



## VIP TRANSPORT SERVICES COVID-19 GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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We understand that Non Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) drivers may have concerns about the implications of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Here is some general guidance for VIP Transport Services drivers.

#### **Should I continue to work?**

VIP Transport Services drivers can continue to work. Some people are considered more vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19), because they have a particular underlying health condition.

Welsh Government has published information on how to protect vulnerable people (known as shielding). If you are shielding you should stay up to date with all the latest guidance as this contains relevant information on whether you are permitted to work.

## **Vehicle MOT's and Tax**

MOT testing will restart on 1 August . This means that if your vehicle's MOT is due on or after 1 August you must get the test done.

If your vehicle's MOT is due between 30 March and 31 July 2020 you will still receive a 6 month exemption from testing.

You must ensure that your vehicle remains safe and roadworthy. You can be prosecuted for driving an unsafe vehicle.

You can tax your vehicle as soon as your MOT expiry date has been updated.

## **Your health**

You should keep up to date on information about stopping the spread of COVID-19 and self-isolation. Health advice is available on the NHS Wales website.

## **Keeping yourself and passengers safe**

If you or someone you have been in contact with have symptoms follow the advice regarding self-isolation on the NHS Wales website.

Ensure that passengers wear a face covering (see section on face coverings below).

Think about asking about symptoms before a client is picked up. If potential clients have symptoms such as a persistent cough, or high temperature or loss of sense of smell and/or taste, you should direct them to NHS Direct and advise them not to make the journey.

Ask clients to sit in the rear of the vehicle. It is preferable that single clients sit in the rear left-hand seat to maximise the distance between driver and passenger.

Keep a bottle of hand sanitiser gel in your vehicle. This should be at least 60% alcohol based. Alternatively keep a large bottle of water and a bar/bottle of soap.

You should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.

Keep the vehicle well ventilated, and open windows when possible.

After each passenger journey drivers should clean hard surfaces such as:

- door handles
- window winders
- seat belts
- the rear of the front seats and other surface the client passenger(s) may have been touched or coughed/sneezed on.

You should also regularly clean the following:

- steering wheel
- gear stick
- radio equipment
- data heads
- handbrake
- indicators
- switches
- handles
- seat belts
- any other hard surfaces

A thorough clean of the vehicle with standard cleaning products should be completed at the end of each shift/working day.

After cleaning your vehicle you should wash/sanitise your own hands.

Ensure the vehicle remains safe and road-worthy. You should carry out basic vehicle maintenance checks at the start of every shift. This should include a visual check on all lights, oil & water levels, tyres, mirrors, seat belts and access ramps (where applicable). Many garages that undertake repairs remain open.

Carry tissues in your vehicles and use tissues to catch coughs and sneezes. Dispose of used tissues in a bin straight away.

It is recommended that you wear a face covering, but do not let the use of a face covering give you a false sense of security. Continue social distancing and good hygiene measures including washing your hands before putting a face covering on or taking it off.

### **Passengers who are blind and partially sighted**

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association have guidance on their website for staff who transport people who are blind or partially sighted.

Can I install a safety screen in my vehicle to protect myself from coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The installation of protective barriers or safety screens is a decision for licensing authorities. VIP Transport Services drivers are to make their own decision based on their own assessment of risk.

Before considering installing a safety screen you should contact your licensing authority to:

- check that they will permit the installation
- ensure that the screen and installation will meet their requirements

## **Can VIP Transport Services drivers support passengers with accessibility issues while maintaining social distancing?**

VIP Transport Services drivers are still under the same obligation to provide reasonable assistance and make reasonable adjustments for disabled passengers. You should follow the guidelines above including good hygiene practices when it is not possible to maintain the recommended social distance.

### **Mandatory use of face coverings**

As of 27 July 2020 all passengers using public transport (including NEPT vehicles) must wear a face covering. Welsh Government recommends wearing a three layer face covering.

You should always ask your client to put on a face covering before they get into your vehicle, but you should be aware that some clients may be exempt or have a reasonable excuse for not wearing one. For example some people cannot wear or put on a face covering due to a physical or mental illness. It is suggested that you familiarise yourself with the guidance in relation to face coverings.

Clients travelling in a VIP Transport Services vehicle without wearing a face covering, may be liable to a fine.

Although it is only a legal requirement for passengers to wear a face covering on public transport, in order to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission, we would advise that drivers also wear a face covering.

It's important for clients to be able to identify you as a legitimate driver. Therefore, please be prepared to remove your face covering so clients can see your identity matches up with your displayed identity badge. This must be done following the current social distancing rules.

Children under 11 years old are not required to wear a face covering. Children over 11 years old need to wear one for NEPT journeys.

## **What to do if a client is not wearing a face covering.**

It should be noted that it is the client that is liable for contravening the regulations if they fail to wear a face covering without an exemption or reasonable excuse. The driver is not liable under the regulations, however, it is recommended that you consider the following steps if a client is not wearing a face covering:

- Ask the client why they are not wearing a face covering to establish whether they are exempt or have a reasonable excuse such as a health issue that prevents them from wearing a face covering.
- Consider keeping a supply of face coverings for clients who do not have a face covering with them.

As it is a mandatory requirement that clients wear face coverings in VIP Transport Services vehicles, you should refuse to transport a client who is not wearing a face covering if they do not have a reasonable excuse to not be wearing one.

You may transport a client that is exempt or has a reasonable excuse for not wearing a face covering:

VIP drivers will need to consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to transporting passengers with disabilities.