

Guidance for Transport Operators

Issue 7
22/03/21

providing services for
Nottinghamshire County Council



Please take time to read this guidance and refer to the links to government advice. If you would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact Transport & Travel Services, Nottinghamshire County Council.

Based on recent advice from the Government on safer transport measures, this guidance covers six important areas relating to the services you do for the Council:

- 1. Risk Management**
- 2. Mitigation & Prevention**
- 3. Vehicle & Equipment Cleaning**
- 4. Infection Control**
- 5. COVID-19 Track & Trace**
- 6. Workforce testing**
- 7. Stay informed**



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

1. Risk Management

You should undertake a risk assessment about sensible measures to control the risks with your workforce, your vehicles and your services. If you haven't done so already, use a template such as the one recommended by the Health & Safety Executive [available at this link](#). >>

Risk assessments are required to consider all aspects of what a company does and staff should be involved as much as possible. Risk assessments are important tools to identify sensible measures to control the risk in the workplace and examine the transport services you provide.

A risk assessment will help you decide if you have addressed all necessary points and to ensure adequate measures are in place to ensure social distancing (2m or 1m with risk mitigations) and good hygiene – these are the main mitigation elements to reduce the virus transmission:

- ✓ **Social distancing**
- ✓ **Hygiene**
- ✓ **Fixed teams or partnering**
- ✓ **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).**

Further government advice for operators is available at this link. >>



2. Mitigation and Prevention

Government advice about social distancing has been amended. If staff or passengers cannot keep a 2m distance, the risk can be reduced by maintaining a 1m distance where possible and adopting suitable mitigations.

Operators should consider what suitable mitigations can be implemented on their vehicles. The recommended 2m social distance may not always be possible; address this as a risk on your risk assessment along with other risks you have identified and list the measures you will introduce that will attempt to maintain a 1m distance where possible.

To inform your risk assessment the following may be considered (note this is not an exhaustive list and not all will be relevant):

- ✓ **Assess each vehicle for the recommended social distance**
- ✓ **Look at alternatives such as physical screening if possible, as long as this does not impair visibility or cause other safety issues**
- ✓ **Rearranging, limiting or removing seating**
- ✓ **Blocking off seats that are close to the driver**
- ✓ **Removing any face-to-face seating**
- ✓ **Sitting passengers in the back-left hand seat rather than behind the driver**
- ✓ **Keeping a log of seats available to use on each vehicle**
- ✓ **Using larger vehicles in your fleet as requested/agreed by Nottinghamshire County Council**
- ✓ **Increasing ventilation where possible – windows, skylights**
- ✓ **Regularly cleaning the inside of vehicles - it is essential that this is done between trips**
- ✓ **Keeping crews together, rather than mixing multiple staff on shifts**
- ✓ **Clear signage in workplace and in vehicles for your staff**
- ✓ **Sitting passengers' side by side and not face-to-face (in taxis or smaller vehicles)**
- ✓ **Escorts should avoid physical contact with young people if at all possible and try to minimise face-to-face contact**
- ✓ **If handling cash, to reduce contact, consider installing a hopper, or encourage payment by 'contactless' methods.**





If drivers are concerned that passengers are not adhering to the social distance measures that have been implemented on vehicles, they should politely remind them to sit on designated seats or at the current social distance. If they have any specific concerns, they should report these to their line manager, who in turn should report them to the relevant manager in Transport & Travel Services, Nottinghamshire County Council.

Boarding & Alighting

There may be situations where it is not possible to keep a suitable distance from passengers, for example when they are boarding or alighting. Your risk assessment may include measures which you put in place to manage boarding and alighting where larger groups of passengers utilise the vehicle, such as mainstream home to school transport. You may for instance introduce a system of using different entrances/exits or erecting plastic screens around the cab.



Passengers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19

If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in any of your passengers or in anyone in their household DO NOT transport them:

- ✓ Think of your personal hygiene and that of your passengers
- ✓ Report to your manager immediately
- ✓ Report to the relevant school.



3. Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning

You should have implemented a revised cleaning procedure to a much higher standard than normal.

Cleaning should focus on the main areas of the vehicle which receive the most regular contact from passengers including:

- ✓ **Door handles (inside and out)**
- ✓ **Handrails or grab rails**
- ✓ **Head rests**
- ✓ **Seat backs**
- ✓ **Seat belts (tongue/buckle/webbing)**
- ✓ **Windows.**



If you operate wheelchair accessible vehicles, the securing equipment and webbing should also be cleaned before and after every use, along with all the lift operating handset and rails.

The areas which are constantly touched by drivers and escorts should also be separately cleaned – these include items such as steering wheel, gear stick, handbrake, controls, handles and switches etc.

Further government advice on 'deep cleaning' vehicles is available at this link. >>



4. Infection Control

The personal safety of drivers should be considered at all times and more frequent hand washing or sanitising should be taking place in line with Public Health England instructions.

Employers have a responsibility to provide PPE to their employees if their company risk assessment indicates that they should.

Face coverings for staff

Nottinghamshire County Council strongly recommends that all staff wear a face covering when driving or working as an escort on a vehicle. There will be exceptional circumstances when a staff member cannot wear a face covering, or when their task makes it sensible for them not to wear a face covering.

It is important that staff follow the correct guidance on wearing a face covering. Employers should provide staff with the following information:

- ✓ **Wash 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 face or the face covering, as this could contaminate it with germs from hands**
- ✓ **Change face covering if it becomes damp or if it's been touched**
- ✓ **Continue to wash or sanitize hands regularly**
- ✓ **Change and wash face covering daily**
- ✓ **If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions - if it's not washable, dispose of it in general waste**
- ✓ **Practise social distancing wherever possible.**

Staff should be made aware that face coverings can prevent some disabled people from accessing oral information and instructions (from staff and fellow passengers).

Please refer to the latest government advice on face coverings, available at this link. >>



Face coverings for passengers

It is now mandatory for passengers travelling by public transport services to wear a face covering. Passengers will be breaking the law if they fail to comply and could be liable for a fine. Surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of PPE should continue to be reserved for people who need to wear them at work. However, passengers will comply with the regulation if they are wearing these. Specific exemptions apply, including for health, equality or age reasons.

The latest list of exemptions is available at this link. >>

Passenger compliance with the face covering regulations

The aim is to achieve high rates of compliance with wearing face coverings, rather than high rates of enforcement. Operators are encouraged to adopt a strategy of engage, explain, encourage, ensuring they explain the exemptions from the requirements.

Government advice for passengers is available at this link. >>

Face coverings for children on dedicated school transport

It is now mandatory for children and young people **aged 11 and over** to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. Children under 11 **may** wear face coverings if they are able to handle them as directed. As with public transport services, operators are encouraged to adopt a strategy of engage, explain and encourage and are not responsible for enforcing the wearing of face coverings.



Remember, face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing and regular handwashing.



Hand washing & hygiene

Ensure you and your staff wash hands for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitiser of at least 60% alcohol if hand-washing is not available) **BEFORE** and **AFTER** every contact and every use of PPE. The government advice asks employers to use signs and messages to build awareness of good handwashing techniques and other hygiene behaviours for example around coughing and sneezing.

HOW TO WASH



1 Rub front of hands palm



2 Rub back of hands palm



3 Scrub between fingers



4 Clean fingers



5 Clean fingernails



6 Rub wrists

YOUR HANDS

Driving

Along with enhanced vehicle cleaning measures, ensure your risk assessment sets out good personal hygiene for drivers and passenger assistants including:

- ✓ **Avoid touching your face**
- ✓ **No eating or drinking in the vehicle**
- ✓ **If you have to sneeze, do so into the crook of your elbow**
- ✓ **Wash your hands when you get to your destination.**

If you have to get out of the vehicle en-route, and you cannot wash your hands or do not have a hand sanitiser, avoid touching your face; avoid eating or drinking; and wash your hands as soon as you can.



5. COVID-19 Track & Trace

Staff must not work if they have COVID-19 symptoms, or if someone in their household has symptoms. If they develop symptoms whilst at work, they must go home and get a test.

Staff must also not work if they or someone in their household has had a positive test result whether they have symptoms or not. Please refer to section 6 of this guidance regarding Workforce Testing.

The Stay at Home guidance is available at this link >>

Children, young people or staff who have been in contact with someone who has developed symptoms whilst at school or on home to school transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless (one of these):

- ✓ **they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test)**
- ✓ **the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive and they were in contact within 48 hours of them first displaying symptoms**
- ✓ **if they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace**

Staff are required to book a test if they display COVID-19 symptoms.

For information on how to book a test, please use this link >>

For information on COVID-19 symptoms, please use this link >>

Staff will need to be ready and willing:

- ✓ **to provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they test positive for COVID-19 or if asked by NHS Test and Trace**
- ✓ **to follow the Say at Home guidance if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of COVID-19.**



6. Workforce testing

Alongside the vaccination programme, the government has advised that testing forms a critical part of the roadmap to recovery.

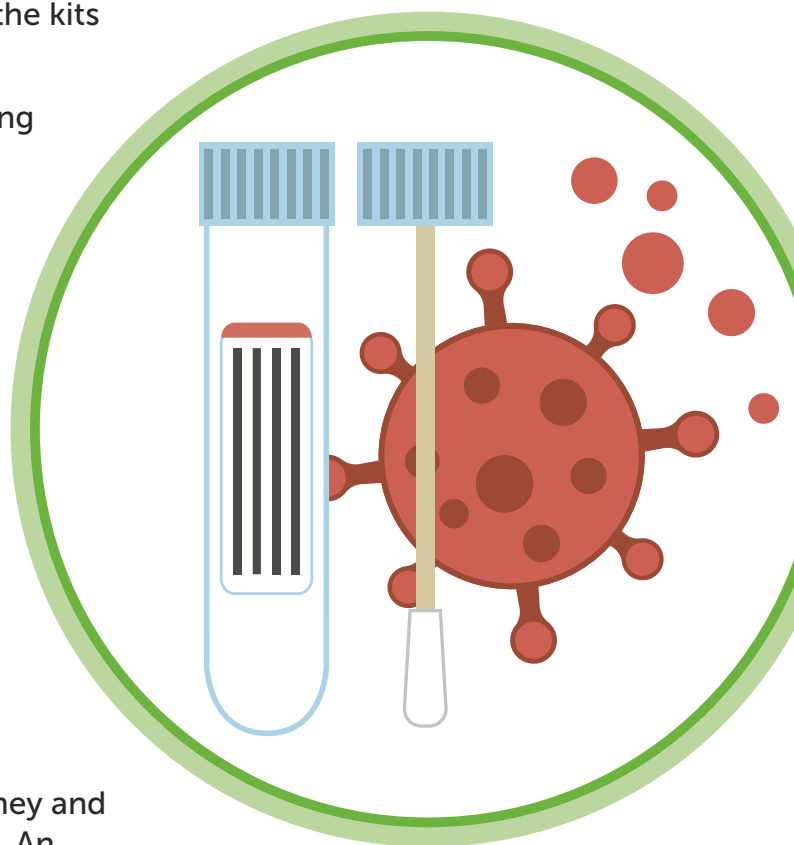
All transport operators are encouraged to actively participate in the asymptomatic testing of all transport workers. This testing helps to identify people who may unknowingly risk spreading the virus and thereby prevents workplace outbreaks.

If you employ 50 or more staff, you can set up rapid lateral flow testing in-house. Register to order the kits [at this link](#) >>

Where operators cannot set up workplace testing (such as when employing fewer than 50 staff), community testing centres are being set up by local authorities and these can be visited by transport workers. Please visit [this link](#) >> to find your nearest centre and encourage your team to visit on a regular basis.

If a member of staff tests positive following a supervised lateral flow test at either their workplace or a community testing centre, then they and other members of their household must isolate. Other close contacts will be traced as normal. There is no need to get an additional PCR test at a test centre.

If a member of staff tests positive following an unsupervised (at home) lateral flow test, then they and other members of their household must isolate. An additional PCR test is required and should be booked online or by calling 119. If the PCR test is negative, then the member of staff and close contacts can stop isolating.



7. Stay informed

This summary of the latest guidance is accurate at the time of publication on 22/03/21 and further versions will be issued. However, as a Transport Operator, it is your responsibility to keep up to date with the latest government guidance.

If you would like to discuss this guidance with Transport & Travel Services at Nottinghamshire County Council, please contact us on **0300 500 80 80**.

