

## **General guidelines and precautionary measures against the spread of COVID-19 for buses and other Means of Public Transport**

The following apply, mainly, to buses as well as to other Means of Public Transport, where they can be applied.

### **1. Arrangements for strict adherence to personal hygiene guidelines by the drivers and the passengers**

- a. Placing posters for hand and personal hygiene guidelines at prominent places at bus stations/stops and at indoor/outdoor waiting areas for boarding and disembarkation of passengers, to be followed by drivers and passengers.
- b. At bus stations/stops, where sanitary facilities are available, there should be disinfection and hand hygiene stations, either soap and running water or an alcohol-based solution with alcohol content greater than 60%. Disinfection also applies for bus entrances.
- c. Inside the means of public transport there should be constant information of passengers and reminders as to the infection symptoms, the precautionary measures and actions that need to be taken when dealing with a suspected COVID-19 case among the passengers. Informative brochures, audio and visual spots etc. can be used for this purpose.

### **2. Arrangements for practicing physical distancing between drivers and passengers**

- a. At bus stops and at stops/stations of other means of public transport avoid overcrowding of drivers and passengers and maintain the required distance of 2 metres.
- b. On buses only one passenger should be seated at each double seat. Seats behind the driver should be left vacant.
- c. The use of protective face mask for passengers in means of public transport is mandatory, paying attention to the proper use and disposing of the mask immediately upon exiting the bus in foot-operated disposal bins. Also mandatory is the use of protective face mask for the bus drivers or for drivers of other means of public transport.
- d. Boarding of passengers must not exceed 50% of the maximum bus capacity. The driver is responsible to monitor the number of passengers on board.
- e. For the boarding of passengers, the front entrance of the bus should be used while for the disembarkation it is preferable that the side or back doors are used. If there are no side or back doors, the front door of the bus will be used for the disembarkation of passengers but not simultaneously with the boarding. Entry/exit doors must be clearly labelled.

### **3. Arrangements for airing out, cleaning, disinfection of means of public transport, of sanitary and cleaning facilities and for waste management**

- a. Daily and thorough cleaning and disinfection, especially of surfaces often touched, such as handrails and handholds. It is recommended to clean high touch surfaces after each route or after every 3 routes for regular passenger buses with a fare for each passenger.
- b. Means of transport as well as waiting areas for boarding and disembarkation of passengers must be aired out and naturally ventilated as frequently as possible; they must also be cleaned thoroughly and frequently with the use of a neutral cleaning product, followed by disinfection of surfaces with an effective antiviral disinfectant. It is recommended to use 0,05-0,1% sodium hypochlorite (NaClO) (diluted at 1:50 if household bleach is used which has initial concentration of

2,5 to 5%). For surfaces that might suffer damages from the use of sodium hypochlorite, other products can be used for disinfection following the cleaning routine, which are ethanol-based (at least 70%).

c. Regular and thorough cleaning of public toilets, washbasins, showers and of other sanitary facilities used by many persons at bus stations. It is recommended to use an effective antiviral disinfectant, such as sodium hypochlorite in 0,1% concentration or other approved products according to instructions of use provided by the manufacturer. It is recommended to close the toilet lid before flushing. **Cleaning hands BEFORE AND AFTER the use/cleaning of the toilet is also recommended. Finally, it is recommended to monitor the number of persons entering the enclosed area of the restroom to avoid overcrowding and maintain strict adherence to the above measures.**

d. The cleaning staff must wear personal protective gear (mask, gloves, uniform that must be washed daily) while carrying out cleaning routines.

e. Cleaning materials must be washed and properly disinfected at the end of each cleaning routine.

f. The cleaning staff must apply proper hand hygiene, each time they remove their personal protective gear.

\* As regards vehicles, they must be efficiently ventilated at all times. Air conditioners with air recycling should not be used and instead it should be encouraged to use windows, skylight roof windows and fans to increase natural air ventilation. These measures should be adjusted on the basis of local circumstances, the needs and the types of vehicles and of other equipment used.

#### **4. Dealing with a suspected coronavirus case**

a. If a passenger displays symptoms while traveling (fever, cough, sore throat, chest pain, diarrhea), the following should be applied:

- The suspected case is isolated on the bus at a distance of at least 2 metres from the other passengers and the driver is notified.
- A mask is used or the mouth and nose are covered with a tissue when sneezing or coughing in case a mask is not available. Ill passengers must be given plastic bags for the safe disposal of waste (e.g. used surgical masks and tissues).
- The bus driver must contact immediately the Ambulance Service call centre at 1420 (24h service) and give information as to the suspected case and the bus terminal which they are headed to.
- At the bus terminal the passenger is transferred to a temporary isolation area designated by the competent authority until his/her transfer to a medical centre. It is noted that at the terminal, the suspected coronavirus case is the last person to disembark.
- If such an area is not available, then the passenger must wait separately from other persons at a distance of at least 2 metres. This will be decided by the competent Authority based on risk evaluation and available resources.
- The bus should be then thoroughly disinfected according to the temporary guide for environmental cleaning in non-healthcare facilities exposed to SARS-CoV-2, found at <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/interim-guidance-environmental-cleaning-non-healthcare-facilities-exposed-2019>.

- **Waste (e.g. used masks and tissues) should be placed in bags, which then must be sealed and disposed of safely.**

b. According to the relevant legislation for safety and health at work and the Infectious Diseases Law, drivers of buses or of other means of public transport as well as each passenger must take all requisite personal hygiene and safety precautionary measures at bus stops/other means of public transport, at indoor/outdoor waiting areas for boarding and disembarkation of passengers. These measures include the following:

- Washing of hands thoroughly with soap and water or, if the hands are not visibly soiled, with an antiseptic solution (alcohol content more than 60%). Hands hygiene must be applied before bus boarding and after disembarkation.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with hands and cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Refrain from using means of public transport if you display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Avoid touching surfaces and objects at the bus stops/terminals and on board the bus or on other means of public transport.
- Use the face mask properly. The use of mask is mandatory for bus drivers and drivers of other means of public transport as well as for passengers.
- Apply any other measures as defined by the risk evaluation.
- The public must be encouraged to reserve a bus seat either through the internet or by phone.

### **5. Consumables and equipment**

Care should be taken to always have immediately accessible means of personal protection on the bus that include:

- Protective face masks
- Single use gloves
- Hand hygiene products (e.g. soap and alcohol-based sanitizer of at least 60% ethanol for hand rubbing)
- Paper tissues
- Disposal bags

**6.** All means of protective gear, products for disinfection and cleaning, signage, announcements etc. must be provided by the employer.

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