Face Coverings on Public Transport

Thank you to all our customers for following our advice and helping to keep everyone safe and public transport running for those that really need it.

From 15 June, it is compulsory to wear face coverings on all public transport and so here is a Q&A to help you.

What is meant by a face covering?

This means it is a covering of any type which covers your mouth and nose.

Do I have to wear a face covering?

Yes, the Government has announced that face coverings will be compulsory on all public transport from Monday 15 June in England. It does not currently apply in Scotland or Wales You can find out more details on the Government website.

Do I have to wear one on all public transport?

Yes, you must wear a face covering if you're using any public transport including trains, buses, and ferries.

Where must I wear a face covering?

You must wear a face covering when you on board the train, the bus or the ferry. Although you don't have to wear one while waiting at a station, bus stop or ferry terminal, many operators would and you may prefer that you did to help keep fellow passengers and staff safe.

What type of face covering is allowed?

You can wear face coverings that can be made at home or purchased.

They should cover the mouth and nose and can be something as simple as a snood, a scarf or a bandana tied snugly behind the head. You can check out the Gov website for a guide to making and wearing cloth face coverings.

Are you giving away free face coverings?

If you're using public transport it's your responsibility to have your own face covering, they will not be provided as part of your 'journey'. Some operators may decide to hand some out for a limited time or you might be able to buy them from stations and other locations.

Will staff be wearing them?

Staff and enforcement officers are not required to wear face coverings, however, many staff may choose to wear one on a voluntary basis.

Who is exempt from wearing a face covering?

There are a range of exemptions. Children under the age of 11 don't have to wear one but of course they can if they want to. The legislation also recognises that some passengers may have a "reasonable excuse" not to wear one, for example as they have a physical or mental illness or impairment or a disability. There are other legitimate reasons such as taking medication and if wearing one would cause severe distress to the person.

How will I show I am exempt?

We do appreciate that some people will not be able to wear a face covering for medical or other reasons. If you aren't wearing a face covering while using public transport, you may still be asked about this by a member of staff. It's your responsibility to explain why you do not have to wear one for the reasons stated above, e.g. children's age, or have medical evidence.

Some operators are considering bringing in "exemption cards", but as this is new things will change quite quickly in the coming weeks/ months.

What happens if I don't wear one?

We will be doing everything we can to support the wearing of masks and encouraging passengers to respect each other's safety, regardless of individual circumstances. However, under the legislation the police and others have the powers to prosecute a passenger if they are not wearing a face covering on board the service.

What will happen if I am prosecuted?

Wearing a face covering is mandatory. If you are prosecuted for failing to do so the matter will go through the court system or you may receive a fixed penalty notice of £100.

A fellow passenger is not wearing a face covering, who should I report it to?

A number of passengers are exempt from wearing face coverings for medical reasons, so please be understanding. If you do see someone without a face covering, don't approach them, keep your 2-metre distance, but speak to a member of staff or report it to the operator in the first instance.

Please continue to keep checking the Re Think Travel pages for the latest information and advice about public transport services.