

Frequently Asked Questions for Transit Providers

Updated January 5, 2021

What happens if a CDL expires before an operator can renew it due to reduced capacity at DMV?

The DMV has an agreement with law enforcement for a rolling citation moratorium for credentials expiring between November 1, 2020, and April 30, 2021 when the credential has been expired for fewer than three months.

Licenses will continue to expire on the dates that are marked on the physical license, and DMV's electronic records will continue to show these same dates. The citation moratorium is akin to a grace period. License holders still need to renew as soon as possible, because the agreement is limited to licenses that have expired within the past three months.

A copy of the agreement is available at this link:

https://www.oregon.gov/odot/DMV/docs/Moratorium_Letter_22Dec2020.pdf

What are the guidelines for transit agencies operating during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) publishes information about COVID-19, including agency-specific guidelines. The OHA website's COVID-19 webpage is available at this link:

<https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>.

[OHA guidance for transit agencies is available at this link:](https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/Ie2355.pdf)

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/Ie2355.pdf>.

This guidance provides links to:

- Mask, Face Coverings, and Face Shields
- General Guidance for Employers and Organizations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth in community settings. This is an additional public health measure that can help to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in addition to (not instead of) social distancing, frequent hand cleaning, and other everyday preventive actions. A cloth face covering is not intended to protect the wearer, but may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others. This is especially important in the event that someone is infected but does not have symptoms. A cloth face covering should be worn whenever people must go into public settings (grocery stores, for example).

The CDC's website includes more information about selecting masks, how to wear masks, storing and washing masks, making masks, and considerations for wearing masks. You can find

information at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

How might a transit agency approach enforcing the face covering requirement for passengers?

Each transit agency should approach enforcement of this requirement in the manner that works best for the agency and the community it serves. Some options for transit providers to consider when developing policies and procedures are listed below. Providers are encouraged to research and consider other best practices as response to the pandemic continues.

Although transit agencies are partners in maintaining public health, drivers may not be qualified to accurately assess and diagnose the health condition of passengers. For this reason, passengers may generally be permitted to refrain from wearing a covering if they express any reasonable justification for being unable to do. Drivers should maintain a friendly, respectful, and courteous demeanor in order to create an environment to encourage the maximum number of passengers adhering to the face covering requirement.

Drivers and agency staff are discouraged from engaging in any of the following:

- Forcibly preventing a passenger from boarding who refuses to wear a face covering
- Forcibly removing a passenger from a bus who removes their face covering while on board
- Assisting passengers with putting on a face covering
- Allowing or participating in harassment, intimidation, or discrimination of any passenger who is unable to wear a face covering or has legitimate reasons for refusal
- Performing temperature checks on passengers as a condition to board

Should transit providers alter services as a result of COVID-19?

Concern regarding public transportation is understandable. Providers can and should respond to changes in local conditions and needs related to stay-at-home guidelines, changes at large employment centers, staff reductions due to illness, or other challenges. Such conditions may make it difficult or impossible for a provider to continue offering service at usual levels or frequency.

In declared emergencies, transit providers should work with local emergency management officials to address community needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, both the state of Oregon and the federal government have declared emergencies.

What should we be telling our passengers?

OHA guidance is available at this link:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2355.pdf>.

The guidance requires the following:

- Transit providers must post clear signs—in more than one language at transit stops/centers—listing COVID-19 symptoms
- Providers should ask riders with symptoms to stay home and provide them with appropriate contact information if they need assistance
- If someone with symptoms must travel, they should be encouraged to use an alternate to transit, if available

CDC guidance is available at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

The CDC recommends the following:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Avoid close contact and practice social distancing between riders and the 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

Are transit providers required to transport visibly sick riders?

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has provided guidance (under the civil rights section of its FAQ document) to offer options for transporting visibly sick riders who represent a direct threat to the health or safety of others. The guidance is available at this link:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19#COVID-19Civil>

Transit agencies should consult with local public health officials, city or county managers, and local legal counsel before determining whether a transit rider should be denied access in the interest of public health. These decisions should be made at a policy level and not left up to vehicle operator discretion.

What resources are available to transit providers in continuing operations for passengers who have no other travel options?

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which provides new FTA Section 5307 and 5311 funding to assist providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, was signed into law on Friday, March 27, 2020. The ODOT Public Transportation Division's communication on distribution of these funds is available at this link:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/ORDOT-284a244>

Also, with the federal disaster declaration, local governments are eligible for relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and can pass such resources on to public

transportation agencies if they are assisting with emergency functions. Local transportation agencies who wish to apply for FEMA funding should check with their county emergency management office about the application process.

Can FTA Section 5310 and 5311 funds be used to provide meal delivery?

Yes, 5310 and 5311-funded vehicles can be used to provide meal delivery.

Subrecipients can pay for operating meal delivery services through the following:

- 5311: This can be done with the CARES funding (100%) match rate and the Emergency Relief enhanced match rate (100%)
- 5310: This can be done with the regular match rate. The enhanced match rates are not available for 5310.

Note: The period of eligibility for using 5311 funds for operating meal delivery has been extended until January 20, 2022.

Has the FTA waived any federal requirements?

Transit agencies responding to the COVID-19 pandemic may use the Emergency Relief Docket to request a waiver from FTA administrative and regulatory requirements, as well as the provisions of any non-statutory FTA requirements. The Emergency Relief Docket is available at this link: <http://www.regulations.gov>

Some federal requirements include specific provisions related to emergencies, and therefore, no FTA waiver is necessary.

The FTA's COVID-19 FAQ page provides additional details and contact information regarding waiver requests. It is available at this link: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Can funding from the Special Transportation Fund (STF) be used to support transportation services other than public transportation services?

Per Oregon Administrative Rules and Oregon Revised Statutes, STF funds are available for financing and improving transportation programs and services for seniors and people with disabilities and may be used for the following purposes:

- (a) Maintenance of existing transportation programs and services for seniors and people with disabilities;
- (b) Expansion of such programs and services;
- (c) Creation of new programs and services; and
- (d) Planning for, and development of, access to transportation for seniors and people with disabilities who are not currently served by transportation programs and services.

The designated uses of STF funds are determined by local priority, through a local STF Advisory Committee process. If an STF Agency and Advisory Committee determine that local citizens, particularly seniors and individuals with disabilities, are not able to access regular services, the local agency can determine that providing meals or pharmaceutical delivery services are considered appropriate uses of these funds and would benefit those vulnerable populations. The same process could apply to cleaning and disinfecting measures, or transporting personnel for medical or emergency purposes.

Can STF funds from one STF Agency be used to fund services in an adjacent STF Agency's area of responsibility?

Yes. Access to essential services is not limited by jurisdictional boundaries, and frequently involves travel to another community outside the general area of an STF Agency. Multiple STF agencies should work cooperatively with providers, individuals, and other agencies to more effectively apply funding and other resources to meet common transportation needs of vulnerable populations (e.g., people unable to drive, people with disabilities, and older adults). Coordination actions may reduce duplication of service, reduce cost, increase service levels, or make services more widely available in a community.

Can funding from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) be used to maintain existing public transportation services?

Yes.

Can funding from the Statewide Transportation fund (STIF) be used to support transportation services other than public transportation services?

No. STIF statute limits STIF use to financing investments and improvements in public transportation services, except for light rail capital.

https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Planning/Documents/Oregon_Statewide_Transportation_Strategy.pdf

Where else can transit providers find more information or examples?

Contact your ODOT regional transit coordinator or reach out to partner transit agencies. ODOT PTD will continue to update its COVID-19 webpage. It has links to relevant information and examples from state or national agencies. It is available at this link:

<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/RPTD/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx> .

The FTA also has resources available at this link: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/coronavirus>

We are all in this together and need to continue supporting each other.