

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>

- DASH will implement a modified weekday schedule effective Tuesday, September 15. For more information, [click here](#). DASH has switched to rear-door boarding, eliminated fares, and closed certain seats to promote physical distancing between operators and passengers. Face coverings are required on all DASH buses. DASH has implemented enhanced daily vehicle and facility cleanings to focus on critical touchpoints like handrails, fareboxes, and doors. Disinfection procedures and materials indicated to be effective against COVID-19 have been implemented.

Arlington County (ART)

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

- To help slow the spread of the coronavirus, ART is operating reduced bus service, implementing rear-boarding, and suspending fares. Arlington Transit encourages social distancing on all buses and asks that riders use ART for essential travel only. All riders must wear masks. Vehicle capacity is limited. All buses are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized at the end of each night by using approved disinfectant to wipe down all stanchions, hand rails, passenger seats, windows, and all components in the driver's area.

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. Service changes are in effect; the National Mall route is suspended. Enhanced cleaning protocols are in place.

Fairfax County Connector

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

- The Fairfax Connector has returned to full service and has launched new and enhanced bus routes as of August 29. [Click here](#) to learn more. Fares are waived until further notice. Riders are required to board and exit using the rear doors. This does not apply to customers who need to use a wheelchair ramp. Passengers are required to wear non-medical face coverings or cloth masks. Fairfax Connector has increased vehicle cleaning cycles with a special focus on bus interiors and critical touchpoints such as door handles, handrails and other surfaces. These cleanings will incorporate disinfection procedures indicated to be effective against COVID-19.

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

- Current status for Local Fixed Route, Metro Connection and Commuter Bus service is available at <https://www.loudoun.gov/buschanges>. Fares have resumed as of September 1, 2020. Passenger capacity is limited on all buses. Face coverings are required for bus operators and passengers. All buses are cleaned extensively and sanitized on a daily basis. Bus operators regularly clean all high touch points between trips.

Frederick County Transit

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

- TransIT is operating at full service. Fares are waived while reduced service is in effect. Passengers and operators are required to wear face coverings; masks are not provided to passengers. Rear door boarding is in effect. Enhanced sanitation procedures have been implemented.

Montgomery County Ride On

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

- Ride On is operating all 79 routes, except the Flex microtransit service, but on reduced frequencies due to social distancing requirements. Fares are waived temporarily. Passengers and operators are required to wear face coverings; masks are provided by Ride On. 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.

MTA Commuter Bus & MARC Commuter Rail

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

- Face coverings are required for all passengers on Maryland buses and trains. MTA has proactively initiated an enhanced daily wipe-down of bus, rail, and paratransit vehicles to include disinfecting areas with high passenger touchpoints.
- As of June 8th, Commuter Bus will return to operating on the published "S" schedule for all routes, except Route 201.
- Beginning July 13th, MARC Train will return to full service for the Penn, Camden, and Brunswick Lines.

Prince George's County TheBus

<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/1122/Maps-Schedules>

- TheBus is operating at reduced service. Fares are waived while reduced service is in effect. Passengers and operators are required to wear face coverings; masks are not provided by TheBus. Rear door boarding is in effect. Vehicle capacity is limited to 10 passengers.

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 22nd, 2020.

VRE Commuter Train

<https://www.vre.org/about/blog/coronavirus-health-safety-guidance-on-vre/>

- VRE is operating on an “S” schedule, supplemented with Train 300 (Departs Spotsylvania at 4:54 am) for the northbound commute and Train 307 (Departs Union Station at 4:10 pm) for the southbound commute. When cleaning/sanitizing, crews place emphasis on areas people touch (e.g. seats, handholds, etc.), and restrooms are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Passenger cars are wiped down twice daily using disinfectant(s). Face coverings are required for passengers. Dispensers of hand sanitizer are being installed on trains and at the stations. To ensure physical distancing of passengers, new graphics will guide riders to window seats in every other row, and upper level seating will not be available in the cab car. Graphics to support social distancing are being installed on station platforms.

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. Rear door boarding and fares are waived.
- 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.
- [incentTrip](#) 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**, 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.

Micromobility Responses to COVID-19

Bird Scooters

<https://www.bird.co/blog/letter-to-our-riders-covid-19/>

- Bird has increased the frequency that mobility device are cleaned and sanitized. Wear gloves and a face covering when riding Bird mobility devices to help limit potential exposure to germs.

Capital Bikeshare

<https://www.capitalbikeshare.com/blog/covid19>

- High contact surfaces on bikes will be disinfected each time they arrive in the depot. High contact surfaces on vans used to transport vehicles will also be disinfected at the start of each shift.

Lime Scooter

- Lime has enhanced their cleaning methods and increased the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting scooters. All parts of the scooter that are touched by people are cleaned. [Lime Aid](#) has been launched to provide free rides to health care workers and other essential personnel.

Lyft Bikes & Scooters

- Lyft is frequently disinfecting high-contact surfaces on bikes and scooters. Wear gloves and a face covering when riding Lyft mobility devices to limit help limit potential exposure to germs.