

## **Face Coverings on Public Transport**

The wearing of a face covering is now a legal requirement for passengers when onboard the vehicle unless they have an exemption to do so. This came into effect on 15 June and covers bus, tram train, ferry and air travel. The Government has issued detailed guidance on where and how it applies:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#face-coverings>

### **What are the exemptions to wearing a face covering?**

Some passengers and circumstances are exempt from wearing a face covering. The requirement to wear a face covering does not apply to:

- a child under the age of 11
- passengers in an allocated cabin, berth or other similar accommodation, when they are alone or with members of their household or support bubble
- passengers who remain in their private vehicle while on board public transport, for example on a car ferry
- an employee of the transport operator, when they are acting in the course of their employment
- any other person providing services to the transport operator, under arrangements made with the transport operator, who is providing those services
- a constable or police community support officer acting in the course of their duty
- an emergency responder such as a paramedic or fire officer acting in the course of their duty
- an official, for example a border force officer, acting in the course of their duties

You also do not need to wear a face covering if you have a good reason not to. This includes:

- if you have a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability that means you cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering would cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with, or providing assistance to, someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- if you are travelling to avoid injury or escape the risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- if you need to remove it during your journey to avoid harm or injury or the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others
- if you need to eat, drink, or take medication you can remove your face covering
- if you are asked to remove your face covering by a police officer or other official, for example to check your railcard

### **Are people complying to the rules and how is it being enforced?**

Compliance amongst passengers in South Yorkshire is generally positive, with rates increasing from less than 10% the week before on bus to over 80% now.

There does remain however some inconsistencies in the application of the requirement, as customers do not need to demonstrate that they are exempt, and bus drivers are being asked not to challenge customers in these circumstances. DfT are updating their customer messaging and information accordingly and we remain positive that the public will largely comply with this requirement.

Bus operators and transport authorities (including SYPTE) have produced new journey assistance cards which customers can print off or collect from our interchanges which can be shown to drivers if they feel necessary to do so, but again, drivers are not being mandated to ask for this as evidence. A customer can be refused boarding if required but our experience to date is that this has not been necessary. You can also appreciate that bus drivers are not in a position to assess individual members of public on their potential disability or health condition as many of these are not visible. However, drivers are instructed to politely remind customers that they should wear a face covering onboard and some drivers are now issuing notices to any passengers without a face covering who have forgotten to bring one, to remind them of the law and tell them they may be liable to be fined.

Enforcement on rail is being assisted by British Transport Police (BTP). They are actively challenging customers who are not wearing face coverings on the rail network, and are now starting to, in limited circumstances, either prevent customers from boarding trains or removing customers from trains if no reasonable reason for exemption is provided.

For other modes of transport, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) supporting enforcement on buses and trams would only be where it escalated to involve antisocial behaviour.

SYPTE will continue to oversee and discuss rates of compliance with all operators, SYP, BTP and also engage with DfT to ensure that we have appropriate controls and powers to allow compliance to remain high.

### **Is a face covering required in an interchange or at stations?**

Whilst we do not require face coverings to be worn in interchanges and at stations, we are encouraging their use and will continue to review the need for our employees and Noonan contracted employees to wear one during their normal course of business. We have installed screens at our customer services desks and enhanced our cleaning regime of key touchpoints in our interchanges to further increase customer confidence.

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