



BC Transit Key Messages – Coronavirus
Version 25 – December 2, 2020 Time 12:00 p.m.

COVID-19 and Transit

Do you have a plan if you have a COVID-19 case from an employee or customers? Have you had any confirmed cases?

- The Province of BC and health authorities are taking the lead on announcing confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- If we were to have a confirmed case, we do have a protocol for proactively cleaning a bus or a facility.
- BC Transit and our operating partners also have a plan to support employees as appropriate based on the advice of the Province of BC and the Provincial Health Officer.

What are your overall costs?

- BC Transit would like to thank the Government of Canada and the Province of BC for providing funding to cover the significant additional expenses and lost revenue related to COVID-19.
- The \$86 million in funding for 2020/21 and 2021/22 will help cover the costs of:
 - Lost revenue at the fare box
 - Lost gas tax revenue for the Victoria Regional Transit System
 - Additional expenses to improve safety and comfort for BC Transit staff and customers
- The \$86 million is part of a \$1.08 billion funding package from the Government of Canada and Province of BC to support local governments and public transportation.

Will the funding cover your costs?

- Yes, we expect the funding provided will cover our costs for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

What have you done to reduce costs?

- BC Transit has taken a number of steps to help reduce costs given the current response to COVID-19.
- However, the costs associated with our response to COVID-19 are higher than our current savings.
- This includes adjusting service where required while ensuring we have appropriate frequency for customers that rely on us as their transportation solution.
- We will continue to find cost savings as appropriate, while recognizing a need to maintain the best possible service for our customers.

What is happening with the electric buses and the low carbon fleet program?

- BC Transit is moving forward with our plan to introduce 10 battery electric buses in Victoria in 2022.
- As with any industry, we will continue to work with our partners and have to adjust to impacts of COVID-19.
- BC Transit remains committed to the Low Carbon Fleet Program released in 2019.

BC Transit Service and Ridership

How is your ridership?

- With many post-secondary institutions transitioning from in-person classes, businesses temporarily closing, changing business practices or supporting work from home, and other factors – we are seeing lower ridership numbers than what we would typically see this time of year.
- We are continuing to provide transportation services customers can rely on.
- We have seen a decrease in boarding of approximately 50 per cent in systems with automatic passenger counters.
- During the spring ridership was down between 60 to 80 per cent depending on the system.
- Again, we would ask that people please stay home if they are sick, practice proper hand hygiene, wear a face covering while on a transit vehicle, and sneeze and cough into their elbow.

Are you going to reduce service?

- BC Transit continues to adjust to the fluid situation like other businesses and agencies in Canada and around the world.
- We are working to provide service in alignment with BC's Restart Plan, the response to new COVID-19 measures, and with demand and available resources in mind.
- We have adjusted service in a number of communities, and will monitor the situation and adjust as necessary.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

- For health related questions, please contact 8-1-1 or visit bccdc.ca.
- For non-health related questions, please contact 1-888-COVID19 or visit BCCDC.ca
- For more information about transit services, please call your local transit office or visit BCTransit.com

What is occurring with handyDART?

- handyDART remains an important service for getting groceries, pharmacy items and going to doctors' appointments.
- The best prevention according to health experts is staying home if you are sick, wearing a face covering, and personal hygiene.
- Our handyDART transit operators have been provided with additional personal protective equipment.
- The companies that provide handyDART services on behalf of BC Transit across the province continue to provide information to and work with customers.

What are the vinyl panels?

- BC Transit has installed vinyl panels on all buses without a full driver door to support physical distancing for transit operators and customers. BC Transit has installed Full Driver Doors on medium duty, heavy duty, and high capacity buses across the province.
- The Province of BC and the Provincial Health Officer continue to lead the response to COVID-19, and BC Transit is taking their advice.
- For more details about BC Transit's response to COVID-19, please visit BCTransit.com

BC Transit Service and Ridership

What are the rules for people bringing recycling on buses?

- In order to keep the bus clean and reduce the likelihood of requiring a bus switch due to a spill, we will not be accepting recycling on the buses at this time.
- If you have questions, please contact your local transit office.

Can you explain the deferral of expansions?

- BC Transit is working with our partners to continue delivering transportation services our customers can rely on.
- As with any agency, business or family, the events in 2020 have disrupted our regular processes as we work to respond to COVID-19.
- BC Transit is shifting our priorities to ensure we continue supporting the response to COVID-19.
- We will also have to work hard to get customers back on public transportation as we have experienced a 50 per cent drop in ridership.
- In the spring we experienced a drop in ridership between 60 and 80 per cent.
- As a result, we are delaying all our planned expansions for 2020/21
- We will instead be working with our local government partners to develop service and ridership recovery plans.
- With strong growth in ridership over the past 5 years and support from the Province of BC and local governments, we recognize this is not an ideal situation, however it is a step we must take.

Physical Distancing

What are you doing to allow for physical distancing on your buses including managing capacity?

- We recognize health experts are recommending physical distancing as a response to COVID-19.
- We are working hard to make the bus a comfortable space for customers.
- BC Transit and the Province of BC have made wearing face coverings mandatory unless you meet the exemption criteria.
- We are managing capacity to keep buses at a comfortable load.
- You can see the passenger loads on NextRide and choose to take another bus as appropriate.
- We also encourage customers to travel at non-peak times.
- The best prevention according to health experts is staying home if you are sick, wear a face covering, and good personal hygiene.

What can customers do to physically distance on a bus?

- Customers can help with physical distancing on their transit trip as necessary.
- This includes moving to open spaces on the bus, checking NextRide and making decisions about which bus they wish to take based on customer loads.
- Customers must also wear face coverings on the bus, and at bus stops where physical distancing is not possible.

Physical Distancing

Why have you put red tape in the bus?

- A key measure to encourage physical distancing for our transit operators is to encourage customers to stand behind the red line.
- To make the red lines more visible, we have decided to put tape on the floor of the bus.
- In an effort to encourage physical distancing, we ask customers to please stand behind the red line.
- Our drivers are still happy to answer your questions and provide support, while respecting physical distancing.

Are you worried about pass-ups with the bus passenger limit measures?

- We're working hard to follow the guidance of the Province of BC and medical professionals.
- We have seen a decrease in ridership of approximately 50 per cent in BC Transit communities across the province.
- In the spring we saw decreases in ridership of approximately 60 to 80 per cent.
- BC Transit will continue to reduce capacity on buses in an effort to create a comfortable transit experience.
- We do anticipate pass-ups with this change, but will be tracking the situation and following up as necessary.
- We encourage customers to check NextRide where available before traveling, and attempt to travel at non-peak hours.

What are your plans for potential pass-ups on regional routes including those along Highway 16?

- For our regional services, including services along Highway 16, we are limiting passengers to the best of our ability while putting the safety of our customers and transit staff first.
- In these instances, if a bus reaches capacity the driver will work with the dispatcher to make a decision to either deploy another bus (if available and recognizing a potentially significant delay for the customer) or allow the person on the bus at that time.
- If customers have questions, we encourage them to speak with their local transit office.

How many people will be allowed on a bus?

- BC Transit will continue to reduce capacity on buses in an effort to create a comfortable transit experience.
- As a result, customers may experience pass ups.
- We encourage riders in communities with NextRide to check for capacity conditions in advance of boarding.

Staff and Drivers

What are you doing to support your drivers and front line staff?

- We recognize we have drivers and front line staff that have public interactions.
- We continue to work with our drivers and staff to provide support as required.
- Our drivers have access to on-road support during their shift, and a manager 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- We have implemented enhanced cleaning measures on our buses and in our facilities to support our drivers, staff and customers.
- We have also implemented vinyl panels on buses without a full driver door.
- The prevention messaging from health experts is the same for employees as it is for the general public – stay home if you are sick, practice proper hand hygiene, wear a face covering, and sneeze or cough into your elbow.

Are you supplying drivers with masks? Do you support drivers' wearing masks?

- Face coverings are being made available for transit operators.
- We have also handed out promotional face coverings to customers.
- Customers are expected to supply their own face covering for their transit journey.

Do your drivers get sick pay to stay at home if they are unwell?

- Staff are being asked to stay home if they are unwell.
- We are supporting our staff through our standard process.

The Prime Minister recommended working from home, what is your policy?

- We're following government guidelines and trying to support physical distancing as much as possible.
- We're taking a practical approach, and bringing people back into the office as appropriate and based on the advice from the Province of BC, WorkSafeBC and the Provincial Health Officer.
- We have implemented appropriate safety measures to support physical distancing in the office.

Are your staff obeying the 14-day self-isolation period after returning from international travel?

- BC Transit, in partnership with our local government partners, the Province of BC, and the local operating company, provide a critical transportation service for those in essential positions, including health care, and for those need to get groceries or go to the pharmacy.
- We expect our staff, the staff of our operating company and our customers to follow the direction of the Government of Canada, the Province of BC and the Provincial Medical Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry to self-isolate for 14-days if required due to travel or advice from a medical professional.
- As always, if customers have questions or concerns about BC Transit services please report them to your local customer call centre.

Staff and Drivers

How many drivers are off?

- Many businesses and agencies are seeing similar changes given the response to COVID- 19.
- Daily numbers will fluctuate, and we will continue to monitor and implement plans as appropriate.
- To respect confidentiality, we will not disclose whether drivers are working or not.
- We are being responsive in planning and adjusting our service, and communicating that to customers as information becomes available at BCTransit.com or through our customer call centres.

What fare product vendors are open in my community?

- Details about fare product vendors in your community are available at BCTranist.com/COVID19.

Cleaning related questions

Overall cleaning message

- Following the lead of the Provincial Health Officer, WorkSafeBC, and the Province of BC, we have implemented increased cleaning measures on BC Transit buses and at BC Transit facilities based on professional advice.
- Cleaning includes:
 - Daily cleaning of high touch areas on all buses
 - Weekly sanitization of buses
 - Weekly sanitization of handyDART buses
 - We are prepared to implement additional measures, as required.

Have you increased your cleaning practices on board your buses?

- We have implemented and continue to carry out additional cleaning measures on top of our regular practices.
- We are also continuing to remind staff and customers of the importance of practicing proper hand hygiene, including using hand sanitizer and hand washing practices, and to sneeze and cough into their elbow.
- We have a plan to further expand our cleaning practices if required.

Can you put hand sanitizer on your buses (entrance/exit)?

- We encourage customers to please put hand sanitizer in their bag as they head out for their transit journey and other activities.

Who would I talk to if there is a bus that requires cleaning?

- If there is a bus that you see that needs attention please call your local transit office.
- Contact information for your local transit office is available at BCTransit.com