

COVID-19 FAQs

5/20/2020

Answers are changing day by day and sometimes hour by hour. Please note the day and time of the answer. This document is updated frequently.

Public Transportation

For passengers

Status as of May 20, 2:00 p.m.

Can I still use public transit?

Yes. Public transportation is a vital link, and sometimes the only means, for Oregonians to access employment, healthcare and other important services including access to groceries and pharmacies. Governor Brown's March 23 Executive Order directs all of us to stay home to the maximum extent possible and only go out when necessary.

The state and federal government intend to continue transit connections while keeping services as safe as possible during this pandemic. Transit providers are taking actions to continue to provide services, including:

- Increased sanitation and disinfecting of vehicle interiors.
- Posting health directives from the [Oregon Health Authority \(OHA\)](#) and Centers for Disease Control ([CDC](#)).
- Implementing passenger spacing protocols.
- **Requiring riders to wear face coverings (refer to your local transit provider for policy details)**
- Providing hand sanitizer for employees and passengers.

What should I consider when deciding to take a bus or train?

Concern regarding public transportation is understandable during this time. If you must travel outside your home, use the same precautions you would for all travel.

Please only take transit if necessary and maintain **3** feet of distance from other passengers and **6 feet of distance from** the operator if you do ride. Many buses and trains are running to transport medical staff, first responders and other essential workers where they need to go. By avoiding unnecessary trips, you're helping give them the space they need to ride safely.

Please refer to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) [Guidance for the General Public](#) when traveling and using public transit.

The CDC [recommends](#) the following:

- ~~Stay home if you're sick.~~
- ~~Avoid close contact. Practice 6 feet social distancing between other riders and transit driver.~~
- ~~Clean your hands often. Wash vigorously with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.~~
- ~~Cover coughs and sneezes.~~

Can we expect public transit service to stay the same during the pandemic?

Transit operators are at the front line during this pandemic. ODOT and local public transit providers are taking local conditions into account as they plan their service. Some providers have reduced services as ridership has declined or staff has had to stay home. Please [access local online resources or your provider's customer service line](#) to learn if there are changes to your bus. For the [Cascades train](#) route, you can call 1-800-USA-RAIL.

Amtrak

Status as of Thursday, March 19, 12:30 p.m.

Beginning Saturday, March 21, Amtrak Cascades passenger rail service is reduced in Oregon and Washington. The service reduction is scheduled to last until April 4 but may be extended.

Amtrak is using deep-cleaning methods to help protect against the virus and because ridership has dipped, officials are finding that there is plenty of room on the trains to follow the social distancing guidelines. Amtrak is also offering flexibility around fees. See [Amtrak.com](#) for details or call 1-800-USA-RAIL.

Other

Are public meetings cancelled?

Updated March 24, 2020, 12 p.m.

Yes. We are moving many of our open houses and public comment meetings to our on-line open house section of the ODOT webpage.

Special Event Permits

Status as of Thursday, March 19, 12:30 p.m.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has stopped issuing special event permits for events to be held on the state highway system prior to April 14 that would attract 25 or more people. Current permits for this time period are being canceled and event organizers notified. Permits may be issued for events after April 14th, however organizers should be aware that the COVID-19 situation is evolving quickly and may require extending the ban on events.

This decision was made to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the health of Oregonians. We look forward to working with our communities to hold these events when the crisis is over.

Employment Impacts

Will employee work schedules change?

Status as of Thursday, March 19, 12:30 p.m.

Managers have been directed to offer all staff, especially high risk individuals (people over 60 years old and with pre-existing medical conditions), the option of working from home if appropriate. Staff whose duties preclude working from home or teleworking are directed to employ social distancing (no in-person meetings with more than 10 individuals, maintaining personal distance, etc.) and personal health protection measures

(e.g. staying home if feeling sick, washing hands frequently, covering coughs, etc.).

Should in-person meetings be held as scheduled?

Status as of Thursday, March 19, 12:30 p.m.

Skype and conference calls should be used for meetings as much as possible. If you need help setting up a Skype meeting or getting a conference call line, contact your administrative support or consult links on this page: <http://transnet.odot.state.or.us/odot/home/Pages/COVID19.aspx>.

Staff should hold only absolutely essential meetings in person, and limit attendees depending on the size of the room. Give each person about six feet of space.

Can I work from home?

Status as of Thursday, March 19, 12:30 p.m.

Discuss this with your supervisor. If appropriate, accommodations will be made.