



New rules requiring passengers to wear a face covering on their journey came into force on public transport across England from Monday 15 June 2020.

Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are not included in the regulations but it is recommended face coverings should be used by drivers and passengers. Several companies are making face coverings mandatory for drivers and passengers to coincide with the public transport regulations.

While the regulations exclude taxi and private hire vehicles, updated guidance does include references: '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)' advises that taxi and private hire passengers 'should' wear face coverings, and that drivers 'may be entitled to refuse' to carry passengers without one; while operator guidance: '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer transport guidance for operators](#)' lists taxi and private hire vehicles as excluded from the regulations but states that 'a taxi driver may refuse to accept passengers if they are not wearing a face covering'.

By mandating the use of face coverings government is asking passengers to play their part in helping to protect each other as the numbers of people travelling gradually start to rise across the country, following the careful easing of restrictions when it's safe to do so.

Under the changes, operators will be able to stop passengers who refuse to follow the rules from travelling and direct them to leave services. Exemptions for the use of face coverings will apply to those with certain health conditions, disabled people and children under the age of 11.

The regulations came into force on Monday 15th June and made wearing face coverings mandatory on buses, coaches, trams, ferries, aircraft and trains. **Taxi drivers and operators are entitled to refuse journeys if customers refuse to wear face masks.**

The changes from 15 June coincided with the easing of certain lockdown measures, including the reopening of non-essential retail stores. While social distancing and hand washing remain by far the most important disease prevention measures, when necessary to use public transport, people may be more likely to be in enclosed spaces for longer periods of time where there is a greater risk of the spread of the virus and social distancing is likely to be difficult to follow consistently.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has advised that using face coverings as a precautionary measure in this setting can provide some additional protection to fellow passengers and can help people to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus if they have it, but are not showing symptoms.

Face coverings are not the same as face masks. It is important that people do not use medical grade PPE masks to ensure these remain available for frontline staff.

Last month, the government set out advice for people on [how to make their own face coverings](#) easily at home, using scarves or other textile items.

In line with Government rules, face coverings must be worn for the full duration of journeys on the public transport network. Your face covering must cover both your mouth and nose. Customers using taxis and private hire vehicles should also use a face covering for the duration of all journeys. The latest scientific advice says that face coverings can help reduce the chance of infecting others.

A small number of customers are not required by law to wear face coverings. People who do not need to wear a covering are listed below.

Face coverings exemptions

The following are EXEMPT from the requirement to wear a face covering on public transport services:

- Children under the age of 11
- Employees of, or persons providing agreed services to TfL
- Police constables (including British Transport Police) officers acting in the course of their duty
- Members or employees of the emergency services responding to an emergency

A person will have a reasonable excuse and will not be required to wear a face covering in the following circumstances:

- Where a person cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability (within the meaning of section 6 of the Equality Act 2010), or without severe distress
- Where a person is providing a lip-reading service to a person they are travelling with
- Where a person removes their face covering to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to themselves or others
- Where a person is travelling to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and does not have a face covering with them
- If it is reasonably necessary for a person to eat and drink, and the person removes their face covering to eat or drink
- Where a person is required to remove the face covering by a police constable (including a British Transport Police officer) or another authorised person.