



COVID-19 | FAQ

EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 2, 2021

WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT VIA IS DOING ABOUT COVID-19?

- We're posting regular updates to our website at VIAinfo.net/covid-19.
- Posters and flyers are distributed throughout our transit centers and Park & Ride facilities.
- Signs are posted on buses.
- Information is posted on digital screens and kiosks throughout the system.
- Our customer care team can help with specific questions about fares and service. Please call (210) 362-2020 for help.
- You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter for alerts.
- Sign up for email updates at VIAinfo.net.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN MY BUS SAYS "AT SAFE CAPACITY" IN THE DESTINATION SIGN?

- To help passengers and our operators maintain a safe distance while on board, buses have set a "safe capacity" limit of 16 passengers per trip.
- This is less than half of seated capacity for buses and will allow people to skip a seat and keep some distance.
- We've put more buses on popular routes so that people don't have to wait long for the next bus to come.
- This is one of the ways VIA is helping to protect our passengers and operators.

HOW LONG WILL THE SAFE CAPACITY LIMIT BE IN PLACE?

- We will maintain a 16-passenger limit aboard buses until further notice to allow for safe distancing between passengers.

WHAT DOES THE "STAY HOME, WORK SAFE" ORDER MEAN FOR VIA?

- The "Stay Home, Work Safe" order is to "shelter-in-place" for all persons living in San Antonio and Bexar County.



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- The Executive Order has been extended **through September 16**. For updates and copies of the City and County orders, visit [Bexar.org](https://www.bexar.org) or [SanAntonio.gov](https://www.sanantonio.gov).
- Under the order, everyone is required to stay home, except for essential or "covered" activities as outlined by state and local officials.
- **The order lists VIA and public transit as an essential service.**
 - We will continue to run bus service for those who must still travel.
 - An Essential Service Schedule is in place.
 - Essential Service Schedules were updated on July 27 and will continue until further notice. A complete list of routes and stops affected are available at VIAinfo.net. [Service Changes Effective July 27](#)
- VIAtrans, and VIA Link service will continue to operate as usual.
- The order requires everyone wear a cloth mask while in public and whenever proper social distancing is not possible (staying at least 6 feet apart).
 - Non-exempt VIA passengers will be required to use a cloth face covering over their nose and mouth to board and ride VIA vehicles, and access facilities, until further notice.
 - While supplies last, a face covering will be offered to customers who do not have one when they board the bus.

ARE VIA RIDERS REQUIRED TO WEAR MASKS?

- Yes. It is now a federal requirement that all non-exempt passengers ages 2 and older wear a face covering over their nose and mouth while on a VIA vehicle or at a VIA facility. The new federal mandate, which reinforces VIA's long-standing mask requirement, is effective as of February 2, 2021, and until further notice.

WHAT IF I HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUE THAT PREVENTS ME FROM WEARING A FACE COVERING/MASK?

- There may be specific situations or reasons why a person may be unable to wear facial coverings/face masks: for example, a physical or mental condition or disability. If you are a person who is unable to wear a facial coverings/face mask for these reasons, please contact the VIA Accessible Services Department at (210) 362-2140 to request an accommodation.



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WHY AREN'T PASSENGERS BOARDING THROUGH THE BACK DOOR?

- Most VIA buses don't have automatic back doors. They must be pushed open by passengers when exiting. This is part of the reason we offered a fare-free period, so that customers boarding through the front door could limit contact with the driver and avoid crowding, while additional safety measures were put into place.

IS VIA STOPPING OR REDUCING SERVICE?

- VIA is continuing to operate on an "Essential Service" schedule Monday, April 27, which maintains or improves current schedules for routes that continue to see high ridership and adjusts others based on changing conditions.
- Essential Service Schedules were updated on July 27 and will continue until further notice. A complete list of routes and stops are available at VIAinfo.net. [Service Changes Effective July 27](#)
- Riders are reminded to only make essential trips during this time and observe VIA's requirements to practice social distancing and wear a face covering in public.
- Visit VIAinfo.net/routes for specific route schedules.
- Riders are reminded to only make essential trips during this time and observe VIA's requirements to practice social distancing and wear a face covering in public.

IF I FEEL SICK, CAN I TAKE VIA TO GO TO THE DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL?

- **No.** If you feel sick, do not use public transit, per CDC recommendations.
- Call your doctor or health care provider for instructions.
- Visit the City of San Antonio's website at www.SanAntonio.gov to take a self-screening test.
- You can call the City's COVID hotline at [210-207-5779](tel:210-207-5779), or email questions to covid-19@sanantonio.gov.

WHAT IS VIA DOING TO HELP PROTECT ITS EMPLOYEES?

- VIA has stepped up its cleaning procedures for buses, vans and facilities. This includes daily cleaning—at the end of the run and throughout the day — with solution designed to kill germs that can cause illness.
- Operators and front-line employees have access to hand sanitizer, wipes, gloves and masks.



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- VIA issues masks to all operators and front-line workers. These are mandatory for all employees while working or while at a VIA facility.
- Masks are offered to passengers who do not have one, while daily supplies last.
- Alternative transportation is offered to exempt passengers who cannot wear a face covering because of a mental or physical health risk.
- VIA employees are required to follow additional recommended steps like washing their hands often, coughing and sneezing into their arm, wiping down surfaces and staying home if they feel sick.
- Protective barriers have been installed on all driver cabins for buses and vans.
- Federal law requires all non-exempt passengers ages 2+ to wear a facial covering over the nose and mouth while aboard a VIA vehicle or at a transit facility. The new federal mandate, which reinforces VIA's long-standing mask requirement, is effective as of February 2, 2021, and until further notice.
- We have removed or restricted access to the seats nearest to the driver's seat on our vehicles. This helps reduce interaction and promote social distancing for passengers and operators.
- A safe capacity limit is in place for all VIA vehicles to promote social distancing among passengers and between passengers and employees.
- VIA is performing temperature checks on all employees entering VIA facilities or reporting for duty at a VIA location.
- Up-to-date information on how to stay healthy and safe is available to operators and employees online, in office areas, aboard buses, and at transit centers and Park & Ride facilities.
- Employees who can perform their duties remotely have been asked to do so to promote social distancing in the workplace.

DO VIA OPERATORS HAVE MASKS? ARE THEY REQUIRED TO WEAR THEM?

- VIA issues masks to operators as part of their personal protective equipment that also includes gloves and sanitizing products. This is in line with CDC recommendations and guidelines for the public, including public service workers.
- All VIA employees who interact with the public are provided masks and gloves and required to wear them while working or at a VIA facility.
- We will continue to monitor recommendations from the CDC and other health officials and take any additional steps required.



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DOES VIA HAVE PROTECTIVE SHIELDS ON VEHICLES FOR OPERATORS?

- Yes, we have installed plastic barriers on all driver cabins to further protect them and others from the spread of germs.

IS VIA CHECKING TEMPERATURES FOR EMPLOYEES?

- Yes, VIA is performing temperature checks for all employees entering VIA facilities or reporting for work at a VIA location.

IS VIA CHECKING TEMPERATURES FOR PASSENGERS?

- Not at this time. But passengers are reminded that if they feel sick, they are not supposed to take public transit. They should call their doctor or the City's COVID hotline for information.

HAVE ANY VIA EMPLOYEES TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

- Updates regarding employees who have tested positive are posted to the [VIA COVID-19 page](#).
- A list of routes, bus numbers and times operators drove during the period prior to their last day on duty is also available.
- All vehicles and work areas are cleaned and sanitized daily as needed as part of our enhanced safety protocols.
- All employees are instructed to report COVID-related symptoms to their supervisor and their physician. Employees are told to stay home if they feel ill to limit exposure to others.
- Operators are eligible for COVID-19 screening at the City's pre-approved testing facility. They are asked to work with their supervisor to be referred for testing.

WHAT IS VIA DOING TO HELP PROTECT ITS CUSTOMERS?

- Federal law requires all non-exempt passengers and visitors at transit facilities to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth. This new federal mandate reinforces VIA's long-standing mask requirement. It applies to all persons ages 2 and older, and is effective as of February 2, 2021, until further notice.
- To date, no local cases have been linked to the use of public transit services.
- VIA continues to expand its cleaning procedures for buses, vans and facilities that include daily cleaning with EPA-approved, hospital-grade solution designed to kill germs that cause illness.



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- We have removed or restricted access to several seats aboard buses to create an opportunity for social distancing, including the seats closest to the driver, and others throughout the bus.
- We'll continue to set a safe capacity limit of 16 passengers per trip **until further notice**, to allow for social distancing on board. Extra buses have been placed on popular routes to make sure all passengers are picked up.

WHEN WILL THE VIVA ROUTES RETURN TO SERVICE?

- VIVA routes 11, 40 and 301 are temporarily suspended.
- This change is part of our Essential Service Schedule that keeps service going for people who must make essential trips.
- The schedule focuses service on routes and areas with the highest demand for ridership.
- While most museums, parks and restaurants remain closed or are open with limited capacity, we will pause service on VIVA.
- We hope to return soon!

WHAT CAN CUSTOMERS DO TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS?

- Stay home
- Wear a face covering when in public
- Wash your hands frequently
- Use hand sanitizer between washing
- Cough and sneeze into their arm
- Avoid touching your face
- **ONLY TAKE ESSENTIAL TRIPS during this time.** If you do not absolutely have to travel, stay home and avoid public spaces.
- Keep a safe distance from others when in public. At least 6-feet between you and the person next to you is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), health and government officials.
- We have placed hand sanitizing stations at our offices and facilities for customers to use.
- We have also updated the information available on our website, aboard our buses, and at our transit centers and Park & Ride facilities to ensure customers can stay informed.
- You can find this and other helpful information at WWW.CDC.GOV.



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HOW OFTEN ARE BUSES / FACILITIES CLEANED?

- VIA vehicles and facilities are cleaned daily with CDC-approved solution.
- We have stepped up our cleaning and disinfecting routine to include additional cleaning during the day, as well as overnight.
- This includes detailing of high-traffic areas aboard the vehicle like handles, rails, straps and seats.

WHAT DOES VIA USE TO CLEAN BUSES AND FACILITIES?

- VIA uses an CDC-approved disinfectant to help kill germs that cause illnesses like flu and coronavirus.

HOW DO COVID-19 CHANGES AFFECT CUSTOMERS WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS?

- VIA has put safety measures in place to ensure customers and staff are protected when riding with VIA or at a VIA facility.
- Maximum passenger limits are in place for bus and VIAtrans riders to allow for social distancing.
- Face covering requirements are in place for all non-exempt riders on bus and VIAtrans trips. Persons who have a mental or physical health issue that prevents them from wearing a face covering over their nose and mouth can show their VIAtrans ID or Reduced Fare ID to ride without one.
- Operators will still assist riders in wheelchairs or other mobility assisted device, including kneeling the bus when boarding and helping with securing the chair while on board.
- **For questions about VIAtrans service during COVID-19, please call 210-362-5050.**

WHEN WILL VIA BEGIN HIRING AGAIN?

- VIA has resumed hiring for essential positions, including bus operators.
- Please visit VIAinfo.net/employment for a list of available positions and information about how to apply.