

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/masks>

- Face coverings are required, and fares have been eliminated. Bus routes have been redrawn since September 2021. 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/coronavirus/>

- The DC Circulator requires all passengers to wear a face-covering while aboard. Fares are still currently suspended on all routes. Passengers are asked to board from the rear doors unless access to the ramp or “kneeling” steps is 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. Masks are required for passengers. 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. Cleaning crews are wiping down the interiors of each bus with antiseptic cleaners each day. Bus operators are wiping down frequently touched surfaces on the bus (i.e. handholds, farebox, seat handholds, etc.) before starting their run and in-between trips. This cleaning process will remain in place, in addition to thorough twice weekly bus cleanings, until further notice. Fare collection resumed on all Loudoun County buses on May 3, 2021.

Frederick County TransIT

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

- 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/index.html>

- All Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Ride On, Ride On extRa, Ride On Flex and Flash bus routes are currently in service. Passengers are required to wear face coverings, and all MCDOT buses have a supply of face coverings for those who cannot provide their own. Bus interiors, filters and ventilation systems continue to be cleaned with hospital-grade anti-viral disinfectant. Bus service remains free for all riders until at least July 2, 2022.

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.

Prince George's County TheBus

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

- TheBus is operating Monday-Saturday, 6:00 am to 6:30 pm; fares are \$1 each way and can be paid for with exact change or your SmarTrip card (seniors, passengers with disabilities, youth ages 5-18, and Medicare card holders ride for free). 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 Expanded service for Express Routes launched on June 22nd, 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. A face mask is required while onboard VRE as per a directive from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration. VRE has relaxed capacity limits on platforms and railcars. 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 guidelines and those of other state and federal agencies.

WMATA Metrobus & Metrorail

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

- Metro continues to actively respond to the Covid-19 public health emergency, taking all appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of our frontline colleagues, our customers, and the community at large.
- Face masks are still required by federal law on trains, buses and in stations.
- Fresh air is circulated into trains and buses every three minutes.
- Hand Sanitizing Stations - Find hand sanitizing stations in every Metro station.
- Utilize Touchless Payment - Pay using your smartphone wherever SmarTrip® is accepted.

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.