



Taxi companies provide a vital service to members of the community. There are many things taxi companies are doing already to help protect their staff and customers. This paper summarises what actions companies can take to make their workplace and vehicles covid-secure, avoid transmission and support staff. Please also see references to the full guidance at the end of this document. Always check the latest guidance to make sure you are up to date.

Taxi operators and drivers

drivers

- Whilst not compulsory, drivers are encouraged **to wear a face covering** to reduce transmission risk. See guidance below on how to wear this safely.
- They should **regularly wash their hands** and so it is a good idea to carry hand sanitiser (60-80% alcohol)
- **Regular cleaning of vehicles particularly high touch points** such as door handles.
- **Staff including drivers should not attend work if unwell.** If anyone develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when symptoms appear. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-foracoronavirus-test> or by calling 119. If they require clinical advice contact NHS 111 (999 for a medical emergency).
- **Plan the journey** to ensure the quickest route as this will minimise contact time and risk of exposure **Taxi operators**
- Should ensure that their business is **covid-19 secure** and drivers and other employees have information on covid-19 and know what to do if they become unwell. They should undertake a workplace risk assessment. The Health and Safety Executive has published [guidance to help conduct a risk assessment](#) and see also [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer transport guidance for operators](#). This should include covid-19 secure measures in offices and well as vehicles.
- Should keep **good records of the passengers, drivers and journey length** of time.
- The **installation of protective barriers** is a decision for licensing authorities, Private Hire Vehicle operators and firm/individual operating the vehicle to make based on their own assessment of risk. Please see section below about the implications on not having protective barriers on contact tracing.
- **Other measures to reduce the risk of transmission:**
 - 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 two metre separation; considering reducing occupancy in a larger vehicle
- Please see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer transport guidance for operators](#) for more information on this.
- **Support drivers who need to self isolate** either as a case or a contact of a case. Employees in self-isolation are entitled to SSP for every day they are in isolation, as long as they meet the eligibility conditions. You may be able to [reclaim SSP](#). Additionally, they may be eligible for Working Tax Credit Claim.
- If you have any members of staff who are **clinically extremely vulnerable** they should work from home where possible, but from 1st August 2020 they can return to work as long as it is covid secure. [Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19](#) has more information on this.
- There are also other **higher risk groups** who are more at risk of becoming infected and/or an adverse outcome if infected. These include:
 - older males
 - people with a high body mass index (BMI)
 - people with health conditions such as diabetes
 - people from some Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds These groups may need additional support to ensure safe working arrangements.

Passengers

- **Face coverings:**
 - Passengers should wear a [face covering](#) when using taxis or private hire vehicles. From 24.9.2020 this became a legal requirement for people travelling in taxis and private hire vehicles, subject to the exemptions discussed below. A taxi driver or private hire vehicle operator is entitled to not accept a passenger who is not wearing face coverings but please note some people [don't have to wear a face covering](#) for health, age or equality reason (this includes children under 11 and people who cannot wear face coverings for a medical reason or disability – this is not always a visible disability).
 - The requirement to wear a face covering should also be made clear before the operator accepts the booking.
- **Social distancing:**
 - The risk of transmission is small at 2 metres and where possible, passengers should maintain 2 metres distance. ○ If they cannot keep a 2 metre distance, reduce the risk to yourself and others by maintaining a 1 metre distance where possible, and taking suitable precautions. For example you may advise passengers

travelling alone to sit in the back left-hand seat. They should not sit in the front with the driver.

- **Hygiene measures:**

- Passengers (and staff) should be **aware of the surfaces they touch** and be careful not to touch their face. Mouth and nose should be covered with a tissue or the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- When finishing their journey passengers should **wash their hands** for at least 20 seconds or sanitise their hands as soon as possible.
- Passengers should use **contactless payment** if possible or find out if you can pay online in advance.

- **Transporting sick passengers:**

- Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles can transport workers and passengers of ill health to and from hospitals. However, passengers should not use taxis or Private Hire Vehicles if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or a change to sense of taste or smell) or any of their household are self-isolating due to experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- If passengers require transport due to suspected COVID-19 they should be advised to contact NHS 111 (999 for a medical emergency).

- **Supporting passengers with accessibility issues:**

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

Wearing a face covering

When wearing a face covering it is important that you follow the [guidance on face coverings](#). You should support them in using face coverings safely. This means telling workers:

- wash your 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 your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands – this is particularly important
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- continue to wash your hands regularly
- change or wash your face covering daily
- if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions – if it's not washable, dispose of it safely
- practice social distancing wherever possible

Contact tracing

On receipt of a positive test result individuals are contacted by **NHS Test and Trace** to assess whether there are any close contacts. Close contacts will then be contacted whilst keeping the identity of the case confidential. The taxi company may be contacted when the case is a driver or a client to risk assess workplace and cotraveller contacts.

A close 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). This could be a person who:

- spends significant time in the same household
- is a sexual partner
- has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), including:
 - being coughed on
 - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - contact within one metre for one minute
- has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
- has travelled in a small vehicle, or in a large vehicle or plane

Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

If travelling in a vehicle but >2m distance between the case and the contacts they would not normally be considered a contact.

When is the driver/passenger considered a close contact if they have shared a journey with an infectious case?

- If travelling in a vehicle 1-2m you would be considered a contact if there is no physical barrier between the case and the contact if the journey is more than 15 minutes.
- If within 1m for more than a minute (ie sitting side by side) you would be a contact, or,
- face to face contact <1m for any length of time you would be considered a contact.

The contact tracers will not consider the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) as adequate mitigation when assessing whether a recent contact is likely to have risked transmitting the virus. Only full medical-grade PPE worn in health and care settings and worn by individuals trained in putting on and taking off PPE appropriately will be considered.

Medical-grade PPE should not be purchased to circumvent self-isolation – this could disrupt critical supplies needed by the NHS and social care sector.

Why should we wear face coverings if this does not have an impact on how contact tracing works?

Wearing face-covering reduces the risk of transmission from the wearer to others in enclosed spaces and is therefore recommended in taxis where a two metre distance cannot be maintained. They are however, not fully protective for the wearer and so other precautions should be taken.

What should I do if a member of staff is a confirmed case?

Ensure the member of staff is self isolating at home for 10 whole days from the onset of symptoms. Day of onset of symptoms is day “0”. They should only return to the workplace on day 11 if their symptoms have gone or they just have a cough or a loss of smell/taste. If they still have a high temperature after 10 days, they should stay at home and seek medical advice. The case should also cooperate with NHS Test and Trace. Their household should self isolate for 10 whole days from the onset of the case’s symptoms.

If workplace/client close contacts are identified by the employer, these people need to be added onto the NHS Test and Trace system. In order to do this the employer should ask the case for their CTAS (NHS Test and Trace) ID number. This is the number the case receives when contacted by NHS Test and Trace after receiving a positive result. Once the employer has collated a list of close contacts they should call the Self Isolation Service Hub (details below). This also means that these contacts are able to receive a self-isolation support payment if they are eligible.

What is the Self-Isolation Service Hub?

The Government has launched a new Self isolation Service Hub. This is a telephone line for Employers and establishments to provide to NHS Test and Trace with a list of people who have been identified as contacts of a case of COVID-19 in your establishment, and therefore who must self-isolate.

It is important that you follow up and call 020 3743 6715 as soon as you have had a positive case in your establishment (and every time thereafter), because all contacts identified are then formally logged with NHS Test & Trace. This allows those contacts who are eligible to receive a self-isolation support payment from their Local Authority. Without the NHS Test & Trace reference, they cannot receive financial support.

You will need the CTAS ID of the person who had a positive case, in order to be able to record the contacts from your establishment – please ask the employee/person at your establishment who tested positive to provide this to you as soon as they receive it, so you can call the hub as soon as possible to be able to support your employees and visitors at the earliest opportunity.

Further guidance on who may be eligible and how to go about this can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>.

Guidance

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19safertransport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safertransportguidance-for-operators>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidanceforpassengers>
- <https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/business-and-trade/licensingandpermits/taxi-licences/coronavirus-covid-19-taxi-and-private-hirevehicleguidance/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid19/5steps-to-working-safely>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance>

Updated 23.9.20 with new face covering guidance

Updated 23.10.20 with Self service hub information and what to do if a member of staff is a confirmed case.

Updated 17.12.20 Updated with change to ten day isolation period for close contacts of cases.