



## Coronavirus Update 27 – England’s move to Plan B and Consolidation

This Notice follows the [Government’s announcement](#) that England has moved to [Plan B](#) in response to the risks of the Omicron variant.

Government guidance is regularly updated and you can keep up-to-date with the latest information [here](#). We will continue to issue [TPH Notices](#) to provide updates to licensees if significant changes occur.

This Notice also consolidates relevant information from recent TPH Notices and supersedes [TPH Notice 18/21 \(Coronavirus Update 26\)](#), [TPH Notice 15/21 \(Coronavirus Update 25\)](#) and [TPH Notice 10/21 \(Coronavirus Update 23 – consolidation\)](#).

### Plan B

The Government has confirmed that England has moved to Plan B in response to the risks of the Omicron variant. This means:

- Face coverings are required by law in most indoor settings.
- Office workers who can work from home should do so.
- Certain venues and events will be required by law to check that all visitors aged 18 years or over are fully vaccinated, have proof of a negative test in the last 48 hours, or have an exemption.

For more information on Plan B restrictions, and detailed information on what you can and can’t do please [visit the gov.uk website](#).

## **COVID-19 vaccination**

The NHS says COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and they give you the best protection against COVID-19.

Alongside the NHS, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is calling on any Londoner who has not yet been vaccinated, or who is eligible to receive the booster jab but has not yet taken it up, to do so as soon as possible.

You can book your vaccination [online](#).

## **COVID-19 Booster Vaccination**

The Prime Minister has encouraged those who have not yet done so, to arrange their COVID-19 booster vaccination.

The NHS advises a COVID-19 booster vaccine dose helps improve the protection you have from your first two doses of the vaccine. It helps give you longer-term protection against getting seriously ill from COVID-19.

Further information on COVID-19 booster vaccinations and how to book your booster appointment can be found on the [NHS website](#).

## **Consolidated information from previous Notices**

This 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**

[Wear a face covering](#)

Face coverings are required by law in most indoor public places and continue to be required on public transport and in taxis and private hire vehicles. [See a full list of places where you must wear a face covering.](#)

Therefore, all passengers travelling in taxis and PHVs are legally required – pursuant to Government regulations – to wear a face covering at all times when in the taxi or PHV, unless they are [exempt](#) from doing so.

Transport for London **continues to expect taxi and PHV drivers to wear a face covering at all times when in a licensed vehicle**, unless they are [exempt](#) from doing so. This is to keep both drivers and passengers safe.

#### Guidance for managing a passenger not wearing a face covering

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 passengers are required to wear face coverings when travelling in a taxi or PHV, unless they are exempt. 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 passengers are required to wear a face covering, unless they are 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.

## Personal hygiene

The Government is clear that COVID-19 remains a serious health risk and that you should stay cautious to help protect yourself and others.

Simple steps can be taken to keep safe:

- Let fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer
- You must wear a face covering in shops, on public transport and when in a taxi or private hire vehicle
- Get tested and self-isolate if required
- If you haven't already, get vaccinated or get a booster vaccination

Licensees are expected to continue to take the following personal hygiene precautions as a minimum:

- Wash or use hand sanitiser on your hands regularly
- Keep a bottle of hand sanitising gel in your vehicle. It is recommended this be a minimum 60 per cent alcohol
- 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

## 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 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

### 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](mailto:TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk). We will assess your individual circumstances and advise on the next steps.

### Vehicle Hygiene

We would like to remind licensees of our 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>

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.

### Contacting TPH Licensing

For driver and operator licensing questions please see the following list of email addresses for each type of enquiry.

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](mailto: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](mailto:TPHRenewals@tfl.gov.uk)
- **Online driver renewal assistance** – For help with your online driver renewal application, please contact [TPHOnlineEnquiries@tfl.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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 [TPHOperators@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:TPHOperators@tfl.gov.uk)

- To contact us about **any other type of enquiry** related to licensing, please contact [TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk)
- For **vehicle licensing queries**, please contact [TPHenquiries@nslservices.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk).

### Further Resources

There is further information regarding COVID-19, including support resources that cover mental health support and wellbeing support on the [TPH Health and Wellbeing webpage](#) and the [TPH Coronavirus Information for Licensees webpage](#).

## **Section 2 – Vehicle licensing**

### NSL vehicle licensing inspection centres

Our vehicle licensing inspection centres continue to operate with appropriate safety measures in place.

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

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](#).

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

We have published a list of approved temporary screens [here](#) – that also confirms which vehicles the screens can be fitted in.

### Temporary screen approval process

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.

Further information on temporary screens in PHVs can be found on our website: [www.tfl.gov.uk/tph-policy](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tph-policy).

## **Section 3 – Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) operators and taxi booking companies**

## Face coverings

PHV operators and taxi booking platforms should communicate [Government 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.

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 or use hand sanitiser on their hands regularly
- Keep a bottle of hand sanitising gel in their vehicle. It is recommended this be a minimum 60 per cent alcohol
- Wash their hands or use sanitising gel after handling cash
- Do not touch their face
- 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

## 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**

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*For previous Notices and additional licensing information, please visit [tfl.gov.uk/tph](https://tfl.gov.uk/tph)*