



Coronavirus Update 18 (Consolidation)

This Notice consolidates important information from all previous coronavirus Notices under three sections: Section 1 – All licensees; Section 2 – Vehicle licensing; and Section 3 – PHV operators and taxi booking companies.

This Notice supersedes TPH Notices 02/20 – 22/20 (excluding [TPH Notice 12/20](#) and [TPH Notice 14/20](#)).

This Notice should be read in conjunction with [TPH Notice 01/21](#), that contains the latest information and was issued 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.

[TPH Notice 01/21](#) also contains information for drivers who wish to continue to work, Department for Transport 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 is a consolidation of important information contained in all previous TPH Notices on coronavirus and supersedes TPH Notices 02/20 – 22/20 (excluding [TPH Notice 12/20](#) and [TPH Notice 14/20](#)).

Section 1 – All licensees

Face Coverings

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.

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.

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.

Guidance for managing a passenger not wearing a face covering

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 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 a passenger has already entered the vehicle and then takes off their 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, passengers 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

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: www.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.

Vehicle hygiene

We have 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>

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 is provided on a bespoke web page: www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/taxis-and-private-hire/existing-licensee/coronavirus-information-for-licencees. This includes

information on face coverings, vehicle cleaning, cleaning products and safely operating TPH services.

In addition to vehicle hygiene measures, licensees are expected to take the following personal 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

Social distancing

The Government advises that you should 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 or increasing ventilation indoors).

Extra precautions that taxi and private hire drivers can take include:

- Seating 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

- Keep the time you spend near other people as short as possible, ideally under 15 minutes
- Be aware of the surfaces you or others touch

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](#).

Medical assessments

We recognise that there may be delays in obtaining medical information from GPs and specialist medical practitioners due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are adopting 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.

Contacting TPH Licensing

We have limited access to our phone lines and are therefore operating an email-based customer service.

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.
- Notification of any change in personal circumstances – 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 the contact details (email and telephone) provided to TfL are up to date. This enables us to provide you with important regulatory information. In light of the current circumstances, we urge all TPH drivers (and vehicle owners and private hire operators) to check we have the most up to date contact details. Please email any updated contact details – with your driver licence number in the subject heading – to TPHLicensing@tfl.gov.uk.

Courier and delivery work

PHV operators, taxi booking companies, taxi drivers or private hire drivers who are carrying out courier or delivery work should read the Government's guidance for people who:

- Work in or from vehicles: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles
- Deliver goods or items to other people's homes: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes

Speeding

We are committed to keeping our roads safe for all users. During previous lockdowns the Metropolitan Police Service observed an increase in the number of vehicles speeding on London's roads.

Speed is the single biggest contributory factor of fatal collisions and we remind 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.

Congestion Charge and Ultra Low Emission Schemes

From 18 May 2020, owners of private hire vehicles have needed to pay an £11.50 daily charge when driving within the Congestion Charge zone between 07:00-18:00, Monday to Friday. Vehicles that do not meet the ULEZ standards, must also pay the ULEZ charge.

For more information on the Congestion Charge and ULEZ, please visit: www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge/congestion-charge-zone.

Private hire vehicles that are designated as wheelchair-accessible vehicles have retained an exemption from paying the Congestion Charge, but only when carrying out a private hire booking for a TfL-licensed private hire operator. Taxis continue to be exempt from the charge.

As a temporary measure, from 22 June 2020, the Congestion Charge was increased to £15 per day and the hours of operation have been extended to 7:00 to 22:00, seven days a week.

Further details on these changes are provided here:

www.london.gov.uk/pressreleases/mayoral/car-free-zones-in-london-as-cc-and-ulez-reinstated

Section 2 – Vehicle licensing

Partition screens in PHVs

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

There is an established process for seeking approval for temporary partitions or 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 partitions that meet the criteria.

Information on temporary partition screens in PHVs can be found on our website: www.tfl.gov.uk/tph-policy.

Section 3 – Operator licensing

Weekly driver upload

Licensed private hire operators are required to provide details of the vehicles and drivers they have used to fulfil private hire bookings, or have had available to fulfil bookings, for the previous week.

We appreciate that some private hire operators may not be working during the coronavirus pandemic. With this in mind, and specifically for those not operating, we will waive the requirement to provide an upload upon written notification of the dates on which they are not accepting bookings.

Notification should be provided by emailing tph.operators@tfl.gov.uk stating the date that their operations were, or will be, suspended.

Prior to restarting their operations, we require the Nominated Representative to notify us of the date that services will restart. The normal weekly upload processes will then resume as of this date.

More detailed information regarding Private Hire Regulations and all requirements can be found on our website at www.tfl.gov.uk/ph-regulations.

Ridesharing

All ridesharing services should continue to be suspended until further notice.

Please do stay safe and well.

Graham Robinson

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

13 January 2021

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