



Washington State Transit Insurance Pool - 2629 12th Court SW, Olympia, WA 98502

## Pandemic Service Guidelines for WSTIP Members

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Frequency 256 Solution is commonly used, but any disinfectant will do.

**Small transit agencies can use their customer service lines as a conduit for communication**

The following general guidelines are provided as a tool to insure continuation of transportation services, while communicating to internal and external customers, and as an operational framework during an infectious emergency situation or pandemic outbreak.

One primary element during any emergency situation or pandemic is communication. Without a process for communication, misinformation can be circulated causing panic and disruption to services.

### Communication Plan

A communication plan is essential whenever there is a change to normal operating procedures.

The plan should include internal and external communication (internal are employees, and external are customers, other agencies, vendors, or anyone external party affected by service changes).

Agency websites are a primary communication tool. However, many

smaller properties without a website can use their customer service lines or voice recording message for employees, customers and/or outside interested parties.

Communication tools are only as good as the information is provided. When service changes are made during pandemics or other emergency situations, information needs to be updated as changes to service occur. At a minimum, hourly updates to call centers, voice messages, or websites should be the goal.

Once an event has reached its conclusion, a transition back to normal operation also needs to be communicated.

*All agencies should have process and/or contingency plans in place for handling emergencies or pandemic type situations. Preparation is essential to mitigate these challenges and provide transportation to our customers who need the vital services we provide.*

### Containment Plan

The primary avenue for combating the spread of an infectious disease is containment. To accomplish this, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and American Public Transportation Association (APTA) suggest agencies step up their cleaning and maintenance program, and emphasize improved personal hygiene.

To accomplish this it is suggested:

Frequent disinfectant wipe downs are suggested on all surfaces that are or may come in contact with multiple users or the public. Many APTA properties are using a product called Frequency 256 Solution; however any disinfectant would be adequate.

It is more important the cleaning be conducted on a daily basis to achieve maximum containment.

Frequent hand washing (soap and water is sufficient).

Limit touching of face especially around the eyes,



The wearing of face masks for operators driving in vehicles is not suggested due to that in a contained environment (like a bus) the humidity created by wearing a mask attracts microbials to the mask. Attracting microbials increases the likelihood of attracting an infectious disease.

**Prioritize routes accessing medical facilities: hospitals, pharmaceutical services, medical centers, dialysis centers, etc.**

## Pandemic Service Guidelines (continued)

nose and mouth areas.

Frequent use of hand sanitizer.

Raising your arm in front of your face when coughing and or sneezing.

If you feel flu like symptoms: Excessive coughing, sneezing, fever, vomiting; stay home from work until symptoms subside (it is estimated flu symptoms usually last between 1-2 weeks).

Transit agencies may need to re-address sick leave policies during pandemic outbreaks. Employees are more likely to return to work before they are well if they have exhausted their individual sick leave allotment.

**The wearing of face masks for operators driving in vehicles is not suggested** due to that in a contained environment (like a bus) the humidity created by wearing a mask attracts microbials to the mask. Attracting microbials increases the likelihood of attracting an infectious disease.

Also, operators wearing masks while driving a vehicle may panic customers or create the perception that riding transit is unsafe.

*For more information on infectious disease containment please visit the following websites: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).*

It is anticipated that during a pandemic outbreak up to 1/3 of the workforce could be unavailable to work (whether ill or caring for someone ill). In the event a pandemic illness reduces the availabil-

ity of the workforce, the following guidelines are recommended for the continuation of service.

### Administration and Management

While there may be more flexibility with job duties among operators, administrative and management employees will be limited by the reduction of workforce due to the specific job duties they perform: payroll, planning, dispatching, etc...

To address this, it is suggested that agencies have processes and contingency plans in place for certain employees to work at home. This would mitigate the spread of any illness while providing the opportunity to get essential work accomplished.

It is also suggested that certain employees be cross trained whenever possible to insure continuity of service during any emergency.

### Fixed Route

Establish priority routes and service areas.

Prioritize routes accessing medical facilities: hospitals, pharmaceutical services, medical centers, dialysis centers, etc.

Establish secondary routes including essential support employment centers, grocery centers, and social service centers.

Identify non essential routes. Any route that does not pri-

marily service essential and medical services.

*Note: Other service reduction plans such as snow routes do not necessarily use the same criteria for service reduction. Snow routes are often topography and trunk driven and not necessarily essential service driven.*

### Paratransit

Establish priority service.

Routes and services that primarily service medical and pharmaceutical facilities dialysis centers, and grocery centers.

Identify non essential routes and services for initial service reduction.

**If you need more information or assistance on this or any other transit risk related topic, please contact Christian DeVoll, Risk Management Specialist, at 360.628.3127 or [chris@wstip.org](mailto:chris@wstip.org).**

