



Coronavirus Update 23 – Consolidation

This Notice provides important information to licensees, following the [Prime Minister's announcement](#) confirming that Step 4 of the [Roadmap out of lockdown](#) will proceed on Monday 19 July.

This Notice also consolidates and supersedes information from all previous Coronavirus TPH Notices 02/20 – 22/20 (excluding 12/20, 14/20 and 15/20) and 01/21 – 07/21 (excluding 05/21 and 08/21).

The Notice contains information in three sections: [Section 1 – All licensees](#); [Section 2 – Vehicle licensing](#); and [Section 3 – Private Hire Vehicle \(PHV\) operators and taxi booking companies](#).

Section 1 – All licensees

Face Coverings

The Government has said that it “expects and recommends that face coverings are worn in crowded and enclosed spaces, such as public transport, when mixing with people you don’t normally meet.”

Following the Government’s announcement, we expect and recommend that taxi and private hire drivers and passengers **continue** to wear face coverings, **at all times**, when in taxi or PHV, unless they are exempt.

We are strongly encouraging PHV operators and taxi booking platforms to communicate TfL guidance on face coverings to passengers as part of the booking process, to support drivers and to ensure the safety and comfort of both drivers and passengers.

Guidance is provided below to assist licensees in instances where a passenger is not wearing a face covering.

Guidance for managing a passenger not wearing a face covering

On 19 July, the legal requirement for passengers travelling in taxis or PHVs to wear a face covering, unless exempt, will be removed. Licensees should remove any signage from their vehicles that refer to face coverings as a legal requirement or a prosecutable offence.

However, TfL expects and recommends that passengers continue to wear face coverings, **at all times**, when in a taxi or PHV.

Drivers must assess the risk to their own safety and can request that a passenger wear a face covering while in the vehicle. A driver also has the discretion to refuse to carry a passenger if they refuse to wear a face covering without good reason.

The following exemptions should continue to be applied:

- children under the age of 11
- 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 severe distress
- if someone is speaking or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate

What happens if a passenger isn't wearing a face covering when they get in the taxi/PHV?

In these circumstances please explain that TfL expects and recommends that passengers are required to wear face coverings when travelling in a taxi or PHV. This measure is for their safety.

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

In these circumstances, drivers should request that a passenger wears a face covering while in the vehicle and can refuse to carry a passenger if they do not wear a face covering, unless they are exempt.

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

In these circumstances please explain that, in line with Government guidance, Transport for London expects and recommends that passengers are required to wear face coverings at all times when in a taxi or PHV unless exempt.

What if the passenger becomes aggressive?

If the passenger becomes aggressive or refuses to pay drivers should contact the police on 101 or 999 if that is considered justified because of the passenger's conduct. Please note that the driver cannot demand that the passenger remains in the vehicle until the police arrive.

Does the passenger have to provide any evidence to show that an exemption to wearing a face covering applies?

No, passengers do not have to provide any proof of an exemption.

Some passengers may not have a face covering exemption badge or card and we ask that drivers are mindful and respectful in such circumstances.

Social distancing

There is evidence that the risk of transmission of Coronavirus increases by 2 to 10 times at a distance of 1 metre, compared to 2 metres. Additional mitigation measures (such as face coverings) can also reduce the risk further.

Therefore, our guidance to taxi and PHV drivers at this time is:

- To seat passengers as far away from the driver as possible, ideally in the rear passenger-side seat
- Passengers should **not** sit in the front passenger seat in PHVs
- Licensees should ask passengers to handle their own personal bags and belongings during pick-up and drop-off
- Be aware of the surfaces you or others touch

Drivers should maintain distance from people wherever possible, including at taxi ranks and other areas where drivers and/or passengers may congregate.

Our guidance on social distancing will be kept under review.

Vehicle hygiene

It is important to continue to maintain very high standards of vehicle hygiene.

We produced a short, informative video that provides guidance on how to clean licensed vehicles after each passenger has been safely dropped off and at the end of your shift. The video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/V3ogeV8ucvE>

If they haven't already, all licensed taxi and private hire drivers should familiarise themselves with the video and follow the steps to ensure the highest possible safety standards are being met.

Further information on vehicle cleanliness and general advice on keeping safe during the pandemic is provided on our [Coronavirus information for licensees webpage](#).

The page includes information on face coverings, vehicle cleaning, cleaning products and the safe operation of taxi and PHV services.

In addition to vehicle hygiene measures, licensees are expected to continue to take the following personal hygiene precautions as a minimum:

- Wash your hands regularly or, if you are unable to, use hand sanitiser
- Drivers should keep a bottle of hand sanitising gel in their vehicle. It is recommended this be a minimum 60 per cent alcohol. Alternatively keep a large bottle of water and a bar/bottle of soap
- Wash your hands or use sanitising gel after handling cash
- Do not touch your face
- Drivers should avoid using the recirculated air option for the car's ventilation system when carrying passengers and instead use the car's vents to bring in fresh air from outside or lower the vehicle's windows
- If conditions allow, the car windows should be kept open
- Passengers should be encouraged to use contactless payment or to pay online wherever possible

NHS COVID-19 Track and Trace app

We encourage all licensees, if they haven't already, 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 track and trace app in the booking process.

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

Medical assessments

We recognise that there may continue to be delays in obtaining medical information from GPs and specialist medical practitioners due to the coronavirus pandemic. We continue to take a pragmatic approach wherever possible.

We are assessing the need to provide a medical assessment on a case-by-case basis, closely assessing the individual circumstances of each driver.

If you are due to provide a medical assessment and are unable to secure an appointment, please contact us at TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk. We will assess your individual circumstances and advise on the next steps.

Driver assessment centres (Topographical and Knowledge of London)

Topographical testing for PHV drivers and Knowledge of London appearances for taxi driver applicants continue at our driver assessment centres.

At this time centres will continue to operate with measures to reduce the risk to staff and candidates. Measures include the installation of social distancing markers and hand sanitiser units and the wearing of face coverings. Candidates will only be permitted to enter TfL buildings if they are wearing a face covering, unless they are exempt. These measures will be kept under review.

Contacting TPH Licensing

For driver and operator licensing queries please see the following list of email addresses for each type of query. Please include your application or licence number in the subject field of your email.

Please **only** use the relevant email address below and refrain from sending emails to multiple email addresses. This will help us to resolve your enquiry as quickly as possible.

- Medical information – If you have been asked to provide any medical information please contact TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk
- Driver renewal application enquiries – To ask a question about your taxi or private hire driver renewal application, please contact TPHRenewals@tfl.gov.uk
- Online driver renewal assistance – For help with your online driver renewal application, please contact TPHOnlineEnquiries@tfl.gov.uk. Please include a telephone number within your email as it may be necessary for one of our team to call you to resolve your issue.
- Change of address for drivers – To inform us of your address change, please contact TPHAddress@tfl.gov.uk Please allow 10 working days for the receipt of your updated licence.
- To notify us about any change in personal circumstances, including medical health, convictions, cautions or charges, please contact TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk
- Private hire operator queries – To ask a question about your application or any other aspect of being a licensed operator, please contact TPH.Operators@tfl.gov.uk
- Other – To contact us about any other type of enquiry related to licensing, please contact TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk

For vehicle licensing queries, please contact TPHenquiries@nslservices.co.uk

Contact details

All licensees are required to ensure their contact details (postal address, email and telephone) provided to TfL are up to date. This enables us to provide you with important regulatory information.

We urge all TPH licensees to check we have the most up to date contact details. Please email any updated contact details – with your licence number in the subject heading – to TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk.

Health, wellbeing and financial assistance

We appreciate that the pandemic has caused stress and anxiety to some licensees. The removal of further restrictions, as we move to Step 4 of the Roadmap out of lockdown, may be a source of additional anxiety for some.

It is important for all of us to continue to prioritise our mental and physical wellbeing. Take some time to reflect in order to spot any early warning signs of feeling mentally unwell and to seek help and support at the earliest opportunity.

Our dedicated [Taxi and Private Hire Health and Wellbeing webpage](#) provides information, advice and guidance for licensees, alongside additional material from our [Health, Wellbeing, Safety and Security Forum](#) in March.

The [Taxi and Private Hire Health and Wellbeing webpage](#) also contains details of financial support that is available to all licensees.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for licensees

In [TPH Notice 19/20](#) we announced that to help ensure the safety of licensees and passengers, we had made available 1.5 million medical-grade face masks and 30,000 bottles of Dettol hand sanitiser.

We have distributed these materials to licensees at various locations and via some driver representative organisations, who we thank for their help.

We will continue to distribute these packs (of 50 masks and a bottle of Dettol hand sanitiser) to vehicles that pass through our vehicle licensing inspection sites during their annual licensing inspection.

Section 2 – Vehicle licensing

NSL vehicle licensing inspection centres

At this time, to continue to protect staff and licensees, our vehicle licensing inspection centres will continue to operate with appropriate safety measures in place, including: social distancing markers, hand sanitiser stations, personal protective equipment for staff, ventilation of vehicles and limits on contact between staff and customers. Customers must wear a face covering when attending our vehicle licensing inspection centres unless exempt. These measures will be kept under review.

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.

However, we appreciate that some licensees prefer to book their inspection over the phone, so we are currently trialling phone lines remaining available over the weekend. Call 043 222 5555 to make a booking, 8am – 5pm, seven days a week.

Temporary screens in PHVs

Licensees who have already installed an approved temporary screen in their vehicle can continue to use it.

It is essential that any aftermarket equipment (e.g. temporary screen or partition) fitted in a licensed PHV meets appropriate safety standards and that only approved adaptations are made to vehicles.

Any PHV drivers who wish to install a temporary screen in their vehicle need to follow the established process for seeking approval for temporary screens in PHVs, via industry leading automotive testing facilities at Millbrook and HORIBA MIRA.

We have been working with vehicle manufacturers and have published details of temporary screens that meet the criteria and the vehicles they can be fitted in.

Information on temporary screens in PHVs can be found on our website:

www.tfl.gov.uk/tph-policy.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has [published guidance](#) on safety screens in PHVs and has added an updated risk assessment guidance for drivers considering installing a safety screen in their vehicle in [its Coronavirus guidance for Taxis and PHVs](#).

Section 3 – Operator licensing

Face covering guidance from PHV operators and taxi booking platforms

We strongly encourage PHV operators and taxi booking platforms to communicate TfL guidance to passengers and require that face coverings are worn in taxis and PHVs, unless the passenger is exempt.

We recommend that PHV operators and taxi booking platforms continue to provide this information to passengers as part of the booking process and via their other communication channels. This will ensure that passengers are aware of the need to wear a face covering (and any additional steps that are being taken to ensure they are as safe as possible) before they enter the licensed vehicle.

Private hire operators and taxi booking platforms should support drivers in using face coverings safely and provide communications advising them to:

- Wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- Avoid touching their face or face covering, to prevent contamination with germs from their hands – this is particularly important
- Change their face covering if it becomes damp or if they've touched it

- Continue to wash their hands regularly
- Change and wash their face covering daily
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions – if it's not washable, dispose of it safely
- Practise social distancing wherever possible

Ridesharing

Any PHV operator that has previously offered, or intends to offer, ridesharing services should continue to suspend these until further notice.

Please do stay safe and well.

Graham Robinson
General Manager Taxi and Private Hire
Transport for London
16 July 2021

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