

Guidance for Drivers and Operators – COVID-19

Carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment – drivers

As a self-employed driver of a vehicle you must conduct a risk assessment to understand the risks and what you can do about them. You should think about how you work and ways you can protect yourself and your passengers. For more guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles>

As a driver, you do not have to write anything down about your risk assessment.

As part of the risk assessment you undertake, you may decide you want to install a safety screen behind the front row seats to separate yourself from the passengers in the rear of the vehicle. The decision on whether to use a screen rests with you and the local licensing authority. If you decide to fit one, guidance on how to choose and fit a screen safely in a vehicle is available.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safety-screens-for-taxis-and-phvs>

NHS COVID-19 app

To help control the spread of COVID-19, drivers should download and use the NHS COVID-19 app <https://covid19.nhs.uk/>

Picking up passengers

Before a passenger enters your vehicle, you should ask if they have:

- Coronavirus symptoms – a fever, new cough or loss of smell or taste
- Had a positive coronavirus test in the last 10 days

You should refuse service if they have.

You should wash or sanitise your hands if you come into contact with a passenger or their luggage. You should do this before and after contact.

You must continue to provide support to disabled passengers to safely enter and exit your vehicle. You must continue to assist disabled passengers with their luggage and mobility equipment.

Show passengers your face while socially distancing so that they can identify you as their driver.

To help control the spread of the virus, you should remind passengers of the rules on social distancing in place, but you do not have to refuse to carry them.

In the vehicle

Passengers must wear a face covering in a taxi or PHV, unless they are exempt. You can refuse to take a passenger if they are not wearing a face covering and they are not exempt. Passengers do not have to provide proof that they are exempt.

You do not have to wear a face covering, but we recommend that you do if it does not affect your ability to drive safely. Your licensing authority or operator may ask you to wear a face covering. You should follow their guidance if it does not affect your ability to drive safely.

You may need to remove your face covering in order to communicate with passengers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

You should ask passengers to sit as far from you as possible or put a mark where you would like them to sit. Where possible they should not sit in the front of the vehicle.

Open windows when carrying passengers and/or use the car's vents to bring in fresh air from outside. You should not use the recirculated air option for the car's ventilation system when carrying passengers.

End of journey – leaving the vehicle

Take contactless payment if you can.

If not, you should wash your hands with soap and water or sanitiser after handling money.

You should remind passengers to wash or sanitise their hands after the journey.

Preparing your vehicle for the next passenger

COVID is carried in the air by tiny droplets. Larger droplets can land on surfaces they touch. Smaller droplets (called aerosols), can stay in the air for at least 5 minutes and often much longer if there is no ventilation.

Between every journey you should:

- clean those parts of your vehicle that you or passengers may have touched, for example, door handles, payment devices, protective screens, buttons, seats
- open doors / windows to ventilate the car for 5 minutes
- wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser

If you have coronavirus symptoms or have been told to self-isolate

You should not work if you have coronavirus symptoms or you have been told to self-isolate. If you have coronavirus symptoms you should get a test as soon as possible. You should stay at home until you get the result.

Financial help for drivers

If you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, you may be entitled to a payment of £500 from your local council under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

Self-employed drivers may also be eligible for:

- the self-employed income support scheme <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>
- the coronavirus business interruption loan scheme <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme>
- a coronavirus bounce back loan <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-coronavirus-bounce-back-loan>

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable and have received a formal shielding notification, you are entitled to either Statutory Sick Pay or Employment Support Allowance.

Read more about coronavirus (COVID-19): what to do if you are self-employed and getting less work or no work <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-what-to-do-if-youre-self-employed-and-getting-less-work-or-no-work>

PHV operators and taxi intermediaries

Carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment – operators and intermediaries

PHV operators and taxi intermediaries that are employers must carry out a risk assessment in line with government guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators#risk-assessment>

If you have fewer than 5 employees including non-drivers (dispatchers, booking agents etc.), you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment.

Providing health information to drivers and passengers

You should provide health information to drivers and passengers through your smartphone apps, text message and displaying posters within operating centres. You should also:

- encourage the drivers you work with to read the drivers guidance
- display posters to remind drivers and passengers of hygiene good practice
- share messages to encourage drivers and passengers to download and use the NHS COVID-19 app
- remind passengers of social distancing rules when they make a booking
- make clear to passengers that unless they are exempt, they must wear a face covering at all times when in the vehicle
- remind passengers to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before entering the vehicle

Drivers do not have to wear a face covering, but we recommend that they do if it does not affect their ability to drive safely.

Ride-sharing or pooled ride services should not be provided online or at taxi ranks.

Financial help for PHV operators and taxi intermediaries

Businesses and self-employed drivers may be eligible for:

- the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme
- a coronavirus Bounce Back loan

Find out what financial support schemes you may be eligible for <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>