



CORONAVIRUS TRANSPORT UPDATE

As we head towards Christmas, you may be aware there have been some changes to the rules around face coverings, which have been introduced by the government to help slow the spread of the Omicron variant in the UK.

That means ***there is now a legal requirement to wear a face covering unless exempt on all forms of public transport in England*** – and at tram stops, bus and railway stations, and other transport interchanges. The new rules also cover the use of taxis and private hire vehicles.

To help you get used to the new rules and support people during the festive period transport, staff will be out and about on the network in Greater Manchester handing out free face coverings and hand sanitiser and engaging with passengers to explain the new rules and what is expected of people using public transport.

So, if you are unsure about anything, or find yourself in need a face covering for your trip, just look out for a member of staff and let them know you have a question or need assistance and they will be happy to help.

Over the course of the pandemic transport staff have worked really hard to ensure you can continue travelling safely and we are determined to keep on doing just that - so that you can keep on using public transport with confidence.

Commonly touched surfaces are being disinfected and cleaned regularly, while hand sanitisers are available at dispensers at bus stations, on buses, at interchanges, and on the busiest Metrolink stops.

To help keep each other safe passengers are asked to follow the current safety measures:

- You must wear a face covering unless exempt:
 - On all public transport services including Metrolink, buses and trains.
 - If you are using a taxi or private hire vehicle or a ring and ride service.
 - At Metrolink stops, railway and bus stations and at other transport interchanges.
- Please continue to follow safe travel advice and help to keep each other safe - wear a face covering, clean your hands regularly, pay using contactless and leave the windows open when you travel.
 - Where possible open windows to maintain fresh air flow and ventilation.

- Clean your hands frequently by washing with soap and water or using hand sanitiser.
- Use contactless payment if you can.
- Services are likely to be busier - if you can, travel during quieter times
- Consider walking or cycling, particularly for short trips.
- You must not travel at all if you are experiencing any covid symptoms or are self-isolating

So please wear a face covering if you can and help to keep each other safe, but also ***remember that exemptions do apply and some people cannot wear a face covering for valid reasons***, which may not be immediately obvious, so please treat each other with kindness and respect.

There will be further updates issued while these measures remain in place, with the government expected to review them in three weeks' time. In the meantime, please keep checking TfGM's dedicated coronavirus page for more information on how to travel on the network safely, and how we are keeping you safe.

Please look after yourself and continue to encourage friends and family to travel safely.

Kind regards,

Stephen Rhodes
Customer Director
Transport for Greater Manchester