, helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus. PHV

operators and taxi booking apps and platforms should also encourage passengers to make use of the app in the booking process.

For more information about the app and how it works, visit the [NHS Track and Trace guidance page](#).

Speeding

We are committed to keeping our roads safe for all users. The Metropolitan Police Service has observed an increase in the number of vehicles speeding on London's roads. Given that speed is the single biggest contributory factor of fatal collisions, we are working with the police to increase levels of enforcement against speeding drivers. We are reminding all taxi and PHV drivers that it is essential for public safety to observe the speed limits on any given road. Speeding may result in large fines, points on your licence, driving bans and TfL licensing action.

Find more information on our Vision Zero commitment to eliminate all deaths and serious injuries on London's roads by 2041, and recent changes to speed limits in central London on [our website](#).

NSL vehicle inspections online booking portal

We know that our phone lines to book a vehicle inspection are currently busy and we apologise for this inconvenience. We are working hard with our service provider NSL to improve the service.

If you are the owner or registered keeper of a licensed vehicle, the quickest and most efficient way to make a booking for a vehicle inspection remains [the online booking portal](#). The online portal allows you to book or reschedule an appointment at your own convenience 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The booking portal is accessed through your online account. If you have previously applied for or renewed your driver licence online, you will have an online account already set up, and you do not need to create another account. You will have received a letter confirming your unique customer account details as part of your renewal pack which must be used to [log in to your online account](#).

You can apply for a new vehicle licence online at any time, and details of your existing vehicle licensing information will be listed under the vehicle section of your account.

If you have access to the internet and are able to make use of the online service please do so. It will help us to make sure that we can improve the service on the phones to those that really need it during these difficult times.

Mental health and wellbeing

On Friday 9 October 2020 we published [TPH Notice 15/20](#) – World Mental Health Day reminding licensees of the mental health services that are available for anyone who need them. Please do refer to that notice for help and support with your mental health and wellbeing.

Graham Robinson

**General Manager
Taxi and Private Hire
Transport for London**

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For previous Notices and additional licensing information, please visit tfl.gov.uk/tph