

Memorandum



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

DATE: May 28, 2020

TO: Agency Presidents

FROM: Patrick T. Warren, Chief Safety Officer

RE: Hygiene, Social Distancing and the Wearing of Personal Protective Equipment to Prevent COVID-19

Purpose: Establish protocols for social distancing and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including facial coverings to protect MTA employees and customers from COVID-19.

Scope: This protocol applies to all MTA staff and agencies.

Executive Order 202.16

For all essential businesses or entities, any employees who are present in the workplace shall be provided and shall wear face coverings when in direct contact with customers or members of the public. Businesses must provide, at their expense, such face coverings for their employees. This provision may be enforced by local governments or local law enforcement as if it were an order pursuant to section 12 or 12-b of the Public Health Law. This requirement shall be effective Wednesday, April 15 at 8 p.m.

Executive Order 202.17

Effective at 8 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2020 any individual who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering shall be required to cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance.

Executive Order 202.18

"Any person utilizing public or private transportation carriers or other for-hire vehicles, who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering, shall wear a mask or face covering over the nose and mouth during any such trip; any person who is operating such public or private transport, shall likewise wear a face covering or mask which covers the nose and mouth while there are any passengers in such vehicle. This directive shall take effect in the same manner as Executive Order 202.17, at 8 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2020."

Definitions:

- **Social Distance.** A distance between individuals where the risk of droplets of saliva or mucus being transmitted from one individual to another is negligible.
 - The Center for Disease Control (CDC), as of the publication of this protocol, has set the social distance for the prevention of transmitting COVID-19 at 6 feet.
- **Effective and Appropriate Facial Coverings.**
 - Facial coverings are considered adequate if they cover an individual's nose and mouth and prevent the transmission of droplets onto a surface or onto another individual within the MTA transportation system.
 - Face coverings must not be offensive in terms of inappropriate language or images¹ printed upon them.
- **Types of Effective Facial Coverings for purposes of social distancing** can include, but are not limited to:
 - Cloth mask or scarf (e.g. Homemade, hand sewn, bandana, gaiter)
 - Surgical Mask (cloth or disposable/paper)
 - N95/KN95-type Respirator
 - Face Shield (must be worn with a mask)
- **Types of Effective Facial Coverings for functions that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) specifies as requiring particulate filtering:**
 - OSHA requires specialized masks with respirators to protect individuals who are performing tasks with fine particulates and/or fumes that may be toxic. Speak with agency safety staff and/or visit the OSHA website for specific information regarding required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **MTA Customer-Facing Employee.** A customer-facing employee is any employee that routinely encounters the public as a part of their duties. (e.g., conductor, station agent, cleaner)

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)" website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) for information on cloth face covers and other types of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as instructions on use and cleaning.
- See MTA "Safety Notice: COVID-19 Response – Proper Voluntary use of Masks" for the wear and cleaning of masks. (<https://new.mta.info/covid-19/employees/>)
-- Reminder that facial coverings must be cleaned daily to provide adequate protection.

¹ Inappropriate language or images would include words or images that denigrate the Equal Opportunity protected classes of religion, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual identity and/or are pornographic in nature.

Requirements:

- Hygiene. The CDC has established standards for hygiene that support preventing the contractions of COVID-19.
 - Good Hygiene practices:
 - Wash hands with soap for a period of at least 20 seconds or apply 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer to your hands following contact with public surfaces (e.g., doors and door handles, tables, chairs, electronic pay systems, public transportation, etc.)
 - Cover nose and mouth with arm when coughing or sneezing.
 - Stay home when you are ill.
 - Keep unwashed hands away from face.
 - Wear a facial covering which effectively covers your nose and mouth when with the public anytime social distances cannot be maintained.
 - MTA Departments and Agencies will make available to all employees hand washing stations or hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizing equipment shall be present in common workspaces to include entrances to facilities, each floor of office buildings, kitchen/pantries, and yards.
 - MTA Departments and Agencies will routinely disinfect common employee facilities in their respective office buildings, depots, yards and stations.
 - MTA Departments and Agencies will disinfect common touch points in their respective train cars, paratransit vehicles, police cars and buses daily.
 - MTA Departments and Agencies will make disinfecting supplies available for use in service vehicles (e.g. crew cabs, bus driver positions, vans, pool cars, etc.). Employees are encouraged to make use of these supplies to disinfect surfaces that were/are likely to be touched in these vehicles.
- Social Distancing.
 - MTA employees should attempt to maintain 6 feet of separation² between themselves and others to deter the spread of COVID-19. Any time social distances cannot be maintained, facial covering must be worn.
 - In workplace locations where a social distance of 6 feet can be established and maintained for ten minutes, facial coverings are optional to wear. Again, any time social distances cannot be maintained, facial covering must be donned. Examples of locations where social distance can likely be set and maintained are:
 - Conference rooms
 - Office spaces
 - Agencies will attempt identify and make known to their employees, locations where they determine social distances likely can and cannot be maintained, further identifying when facial coverings must be worn. Employees should constantly evaluate conditions and don a face covering whenever they are within 6-feet of one another.
- Each MTA agency will maintain an adequate quantity of PPE in storage and will procure new supplies when the surplus is low. MTA and its agencies will hold approximately a 12 to 24-week supply of facial coverings, gloves and hand sanitizer.

² The social distance standard is set by the NYS Department of Health (DOH). As of the publishing of this protocol DOH set the standard is 6-feet, but is subject to change.

- MTA Customer-Facing Employees are required to wear a face covering when in direct contact with the customers or the public while performing their duties.
- Employees whose jobs do not require interaction with the public.
 - Must be offered one surgical/non-surgical type face covering per day, unless it is soiled or damaged, in which case the employee can request a new one. MTA will also offer employees cloth reusable facial coverings or other cloth facial coverings in lieu of paper disposable masks at the employee's request. (MTA employees may choose to wear a personal face covering for social distancing purposes.)
 - In accordance with Executive Order 202.17, employees who cannot maintain social distancing (> 6 ft.) during their daily activities are required to wear a facial covering at these times. MTA employees must wear a facial covering when they cannot sustain social distancing requirements (> 6 ft.) during the performance of their work (e.g. traveling in a car or truck with a work crew, conducting maintenance in a confined space requiring multiple employees to participate.)
- Situations where Social Distancing cannot be maintained:
 - Escalators: Because of the difficulty keeping a 6-foot distance on escalators, face coverings are required to be worn by employees while moving on an escalator.
 - Elevators office buildings and facilities for employee use: Face coverings are required when inside an elevator with another occupant. (Occupancy on elevators is limited to 50% of the maximum). The MTA Real Estate Office and agencies will assess elevator capacity in their facilities and post capacity signs outside of each elevator.
 - Elevators in stations (Customer access): Customers and employees will be reminded to wear facial coverings and maintain as much distance between one another will using these elevators.
 - Restrooms: Face coverings are required when entering and using restrooms designed for more than one occupant. MTA employees and customers should assess occupancy upon their arrival at any of the situations described above and wait until occupancy has dropped to a level which would support their presence and maintain 6 ft. separation or are separated by a physical barrier.
 - Carpools: Employees must wear a face covering when in any vehicle with more than one occupant.
 - MTA/Government Vehicles. MTA employees must wear face coverings inside MTA or other government vehicles with more than one occupant. When possible, employees should attempt to limit occupancy in these vehicles to promote greater separation. Disinfecting supplies will be made available by MTA so that employees prior to, and upon completion of their use of the vehicle, can wipe down surfaces in the vehicle that are commonly touched (e.g., keys, arm rest, steering wheel, knobs and handles).
 - Break Rooms, Reporting Locations, Locker Rooms, Pantries. Employees must enter these locations wearing a face covering. Further, MTA does not recommend employees enter these locations until 6 feet of separation can be maintained.
 - Hallways. Employees must enter hallways with a face covering. Employees should avoid, when possible, hallways and similar environments where social distancing requirements (6

feet of separation and less than 10 min of exposure to one another) cannot be maintained. When these situations cannot be avoided, all employees present are required to wear face coverings.

- Entrances and Lobbies. Facial coverings must be worn when entering worksites and office buildings.
 - Job Performance Requirements: For type of job tasks requiring two or more people to be within 6 feet of each other on occasion, such as lifting or installing something, employees will carry a face covering at all times during work hours and be ready to don the face covering when coming within 6 feet of another person.
 - Disposable gloves will be available for situations where gloves can be worn when using shared equipment. Employees should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer following contact with equipment surfaces.
 - The MTA will make available disinfecting supplies to employees so they may sanitize their workspace and shared tools at the beginning and throughout their tour.
 - Agencies are to evaluate their various worksites and determine if additional requirements for the wearing of PPE are required and create supplementary protocols as necessary.
- Wear and Maintenance of PPE
 - MTA prepared training videos for donning/doffing, cleaning and disposal of PPE and will be made available for managers and supervisors to use with employees returning to work.
 - Supervisors will monitor employees to see if PPE is cleaned and/or discarded correctly.
 - For instances when social distancing is not possible the N95/KN95 type of masks are expected to last a week and the surgical/non-surgical type masks are expected to last one full day. Paper masks should be stored in a breathable container, such as a paper bag between uses. Cloth facial coverings should be worn for no more than a single day before they are washed.
 - Situations Outside of the Workplace. Executive Order 202.17 requires individuals who cannot maintain social distancing (> 6 ft.) during their daily activities to wear a facial covering at these times.
 - Facial Covering/Mask Requirements within Public Transportation Systems. Executive Order 202.18 requires anyone (customers and employees) within a public transportation system to wear a facial covering. MTA employees must wear a facial covering while within the MTA transportation system (on buses, trains, paratransit and on station platforms). Where appropriate and safe, MTA employees can remind customers to wear a facial covering – “as helps to protect all those around them”. MTA employees should not attempt to direct a customer off MTA property for failure to wear a facial covering, however employees can report these violations through 311 or by contacting the MTA PD/NYPD. Employees should not put themselves into an unsafe situation in order to report improper facial covering wearing by customers.

Communications.

- MTA HQ and its agencies will post signs at facility entrances, near elevators and in locations where employees often congregate reminding them of the protocols for wearing facial coverings and social distancing.
- MTA and its agencies will routinely deliver messages via email, text, webpage or voice announcements further reminding employees of requirements for wearing face coverings and social distancing.
- MTA communications offices will post messages at stations and in trains and buses reminding riders of requirements for wearing facial coverings and social distancing standards.

Reference.

CDC guidance on social distancing. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

CDC guidance for hygiene. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>