

## National Capital Region

### Commute with Confidence: COVID-19 Commuting Tips & Resources

Commuter Connections is here to help you *Commute with Confidence* as the National Capital region begins to methodically re-open businesses. Below are tips on how to keep yourself safe during your commute, as well as information on what local transportation providers are doing to make shared commuting as safe as possible.

#### Local Re-Opening Policies

The District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia each have separate re-opening plans and policies. The links below contain the most up-to-date status for each:

- [District of Columbia Phased Reopening](#)
- [Maryland Roadmap to Recovery](#)
- [Forward Virginia](#)

#### CDC Transportation Safety Guidelines

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains a helpful [webpage](#) full of recommendations and guidance for safely utilizing public transit, ridesharing and taxis, micromobility devices, and personal vehicles. Below are some tips and recommendations for getting ready to commute back to the office. If you are not feeling well or have symptoms of illness, please stay home and avoid taking public transit, driving or riding in a carpool or vanpool, or going in to the office.

- Avoid commuting altogether by **teleworking**. This is the most preferred commute mode to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Commuter Connections provides [telework resources](#) to help employees and employers launch, improve, or sustain a successful telework program.
- When participating in a **carpool, vanpool, or taxi/ridehailing**, always wear a facemask. Limit the number of passengers to one passenger per row; sit diagonally from other passengers in the vehicle. Wash your hands per CDC guidelines immediately following your trip. To practice good hygiene, consider sharing the ride with individuals who you know and trust and/or routinely encounter, such as family or coworkers. The Commuter Connections ridematching system is now equipped with employer-based ridematching so you can more easily find coworkers who would like to safely share their ride.
- Be sure to follow guidelines enforced by transit operators when taking **public transit**. A summary of these guidelines can be found in the section below. Regardless of provider, do your best to distance yourself from others, wear a mask or face covering, avoid touching bus or train handles/poles (it may even be worthwhile to wear disposable gloves), don't eat or drink while riding, avoid full railcars/buses, and avoid touching your phone while riding.
- When **bicycling or walking**, try to stay six feet away from others. Wear a breathable mask and avoid touching crosswalk signals with your hands (or wear gloves). If using a bikeshare or scooter, carry sanitizer to wipe down all points of contact before riding. Interested in biking but don't have a bicycle, or are you looking to donate a bicycle? If so, checkout [BikeMatchDC](#) and [BikeMatchMoCo](#) for more information on how to participate in these programs.
- If you must **drive alone** to limit potential exposure to the coronavirus, avoid [distracted driving](#) and excessive speeding to maintain safety on the roads – being a safe driver is just as important as stopping the spread of COVID-19! When possible, adjust your travel outside of peak commute hours. In some corridors, [Flextime Rewards](#) offers a cash incentive in

exchange for reducing congestion in the region. If your employer offers alternative work schedules such as staggered work hours or compressed work weeks, take advantage of them!

### **Public Transit Pandemic Responses**

Note: Below are Local Transit Responses to COVID-19 which are subject to change. Check with the transit provider for updates.

City of Alexandria (DASH)

<https://www.dashbus.com/covidmods>

- Face coverings are required. Read-door boarding and fare elimination are in effect. Several routes have been modified as of September 15, 2020. Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures are being implemented, including weekly fogging.

Arlington County (ART)

<https://www.arlingtontransit.com/about/covid-19-service-changes-and-information/>

- Arlington Transit requires passengers to wear face masks or coverings while using ART and encourages social distancing on all buses and at bus stops. A federal mask mandate went into effect on February 2, 2021, requiring all travelers on airplanes and public transportation to wear face masks to curb the spread of COVID-19. ART and STAR services will be monitored daily and may be subject to change in response to the latest conditions.

DC Circulator

<https://www.dccirculator.com/covid-19-update/>

- The DC Circulator requires all passengers to wear a face covering while aboard buses. Fares are suspended on all routes through the end of Mayor Bowser's declared public health emergency. Passengers are asked to board from the rear doors, unless access to the ramp or "kneeling" steps are required. Enhanced cleaning protocols are in place.

Fairfax County Connector

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/>

- The Fairfax Connector has returned to full service as of August 29, 2020. Face coverings are required.

City of Fairfax Cue Bus

<https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/public-works/transportation-division/cue-covid-19-response>

- CUE is operating at a regular schedule. Cleaning cycles have been increased on buses with a focus on disinfecting the bus interiors and critical touch points such as door handles, handrails, and other surfaces. CUE is also providing disinfectant wipes for passengers. Masks are required for passengers. Rear door boarding and exiting is in effect. This does not apply to customers who need to use a wheelchair ramp. Fares have been waived until further notice.

Loudoun County Transit

<https://www.loudoun.gov/5371/Transit-Customer-Information-Regarding-C>

- Face coverings are required on Loudoun County buses and in waiting areas, until further notice. Loudoun County Transit will load passengers through the rear door, when possible, to meet physical distancing protocols. In response to the Governor's executive order and to help with physical

distancing on our buses, seating capacity is currently reduced to 50%. Loudoun County will continue to monitor ridership regularly. More trips and routes will be added as demand increases. Fare collection resumed on all Loudoun County buses on May 3, 2021..

#### Frederick County TransIT

<https://frederickcountymd.gov/105/TransIT>

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- TransIT is operating at full service. Fares are waived until further notice. Passengers and operators are required to wear face coverings; masks are not provided to passengers. Enhanced sanitation procedures have been implemented.

#### Montgomery County Ride On

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/essential-plan.html>

- All Ride On-branded bus routes and Ride On Extra routes are in service on a reduced basis. As of May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, several changes to routes took effect. Passengers and operators are required to wear face coverings. Rear door boarding is in effect, but passengers can board through the front door if a ramp is needed to accommodate a disability or stroller. Bus interiors continue to be cleaned with hospital-grade anti-viral disinfectant. Bus filter and ventilation system are also treated each night with a disinfectant. Ride On Flex is expected to resume service on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in Glenmont/Wheaton and Rockville zones.

#### MTA Commuter Bus & MARC Commuter Rail

<https://www.mta.maryland.gov/coronavirus>

- MDOT MTA continues to keep passengers safe by implementing recommended CDC protocols and evaluating new technologies from ultraviolet disinfectant equipment to the development of germ-resistant treatments to air ionizers. We've implemented enhanced shield protection for operators and are testing enhanced passenger seat partitions. In addition, we remind our riders at every to maintain social distancing when possible and to wear masks, which have been shown to offer the most effective protection of all until a majority of the population has been immunized.
- To reduce the spread of Covid-19 and to protect our customers and team members, all riders using public transit are required to wear face coverings
- To adjust service to meet demand, MDOT MTA has implemented temporary, strategic service reductions to MARC Train and Commuter Bus while continuing to operate core Local Bus on normal schedules. The MARC Train and Commuter Bus temporary changes include reducing service frequency while retaining the overall span of service on each route, as is implemented on holiday and snow schedules.
- MARC Train is operating on the published R schedules with limited supplemental service for the Penn and Brunswick Lines. MARC trains undergo daily disinfecting including high passenger touchpoint areas. Each train has at least one restroom with a sink and soap and water so that passengers can wash their hands.

#### Prince George's County TheBus

<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/1120/County-TheBus>

- TheBus is operating Monday-Saturday, 6:00 am to 6:30 pm. Passengers and operators are required to wear face coverings; masks are available for customers. Vehicles are cleaned

daily.

#### PRTC OmniRide

<https://omniride.com/>

- Rear door entry is asked of riders when the bus has two doors. Operators and passengers must wear face coverings; masks are not provided to riders. OmniRide's Local and Metro

Express services will operate fare free. Expanded service for Express Routes launched on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

#### VRE Commuter Train

Video: [VRE's Spray Disinfection Process and What a Ride Currently Looks Like](#)

Interactive Tour: [A Look at VRE Platform Social Distancing](#)

Blog: [VRE's Coronavirus Health & Safety Guidance](#)

- VRE has returned to its full-service schedule. All 32 daily trains are running. The Amtrak Step-Up program, however, remains suspended. A face mask is required while onboard VRE trains through September 13, 2021, per a directive from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration. VRE has relaxed capacity limits on platforms and railcars. This means social distancing is no longer required but can still be observed while ridership is low. The change is consistent with the latest U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and those of other state and federal agencies.

#### WMATA Metrobus & Metrorail

<https://www.wmata.com/covid19>

- WMATA Metrorail has largely been restored to normal operating conditions as of September 2020. All stations are open.
- As of August 23, 2020, WMATA Metrobus operating services have been improved from spring and summer service cuts.
- Face coverings are required on all WMATA transit. WMATA is unable to guarantee that riders will be able to maintain social distance standards at all times during their trip. Enhanced sanitation procedures are in effect. View up-to-date operating details on the [WMATA Operating Service webpage](#). View [Metro's Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan](#) for additional information COVID-19 service recovery information.

#### Additional Commuter Connections Resources

- The free [Guaranteed Ride Home \(GRH\)](#) program is available to workers in need of an emergency ride home. Masks or face coverings are recommended when taking a GRH trip.
- Commuter Connections provides free [Ridematching](#) services for commuters looking for formal carpool partners. Sharing the ride with a familiar individual(s), such as a family member or coworker is recommended during the pandemic. You are invited to adjust your match settings to only match with coworkers. This feature will be available in June 2020.
- The **'Pool Rewards** program rewards commuters for sharing the ride. Earn up to \$130 for 2+ person carpools or receive a \$200 monthly subsidy for vanpools.
- If you choose to drive alone, consider signing-up for the [Flextime Rewards](#) program and earn \$8 per trip avoided during the peak commuting times.
- Download the [CarpoolNow](#) app for on-demand carpooling services. Drivers can earn \$10 per trip (daily). Remember to practice good carpool hygiene when ridesharing.
- [IncenTrip](#) is available to help you plan routes and contains updated transit services as a

result of COVID-19 disruptions. Earn points for your trips, which can be redeemed for cash incentives.

- If you are **teleworking**, check out our [tips](#) (click "Commuters" and then "Teleworking") for being effective while working from home.

### **Commuter Connections Resources for Employers**

- Commuter Connections is available to help your worksite build or enhance a [telework program](#), create alternative work schedules such as staggered work hours and compressed workweeks, and/or develop a commuter benefits program. [Contact us](#) if you are interested in our free services or if you would like free [telework assistance](#)! Other Employer Commute Resources
- The Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) has released a report titled [Supporting Commuters Returning to Worksites during COVID-19](#). It features valuable information on how to assist employees with their commutes.