Returning to Work: Rideshare, Taxi, Limo, and other Passenger Drivers-for-Hire

Guidance Document

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Version 3 | September 28, 2020
Overview
With stay at home and shelter-in-place restrictions beginning to lift, rideshare, taxi, limo and other passenger driver-for-hire companies are faced with difficult questions that must be addressed as they transition back to normal operations, such as:

- How can businesses or individual vehicle owners protect drivers and passengers from the disease during passenger transport?
- How can individual vehicle owners protect other parties during off-hours personal use of rideshare vehicles?

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is thought to be spread primarily through aerosolized respiratory droplets at close range. Airborne transmission from person-to-person over long distances is unlikely. However, there is evidence that this mode of transmission is possible, particularly in crowded, indoor spaces. People may also become infected by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus has been shown to survive in aerosols for hours and on surfaces for days. Infection can occur through eyes, nose, and mouth exposures. There is also strong evidence that people can spread the virus while pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic.

What should an Employer or individual vehicle owner do to protect drivers and passengers during passenger transport?
Rideshare, Taxi, Limo and other Passenger Driver-for-Hire companies should continually monitor global (World Health Organization [WHO]), federal (Centers for Disease Control [CDC] and Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA]), state, and local guidelines for changes in recommendations, disinfection strategies, worker protections and other best management practices.

Employers should also consider forming a knowledgeable team to monitor, assess, and implement new strategies as they become available. In addition, employers should consider the following strategies for reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission during passenger transport in regards to physical distancing, ventilation, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, use of public restrooms during the course of a driving shift, personal hygiene, employee wellness, personal protective equipment (COVID-19 related protective equipment should include cloth or disposable face coverings and/or face shields for close contact activities, and regular work gloves) training, waste, laundering, and communication. Recognizing that many of the drivers are self-employed, we encourage them to apply the same safety recommendations suggested to employers.

Communication
- At minimum, follow the CDC Guidance for Rideshare, Taxi, Limo and other Passenger Drivers-for-Hire.
- Ensure drivers have cloth or disposable face coverings and consider policies and communications that strongly suggest passengers should also wear cloth or disposable face coverings.

NOTE: If an employer chooses to provide or the employee supplies their own N95 respirator, please fully consider all the potential OSHA requirements.

- Develop a response plan for communicating to your employees of the facts of SARS-CoV-2 virus and COVID-19 disease.
- Employers should educate employees to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 and provide instructions on what to do if they develop symptoms. At a minimum, any worker should immediately notify their supervisor, their health care provider, and the local health department, who will provide guidance on what actions need to be taken.
• Health checks and reporting requirements of individuals infected with COVID-19 should be explained to employees prior to reopening and again once operations have resumed.

• Communicate the importance of being vigilant when monitoring symptoms and staying in touch with their employer or manager if or when they start to feel sick.

• Revisit your leave or sick program to allow for time off and follow all HR Policies and HIPAA/other regulatory requirements.

• Require employees who have symptoms or signs (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) or who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 to notify their supervisor and stay home.

• Implement and inform employees of supportive workplace policies as applicable:
  – Flexible sick leave policies consistent with public health guidance. Providing paid sick leave is an important way to encourage employees to stay home when sick.
  – Consider not requiring a COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick to validate their illness in order to qualify for sick leave. If you do require a doctor’s note from your employees to verify that they are healthy and able to return to work, be aware that healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner. Get more information related to the Americans with Disabilities Act during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  – Flexibility to stay home to care for a sick family member.
  – Human resources policies consistent with public health guidance, and state and federal workplace laws. For more information on employer responsibilities, visit the Department of Labor’s and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s websites.
  – Employee assistance program and community resources to help employees manage stress and receive support.
  – Encourage employees at increased risk for severe illness to request special accommodations to allow them to perform their job duties safely while also protecting sensitive employee health information.
  – Encourage those who are sick or at greater risk to stay home. This includes:
    – People with underlying medical conditions.
    – People who live with elderly people or those who are at risk.
    – People with upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms or who live with someone with these clinical symptoms.
    – People with COVID-19, people who live with someone with COVID-19, or who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

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Vehicle cleaning/disinfecting, vehicle configuration, physical distancing, and personal hygiene practices

• Drivers shall clean and disinfect their shared vehicles and equipment.
  – At start and end of shifts, use disinfecting wipes/supplies to routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle and other work equipment, including:
    – Keys;
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- Steering wheel (including buttons, horn);
- All levers - on the steering wheel or seat;
- All buttons - on radio, dashboard, window regulator, etc.;
- All handles - door handles used: both inside and outside (e.g., driver, passenger, cargo), of glove compartment door;
- Seat belt buckle;
- Fuel cap;
- Mobile devices;
- All other work equipment touched (e.g., pencils).

- Between passenger trips, use cleaning wipes to clean any frequently touched surfaces in the passenger area of the vehicle (door handles, window regulator, etc.).
- Consider covering porous seats with a snug, non-porous cover that can be disinfected.
- Select appropriate disinfectants – consider effectiveness and safety.
  - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a list of products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2.
  - Do not mix different EPA registered chemicals together. The combination could be toxic by inhalation. Be particularly careful when using any products containing ammonia, sodium hypochlorite (bleach), or hydrogen peroxide.
  - Review product labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and follow manufacturer specifications for cleaning/disinfecting.
  - Consider consulting an Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Science Professional or Industrial Hygiene expert if additional advice is needed. AIHA has a consultants list of such qualified professionals.

- Ensure disinfection protocols follow product instructions for application and contact time. All items should be allowed to dry thoroughly after cleaning.

- Consider developing a standard operating procedure, a checklist, or audit system to consistently train drivers on enhanced cleaning/disinfecting practices or to track when and how cleaning and disinfecting is conducted. Note that this may be a requirement in some states or local jurisdictions.
- Single-use items and used disinfection materials can be treated as regular waste, following regular safety guidelines.
- Any reused cloth materials should be washed and dried on the highest temperature setting allowable for the fabric.
- Deeper cleaning and disinfecting protocols should be developed and implemented in cases where confirmed cases of COVID-19 are discovered. Refer to AIHA's Workplace Cleaning for COVID-19.
- Provide Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for cleaning and disinfection products and ensure employees are aware of the hazards of use. Incorporate new hazards into existing OSHA Hazard Communications Program.
- Employees should receive, at minimum, awareness training on cleaning and disinfection products used in the workplace following OSHA Hazard Communication Standards. For employees who will use cleaning and disinfecting products, training should also include proper use, personal protective equipment (PPE), disposal, and all precautionary measures.
- Provide disposable nitrile gloves and closable trash bags or containers for use in vehicles when cleaning and disinfecting vehicles.
- Provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol to all drivers for use in vehicles.
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– Before and after using the toilet, taking breaks, and/or eating;
– After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing;
– After handling passengers’ personal belongings, if unavoidable;
– Between rides and after handling/exchanging money;
– After putting on, touching, or removing cloth or disposable face coverings;
– Before wearing and after removing cold-weather gloves;
– Before and after pumping gas.

– Keep a distance of at least 6 feet from passengers when you are outside the vehicle.

– Consider providing an alcohol-based hand sanitiz- er that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% iso- propyl alcohol) in the passenger area of the vehicle and ask passengers to use it upon entering the ve- hicle, before handling/exchanging money, or after coughing/sneezing.

– Avoid using the recirculated air option for the car’s ventilation during passenger transport; use the car’s vents to bring in fresh outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows.

– Avoid offering free items to passengers, such as water bottles, magazines or mints/candies.

– Avoid exchanging money with customers, and requiring signatures, if feasible. Encourage app- based or contactless credit card payments.

– Avoid contact with vehicle surfaces frequent- ly touched by passengers or other drivers be- fore cleaning and disinfecting them, such as door frame/handles, windows, seatbelt buckles, steer- ing wheel, gearshift, signaling levers, and other ve- hicle parts.

– If you work for a company that offers a large fleet of vehicles, ask company management for a car/ taxi (when applicable) with a partition between driver and passengers, if available.

– If feasible, construct a transparent (see-through) hard barrier/partition to separate the driver from the passenger compartment of the vehicle.

– Barriers should divide the driver section of the cabin from passenger seating area to minimize the chance of being exposed to aerosolized respira- tory droplets (for example, from a cough or a sneeze).

– Barriers must not obstruct windows/wind- shields and must comply with other applicable
local traffic authority regulations; they must be completely transparent with no coloring or tinting that would prevent visibility while operating the vehicle.

- Barriers must not obstruct vehicle controls (parking brakes, vehicle shift stick, etc.).
- Materials for barriers may include solid plastic or polycarbonate sheeting that are easy to see through and allow for cleaning on routine basis.

- Encourage drivers to wash clothes daily and cloth face coverings daily on the warmest setting possible.
- Encourage drivers to self-monitor for symptoms and take their temperature daily before staring a shift.

**Screening and Temperature Check Tips**

- Health checks and reporting requirements of individuals infected with COVID-19 should be explained to employees.
- Communicate the importance of being vigilant when monitoring symptoms and staying in touch with their employer or manager if or when they start to feel sick.
- Revisit your leave or sick program to allow for time off and follow all HR Policies and HIPAA/other regulatory requirements.
- Conduct employee temperature screening and wellness checks before each shift. **(NOTE: be sure to comply with OSHA’s Access to Employee Exposure Medical Records standard for confidentiality.)**
  - Temperature screening methods can include manual (use non-contact infrared thermometers) or thermal camera meeting FDA recommendations. Additional screening information/guidance can be found on the CDC website.
  - Assign an employee to manage and conduct the temperature screenings while following CDC guidelines in the above link. If this is not possible, employees can self-check their own temperature.
  - Screening should be done in a manner such that the privacy of employees is respected.
  - Perform a visual inspection for other signs of illness (e.g., flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue, extreme fussiness, cough).
  - Employees who have a fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or above, or other signs of illness should not be admitted to the job site.
- Employers can consider incorporating a wellness questionnaire with questions such as:
  - Have you, or a person you have been in close contact with, been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days? (close contact is 6 feet or less for more than 10 minutes.)
  - Have you experienced any cold or flu-like symptoms in the last 72 hours (to include fever, shortness of breath, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea)?
  - Have you traveled to an international or domestic “hot spot” in the last 14 days?
  - There are a number of examples available for wellness questionnaires (see Resources below).
- Require employees who have symptoms or signs (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) or who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 to notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow the CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments. Consider waiving requirements for medical documentation during the pandemic, as CDC has advised people with mild illness NOT to go to the doctor’s office or emergency room.
- If employee is sick or receives positive COVID-19 test results, results should be reported to employ-
er. In the case of a positive COVID-19 test result, the employee must stay home until cleared for physical return to the workplace by their medical provider, following the CDC’s Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings.

What to do in the event of a COVID-19 illness

- If a COVID-19 case amongst the workforce is identified via testing or suspected based on symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), conduct an enhanced cleaning/disinfecting of the vehicle. At a minimum, use the guidance provided by CDC for Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles.
  - If possible, air out the vehicle by opening windows as long as possible before cleaning/disinfecting.
  - Cleaning and disinfecting should be done immediately by trained personnel who should wear face coverings and gloves, dispose of gloves after use and wash hands and face when complete.
  - Visibly dirty surfaces shall be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water PRIOR to disinfection.
  - For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70 percent alcohol, and EPA-registered disinfectants on List-N should be effective. Recommended bleach solution mixture for cleaning.

What should an Employee/Driver do to protect themselves and the customers?

- Educate yourself about the facts of COVID-19.
  - Obtain your information about COVID-19 from credible sources such as the CDC or WHO.
- Employees should evaluate their health continuously; if they are sick, have a fever or symptoms, or someone at home is sick, then they should remain home. NOTE: Employer HR Policies, HIPAA guidelines and other laws should be followed at all times.
- Self-monitor your temperature prior to beginning your driving shift.
- Maintain good hygiene practices (washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol). For more information, refer to CDC’s handwashing guidelines.
- If an employee tests positive:
  - Follow federal, state, and local recommendations for reporting and communicating cases, while remaining compliant with regulations and guidelines pertaining to protecting private health information such as confidentiality required by the ADA. See OSHA for guidance on reporting workplace exposures to COVID-19.
  - Engage HR immediately and enforce all applicable HR rules and regulations.
  - The driver should stay home and isolate until cleared for physical return to the workplace by their medical provider, following the CDC’s Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings.

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  - Engage HR immediately and enforce all applicable HR rules and regulations.
  - The driver should stay home and isolate until cleared for physical return to the workplace by their medical provider, following the CDC’s Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings.
– Contact your supervisor and report your results as soon as possible.

• Maintain cloth or disposable (or better if you have it) face covering, clean or replace frequently, and use at minimum when unable to maintain physical distancing of 6-feet.

• Depending on local requirements, in alignment with CDC recommendations, wear a cloth or disposable face covering during passenger transport and whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (indoors or outdoors). Ensure the face covering is properly maintained and cleaned. Additional information on cloth face coverings can be found on CDC’s website. (NOTE: Cloth or disposable face coverings primarily protect other people. A cloth or disposable face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.)

• With the exception of children less than two, and individuals who have difficulty breathing, are unconscious, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance, CDC recommends all people wear a cloth or disposable face covering in public settings and when around people who don’t live in their household, especially when other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

• Non-medical cloth or disposable face coverings or cloth or disposable face coverings are NOT Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), but they do offer some protection to others and should be worn while near other people in common spaces or shared workspaces. They are not a substitute for physical distancing, engineering controls, cleaning and disinfecting, proper hygiene, or staying home while sick.

• Remove cloth or disposable face coverings correctly and wash hands after handling or touching a used face covering.

• Wash cloth face coverings after each use. Cloth face coverings can be included with regular laundry. Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the face covering. Use the highest heat setting and leave in the dryer until completely dry. If air drying, lay flat and allow to completely dry. If possible, place in direct sunlight.

• Let your employer know if you have concerns about the PPE that may be provided to you and that you are properly instructed on how to use it. The CDC has recommended sequences for donning and doffing PPE.

• Ask passengers to use a cloth or disposable face covering during transport if they have one.

• Consider leaving the windows down between passenger pick-ups.

• Drivers should cover mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in the trash. If they don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into their elbow, not their hands. Immediately wash their hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or use hand sanitizer as previously described if unable to wash hands. Learn more about coughing and sneezing etiquette.

Worker Rights
AIHA believes that basic protections are worker rights, as well as an essential ingredient of occupational health and safety systems, and that employers must provide a safe and healthful work environment.

What should a Passenger do to protect themselves?

• Passengers in vehicles should follow physical distancing practices.

• Use a cloth or disposable face covering during the trip.

• No handshake greetings.
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- Avoid unnecessary touching of surfaces in the vehicle and carry and use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol.
- If you are symptomatic or feel unwell – avoid using a rideshare or taxi, if possible. Notify the driver if you may be feeling unwell prior to entering the vehicle.
- Use good cough/sneeze etiquette when in the vehicle. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in the trash. If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands. Immediately use hand sanitizer as previously described after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Learn more about coughing and sneezing etiquette.
- Ask the driver to open vehicle vents and/or windows (do not recirculate the air in the vehicle).
- Numerous wellness_questionnaire_examples are available online
- AIHA COVID-19 Resource Center
- American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, Air-conditioning Engineers ASHRAE COVID-19 resource for ventilation
- EPA-Registered Approved Disinfectant List N.
- AIHA’s Indoor Environmental Quality Committee developed these guidance documents about re-opening and cleaning buildings after closures due to COVID-19: Recovering from COVID-19 Building Closures and Workplace Cleaning for COVID-19
- AIHA’s Considerations on the Safe Use of UVC Radiation
- AIHA’s Focus on Construction Health: COVID-19
- AIHA’s Effective and Safe Practices: Guidance for Custodians, Cleaning and Maintenance Staff
- AIHA’s Employers Guide to COVID-19 Cleaning & Disinfection in Non-Healthcare Workplaces
- AIHA’s Reducing Risk of COVID-19 Using Engineering Controls
- AIHA’s PPE for SARS-CoV-2
- AIHA’s Use of Real Time Detection Systems
- AIHA’s Proper Use of Respirators for Healthcare Workers & First Responders
- AIHA’s Workers Rights White Paper

Resources
- CDC’s “What Rideshare, Taxi, Limo, and other Passenger Drivers-for-Hire Need to Know about COVID-19”
- CDC’s Contact Tracing Resources
- CDC’s “What to Do if You Are Sick”
- CDC Health Screening “Should we be screening employees for COVID-19 symptoms?” section of General Business Frequently Asked Questions
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AIHA®

AIHA is the association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) in the workplace and community. Founded in 1939 as the American Industrial Hygiene Association® (AIHA®), we support our members with our expertise, networks, comprehensive education programs and other products and services that help them maintain the highest professional and competency standards. More than half of AIHA's nearly 8,500 members are Certified Industrial Hygienists (CIH), and many hold other professional designations. AIHA serves as a resource for those employed across the public and private sectors, as well as to the communities in which they work. For more information, visit AIHA.org.

About Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Professionals

Occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) professionals (also known as industrial hygienists) practice the science of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating, controlling and confirming workplace conditions that may cause workers’ injury or illness. Through a continuous improvement cycle of planning, doing, checking and acting, OEHS professionals make sure workplaces are healthy and safe.

- Get additional resources at AIHA’s Coronavirus Outbreak Resource Center.
- Find a qualified industrial hygiene and OEHS professionals near you in our Consultants Listing.

Disclaimer

AIHA is not legally responsible and shall be held harmless from all claims, causes of action, and demands, whatsoever, any third party may incur on account of damage, loss or injury resulting from adhering to these guidelines.

These guidance documents were primarily developed for those smaller business that don’t have readily available occupational health and safety resources, and designed to help business owners, employers, employees and consumers implement science-backed procedures for limiting the spread of the coronavirus. They are subject to any local, state, or federal directives, laws, or orders about operating a business and should only be used if they do not conflict with any such orders. These documents are subject to revision and shall be updated accordingly.

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Periodically scan this QR Code to check if any new versions of AIHA's guidance documents have been posted, as well as to find guidance documents for other businesses and industries.
Exhibits for specific areas, items and locations

How to seat passengers in various vehicle types

Using a small passenger car

Using an oversized vehicle, such as a van or SUV with a third-row

Using a large van or bus
Communication

Display posters through the workspace for employees or post in vehicles for general public.

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