



Department
for Transport

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To taxi and private hire vehicle providers and
licensing authorities

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[via email]

LOCAL TRANSPORT RESTART

I am writing to you following the publication of new government guidance [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884370/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators.pdf] on providing transport services safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance was published yesterday and covers all modes of private and public transport.

Separate guidance [<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#taxis-and-private-hire-vehicles>] has been published for passengers to outline who should be travelling and how social distancing rules should be observed across different points in journeys.

It is important that you review and implement these guidance documents if you are operating a taxi or private hire vehicle business, or are a self-employed driver.

There are sections relevant to the taxi and private hire vehicle sector in several documents, so I have attached an **annex** to this letter to help you navigate these.

The guidance will continue to develop as lockdown restrictions change.

Yours faithfully,

Rupert Furness

Deputy Director, Local Transport COVID-19 Response, Department for Transport

ANNEX – TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE Q&A

What guidance has been published for the taxi and private hire vehicle sector?

The Government has published transport guidance on the safe provision of transport services during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are separate guidance documents for transport providers and for passengers. Both guidance documents cover all modes.

The guidance sets out government recommendations on who should be traveling and under what circumstances, and how social distancing rules should be interpreted. It also includes information about cleaning practices.

- Guidance for [passengers](#)
- Guidance for [operators](#)
- Guidance on [clinically extremely vulnerable](#)
- Guidance for [households with a possible coronavirus infection](#)

Should taxi and private hire vehicle drivers or passengers wear PPE such as a mask?

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas.

We are advising passengers if they can, wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet - such as when travelling in a taxi or private hire vehicle.

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings, like those exposed to dust hazards.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by the law. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off. Use the [guidance on face coverings](#) to understand how to wear and make a face coverings.

Other measures such as changing habits, social distancing, screens, cleaning and hygiene are also suggested in the guidance.

Should protective barriers be installed between drivers and passengers?

The installation of protective barriers is a decision for licensing authorities, PHV operators and firm/individual operating the vehicle to make based on their own assessment of risk.

They may also wish to consider:

- Eliminating the use of face-to-face passenger seating
- Use of ventilation
- Reducing occupancy to individual passengers in the back left-hand seat for vehicles that do not enable 2 metre separation; considering reducing occupancy in a larger vehicle

Can a taxi or PHV driver refuse to admit a passenger who is not wearing a face covering?

Taxi and PHV drivers are advised to make an assessment of risk as outlined in the transport operator guidance published on 12 May. The acceptance of a booking request by a PHV operator is a decision made based on the operator's own assessment of risk. Any requirements for face coverings should be made clear to the passenger before the operator accepts the booking. Taxi drivers can use this assessment to determine whether or not it is reasonable to admit a passenger who is not wearing a face covering, considering other mitigations they put in place from their risk assessment. This does not however absolve them of their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

What support is the Government providing to the taxi and PHV sector?

The [Self-employment Income Support Scheme](#) will allow taxi and PHV drivers to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next 3 months. This may be extended if needed.

The Chancellor has set out a [package of temporary, timely and targeted measures to support public services, people and businesses](#) through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19.

Why are taxi and PHV drivers not considered critical workers?

Taxi and private hire drivers should not generally be considered critical workers. Those undertaking Home to School transport or the transport of '[extremely vulnerable](#)' people may be considered critical workers on a case-by-case basis. Critical workers should make suitable arrangements for their children to stay at home where it is safe for them to do so; the need for children to attend school should be discussed with the school.

Can taxis and PHVs transport workers to and from hospitals?

Yes.

Can taxis and PHVs transport passengers of ill health in and out of hospital?

Yes, but individuals should not use taxis or PHVs if:

- They have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) – a new, continuous cough or a high temperature
- Any of your household are [self-isolating](#) due to experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Can taxi and PHV drivers support passengers with accessibility issues while maintaining social distancing?

Taxi and PHV drivers are still under the same obligation to provide reasonable assistance and make reasonable adjustments for disabled passengers. The guidance includes advice on measures that workers and passengers can take when it is not possible to maintain the recommended social distance.