



## **CPT Briefing: Customer communications and face coverings**

From 15 June it is mandatory for passengers to wear face coverings while travelling on public transport. It is important to communicate clearly with passengers before they begin their journey, at bus stops and on the bus about this requirement. This is a new requirement for customers who are used to travelling without a face covering, even during the pandemic and clear customer communications can help minimise any misunderstandings, keep everyone safe and reduce the potential for conflict.

CPT has produced some recommended messaging to help operators communicate with passengers.

### **Pre journey information**

The more information passengers are provided with about their responsibilities with regards to face covering, the higher the rate of compliance is likely to be. Key messages to communicate are:

- Please remember to bring a face covering for your journey as without one you will be unable to travel.
- A face covering can be very simple, like a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head to give a snug fit. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose.
- If you are unable to wear a face covering you might want to get a journey assistance card to help you let people know. Please contact us if you would like one.
- Details on who is exempt are available on [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or our website.
- You can make your own face covering by following the guidance on [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

### **Bus stop or station information**

Providing information at bus stops will help remind passengers about what they need to do on board the bus regarding a face covering. The important information to communicate is:

- Please put your face covering on before boarding the bus and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before putting it on.
- If you are unable to wear a face covering please inform the driver and if you have one show your journey assistance card.
- To keep everyone safe please store a used face covering in a plastic bag and take it home.



## **On board information**

Information on board should focus on helping passengers understand what is expected of them regarding on board behaviour in relation to face coverings. You should be asking passengers to:

- Please wear your face covering throughout the duration of your journey, including when disembarking the bus.
- Rather than wear a face covering our driver is behind a screen to keep you and them safe.
- If you need a drink while travelling please do so quickly and be mindful of others.
- Be aware that not everyone can wear a face covering and some exemptions apply.
- Please take your face covering with you at the end of your journey and dispose of it safely.



## Questions and answers

### What is a face covering and where can I get one?

We are asking people to use home-made face coverings. A face covering can be very simple, like a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head to give a snug fit. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose.

Please refer to Government guidance on how to make and wear a face covering.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

### Do I need to wear it at the bus stop/station as well as on the bus?

No. Passengers on public transport will only be required to wear face coverings inside vehicles. However face coverings remain advisory if you are in enclosed public spaces where you cannot socially distance.

### I've forgotten my face covering can I still travel?

***PLEASE BE AWARE THESE EXEMPTIONS ARE NOT FINALISED UNTIL THE GUIDANCE IS PUBLISHED.***

Unfortunately not, unless you are covered by one of the exemptions, these exemptions are:

Following an Equalities Impact Assessment, exemptions will apply to those with:

- Breathing difficulties and other respiratory conditions.
  - Conditions affecting their dexterity, meaning they are not able to put on a face covering.
  - Mental health conditions such as anxiety or panic disorders.
  - Other non-visible disabilities such as autism.
  - Cognitive impairments, including dementia, who may not understand or remember the need to wear a face covering.
  - Visual impairments, with a restricted field of vision, particularly if any residual vision is at the lower edge of the normal field of view.
  - Impairments which would make it difficult to put on or take off a face covering safely, accurately, consistently or without pain.
- We also expect there to be reasonable judgement to ensure people can respond appropriately to avoid the risk of harm to themselves or others, and seek emergency medical assistance if required.
- The exemptions also apply to those who rely on lip reading. This would include carers who are travelling with someone for whom a face covering will inhibit communication.



- You will also be able to remove your face covering for eating/drinking if necessary and taking essential medication.
- The regulation will not apply to children under 11, or children on dedicated school transport services.

We expect everyone to wear a face covering if they can. The above list of exemptions is not exhaustive and would extend to someone who has a justifiable reason for not wearing one on the grounds of health or disability not outlined above.

### **Will face coverings be available at bus stations and on board buses and coaches?**

Operators will not be able to provide face coverings on board but they may be available at some bus stations and interchanges.

### **If someone is travelling without a face covering what should I do?**

We believe people will follow the rules on wearing a face covering on public transport. Police and transport staff will continue to reiterate Government messaging and the police will ultimately be able to fine people as a last resort.

Please also bear in mind that some passengers are exempt from the requirement to wear one and the reasons for some exemptions may not be immediately obvious.

### **How will the wearing of face coverings be enforced?**

The British Transport Police and police forces generally will have powers to fine those not wearing face coverings on public transport, although this would be a last resort.

### **Will drivers be wearing face coverings?**

Drivers will usually be protected by a screen and will therefore not be required to wear one but should they need to leave the cab to provide passenger assistance they will wear a face covering.

### **Why are you not providing hand sanitiser alongside requiring passengers to wear face coverings?**

Operators have undertaken risk assessments that show that the safest approach is to encourage passengers to wash their hands frequently and to bring their own sanitiser with them when they travel.

### **How will drivers know if someone is exempt from the requirement to wear a face covering?**

We would ask that passengers work with us and comply with the requirement to wear a face covering if they can. For those who are unable to do so they should inform the driver. The journey assistance card scheme is being updated to enable passengers who are exempt to obtain or print a card explaining this should they find that helpful.



A journey assistance card can be obtained from your local bus operator.

\*CPT's suggested wording for face covering exemptions is below:

*"Please be supportive. I have a disability and am exempt from wearing a face covering. Thank you!"*

*"Please be supportive. I have a health condition and am exempt from wearing a face covering. Thank you!"*

**Will bus drivers be expected to call the police if someone refuses to wear a face covering?**

Drivers will have discretion to take the most appropriate form of action and this may include in some limited circumstances contacting the Police through their control room. This is not something we would expect a driver to do as a matter of course.

**If I use a face covering, will there be somewhere to leave it when I get off the bus?**

No, it is important for everyone's safety that passengers take used face coverings with them and dispose of them carefully.

**Can I drink water on a bus or coach on a hot day and remove my face covering to do so?**

Yes, we ask passengers to adopt a sensible approach and consider others

**What about longer journeys do I need to wear a face covering for the whole time?**

Yes you are required to carry a face covering and use it on your journey on public transport in England

But we recognise that reasonable adjustments need to be factored in, which clearly includes practical considerations like being able to eat and drink on a long journey, especially for those with medical needs.

We ask people to follow the advice on using face coverings closely, which is to wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on and after taking it off. People should avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth at all times and store used face coverings in a plastic bag until they have an opportunity to wash them.