



Covid-19 FAQs FOR IF YOU ARE STILL WORKING

1. How do I protect myself while using public transportation?

While taking public transportation is discouraged, it is often the only means of transportation for those in essential jobs (healthcare, public transportation, sanitation services, etc.) to get to work. Trains, busses, and subways have significantly increased their disinfection practices, and have implemented procedures to ensure drivers and other public transportation workers are healthy when they report to work. Drivers may be wearing gloves and using hand sanitizer.

If you are unaware of your city's public transportation changes due to coronavirus, check the internet. For example, many cities now have a policy to enter a bus via the rear door, in order to reduce contact with the driver. In some places, fares have been suspended to minimize driver contact. Other places expect you to show your travel card to the driver as you enter the rear door. Some busses expect you to sit at least 3 rows behind the driver.

Do not take public transportation unless it is absolutely necessary. If you must use public transportation:

- Don't ride if you are sick! Stay home.
- Consider other methods of travel, such as walking or biking, if possible.
- Telecommute, if possible, or consider alternate work hours.
- Ride public transportation during off-periods to avoid the rush and crowds, since schedules have been reduced in many places.
- Practice social distancing and maintain as much space as possible from other riders.
- Wash your hands (preferred) or use hand sanitizer after travel. Keep your hands away from your face.
- Practice sneeze and cough hygiene (use a tissue and discard, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve).

2. Should I wear a mask while I am using public transportation?

We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms ("asymptomatic") and that even those who eventually develop symptoms ("pre-symptomatic") can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends (since April 3) wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies, public transportation) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-feet social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Demonstration by US Surgeon General on how to make a cloth face covering at home:

<https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>

3. How can I sanitize my work area or cubicle?

It is best to clean before disinfecting the work surfaces that are of concern: your desk, keyboard, computer mouse, work phone and any other objects or surfaces that you or your coworkers touch a lot. Cleaning with soap and water or a cleaning wipe will remove dirt that can inhibit the activity of the disinfectant.

After cleaning, use an EPA approved disinfectant – EPA List N covers all disinfectants that have been approved for coronavirus. However, any broad-spectrum disinfectant should be effective against coronavirus, since it is an “enveloped” virus and is not that difficult to kill. Disinfectant wipes are a good idea so as not to apply too much liquid to keyboards and phones. Follow the label instructions for the length of time the application should remain wet.

Don't forget to disinfect your cellphone. From Apple Support: *Using a 70 percent isopropyl alcohol wipe or Clorox Disinfecting Wipes, you may gently wipe the exterior surfaces of your iPhone. Don't use bleach. Avoid getting moisture in any openings, and don't submerge your iPhone in any cleaning agents.*

After cleaning and disinfecting your work area, and often during the day (before/after eating, before/after using the restroom, leaving for home, after sneezing, etc.) remember to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. Hand sanitizer should be considered a backup if soap and water are not available.

Don't forget cleaning and disinfecting common areas like the shared lunchroom: microwave and handle, refrigerator and handle, sink, silverware (bringing your own is a good idea or use disposable), tables, etc.

References:

1. NY Times Article: **No Bus Service. Crowded Trains. Transit Systems Struggle With the Virus.** :<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/us/coronavirus-buses-trains-detroit-boston.html>
2. VOX article, **Should you take public transit during a pandemic?** :<https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2020/3/13/21177324/public-transit-pandemic-coronavirus>
3. CNN Article: **How to keep your workplace clean -- and yourself healthy -- during the novel coronavirus outbreak:** <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/11/health/how-to-clean-work-desk-coronavirus-wellness-trnd/index.html>

4. Apple support: Cleaning your iPhone: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT207123>
5. EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2, <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
6. CDC Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>