



Coronavirus Update 17 – National Lockdown

This Notice provides an update on TPH Notice [21/20](#), following the [Prime Minister's announcement](#) (on 4 January 2021) of a [national lockdown](#) and instructing people to: stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

The Notice also contains information for drivers who wish to continue to work, Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on taxi and private hire services, driver assessment centres, vehicle licensing inspection sites and details of financial, health and wellbeing support that is available to licensees.

This Notice supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, TPH Notices [20/20](#), [19/20](#), [18/20](#), [17/20](#), [16/20](#), [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 important information on prioritising mental and physical wellbeing, personal and vehicle hygiene as well as face coverings.

Licensees should continue to familiarise themselves with updated [Government](#) and [NHS](#) guidance and advice.

Taxi and Private Hire services during lockdown

The current Government advice for taxi and private hire drivers is they can continue to work if they wish to do so, as they are unable to work from home.

Details of the National Lockdown measures, including the circumstances in which passengers are permitted to travel are set out below.

National Lockdown Measures

The Prime Minister announced that from Tuesday 5 January a [national lockdown](#) is in place and that people should: stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

The decision follows a rapid rise in infections, hospital admissions and cases across the country, and the fact that hospitals are now under more pressure than they have been at any other point throughout the pandemic.

The increase in cases has been attributed to the new variant of COVID-19, which scientists have confirmed is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible.

Under National Lockdown restrictions you must not leave or be outside of your home except where you have a [‘reasonable excuse’](#). A reasonable excuse includes:

- Work – you can only leave home for work purposes where it is unreasonable for you to do your job from home, including but not limited to people who work within critical national infrastructure, construction or manufacturing that require in-person attendance.
- Volunteering – you can also leave home to provide voluntary or charitable services.
- Essential activities – you can leave home to buy things at shops or obtain services. You may also leave your home to do these things on behalf of a disabled or vulnerable person or someone self-isolating.
- Education and childcare – You can only leave home for education, registered childcare, and supervised activities for children where they are eligible to attend. Access to education and children’s activities for school-aged pupils is restricted. See further information on [education](#) and [childcare](#). People can continue existing arrangements for contact between parents and children where they live apart. This includes childcare bubbles.
- Meeting others and care – You can leave home to visit people in your support bubble (if you are legally permitted to form one), to provide informal childcare for children under 14 as part of a childcare bubble (for example, to enable

parents to work, and not to enable social contact between adults), to provide care for disabled or vulnerable people, to provide emergency assistance, to attend a support group (of up to 15 people), or for respite care where that care is being provided to a vulnerable person or a person with a disability, or is a short break in respect of a looked-after child.

- Exercise – you can continue to exercise alone, with one other person or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area. You should maintain social distancing. See exercising and meeting other people.
- Medical reasons – you can leave home for a medical reason, including to get a COVID-19 test, for medical appointments and emergencies.

Full details of the restrictions can be found on the [gov.uk national lockdown guidance document](#).

Clinically extremely vulnerable people

The guidance above is for people who are fit and well.

There is additional advice for [people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus](#) and households with a possible or confirmed coronavirus infection.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you should not attend work, school, college or university, and limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

All licensees that fall within the clinically extremely vulnerable category should follow Government advice.

Department for Transport guidance

The Department for Transport has updated its specific [guidance for taxi and private hire services](#) and licensees should familiarise themselves with it.

The guidance for drivers includes: COVID-19 risk assessments, face coverings and vehicle hygiene.

The guidance for operators and taxi intermediaries includes: COVID-19 risk assessments and provision of information to drivers and passengers.

Hands. Face. Space

Approximately 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it.

We encourage all licensees to continue to observe the Government's personal hygiene and cleaning protocols, in particular – Hands. Face. Space:

- Hands – wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds.
- Face – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- Space – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings).

Government guidance

As the rate of transmission of the virus is rising, we urge drivers to remain vigilant and to continue to familiarise themselves with, and follow, [Government guidance](#).

As set out in previous TPH Notices, taxi and private hire drivers are expected to wear face coverings **at all times** when in their taxi or private hire vehicle. This remains the case, unless you have a valid exemption. This is an important safety measure to protect licensees, passengers and wider society and is now even more important in the context of the rising number of coronavirus cases.

We have produced an informative video that provides guidance on how to clean your vehicle after each passenger has been safely dropped off and at the end of your shift. The short video can be viewed [here](#).

All licensed taxi and private hire drivers should take a few minutes to familiarise themselves with the video and follow these 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 can also be found at the [TfL Corona Virus webpage](#).

Driver assessment centres

Driver assessment centres, that provide both Knowledge of London appearances and Topographical assessments, will remain closed until further notice.

Vehicle Inspection centres

All driver vehicle licensing inspection sites will remain open, with appropriate safety measures in place including: social distancing markers, hand sanitiser stations, personal protective equipment for staff and limits on contact between staff and customers who will be asked to wear face coverings.

The most convenient way to book your vehicle licensing inspection is to use our [online service](#). It provides flexibility and allows you to book 24-hours a day, seven days a week. You can book and then re-schedule your appointment to a time, date and location that is most convenient to you.

However, we are aware that some licensees prefer to book via telephone and we are conscious that sometimes high levels of demand exceed our capacity, particularly on Mondays and at lunchtimes.

We are therefore undertaking a three-month trial that will see the booking line open 8am – 5pm, seven days a week. After the trial, we will evaluate the changes to see

what has been successful and whether any permanent changes should be introduced.

Arrangements for both the driver assessment centres and vehicle inspection sites will be kept under review in light of future Government guidance.

MOTs

It remains the responsibility of vehicle licensees to ensure the roadworthiness of their vehicle(s) and to ensure that vehicles continue to meet all regulatory requirements at all times.

It remains a condition of vehicle licensing that a taxi or a private hire vehicle undertakes two MOT inspections per year. Vehicles that are presented for licensing will be required to meet all applicable requirements. This includes the production of a valid MOT certificate at their next inspection.

Licensees should ensure their vehicle continues to comply with the criteria in the [TfL Taxi and Private Hire Inspection Manual](#) at all times.

Financial support

The Government has a number of financial support packages for those affected by the coronavirus restrictions, including increased support for the self-employed.

If you have previously claimed a grant via the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), you can use the online service to see if you are eligible for a third grant.

To make a claim for the third grant your business must have had a new or continuing impact from coronavirus between 1 November 2020 and 29 January 2021, which you reasonably believe will have resulted in a significant reduction in your profits.

The third taxable grant is worth 80% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £7,500 in total. If you are eligible, you must make your claim for the third grant on or before 29 January 2021.

For full information on the financial support available, to check your eligibility and to make an application, visit the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

Companies can also apply for financial support from the Government. The [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme \(CBILS\)](#) provides financial support to smaller businesses affected by coronavirus and the [Bounce Back Loan Scheme \(BBLs\)](#) enables smaller businesses to access finance more quickly during the coronavirus outbreak. The deadlines for applications for both loans have been extended until 31 January 2021.

Full details of the financial support packages available are provided here:
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We appreciate that a National Lockdown and the prolonged nature of the pandemic will cause further stress and anxiety. We continue to encourage licensees to prioritise their mental and physical wellbeing at this time.

It is important to be self-aware and spot any early warning signs of feeling mentally unwell and to seek help and support at the earliest opportunity.

The following support services are available to all licensees, with a number offering coronavirus-specific advice:

- GOV.UK – [Find out what support you can get if you're affected by coronavirus](#)
- [Rethink Mental Illness](#)
- [Mind](#)

- [Citizen's Advice](#)
- [CALM](#)
- [Stress Management Society \(SMS\)](#)

Please also visit our dedicated [Taxi and Private Hire Health and Wellbeing webpage](#) for further information, advice and guidance and details of financial support that is available to licensees.

Please do stay safe and well.

Graham Robinson

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