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Riding PARTA During COVID-19:

Protective Equipment, Safety Measures and Protocol for Bus Operators and Passengers

Issued: July 30, 2020

Adapted from: ***COVID-19 Guidance for Ohio Public Transit and Human Service Transportation Agencies, Ohio Public Transit Association, July 2020¹***

- I. **Statement of Purpose.** In light of COVID-19, PARTA has reimagined service levels, priorities, and level of sanitation to protect the safety and health of our employees and passengers. As the regional transit authority serving the greater Portage County community, PARTA continues to cooperate and comply with federal, state, local agencies and private health authorities to prevent the spread of infectious disease within Portage County.

It is with employee and public safety in mind that we have issued ***Riding PARTA During COVID-19: Protective Equipment, Safety Measures and Protocol for Bus Operators and Passengers (“COVID-19 Safety Measures”)*** to affirm that PARTA is enforcing current transportation best practices within the environmental realities of public transit buses, based upon the driving principle of protecting and preserving the health and safety of our workforce and communities.

- II. **Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitization Assurances.** PARTA performs enhanced cleaning and sanitization in all Transit Buses and Light Transit Vehicles (“All Buses”) and buildings.
 - **Daily.** All Buses are completely sanitized daily, fully sprayed with EPA-approved hospital grade disinfectant with focus on high touch areas such as stanchions, fareboxes, grab handles, operator cabins, and call buttons.
 - After sanitation, buses are left to dry for a minimum of 30 minutes, per disinfectant recommendation.
 - **While on Route and Post-Trip.** Each bus is equipped with a spray disinfectant atomizer for use by drivers as a required part of post-trip inspection procedures. The spray bottles are refilled as needed to ensure drivers are able to disinfect post-shift and at any time while on route the driver determines necessary to protect his/her work environment within the bus.

III. **Compliance with Directives.** To protect the safety and health of bus operators and passengers, *PARTA* requires compliance with the safety measures and protocol outlined herein. Passengers who repeatedly refuse to comply may be subject to suspension of ridership privileges.

- **Protective Equipment in Buses.** All Buses are equipped with:
 - **Plexiglass shield barriers** at operator cabin area to separate operators from passengers while boarding and alighting.
 - **Hand sanitizing dispensers** near front doors for use by operators and passengers.
 - **No touch, single use waste receptacles** for tissue disposal near front doors for use by operators and passengers.
 - **Spray disinfectant atomizers** for operator's use while on route as necessary and as required part of post-trip inspection.

- **Safety Measures to Achieve Social Distancing and Safety While Riding**
 - **General Safety Precautions.**
 - Operators and passengers are responsible to monitor daily for symptoms of COVID-19 and not operate or ride public transit when sick.
 - All persons are responsible for washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes (in the sleeve or elbow, not hands), and not shaking hands.
 - All persons are responsible to comply with social distancing signage and visual cues designed to restrict passengers from different households from sitting or standing in close proximity.
 - **Transit Bus Capacity Limitations.** During COVID-19, Transit Bus capacity is greatly diminished to accomplish social distancing. "Standing room only" is strictly prohibited.
 - **COVID-19 full capacity will be approximately 17 – 25, including passengers seated and standing,** depending on the configuration of passengers traveling from the same household.
 - **First row seating.** Generally, first row seating will be restricted for use by passengers using mobility devices.
 - **Seating.** Some seats contain "seat closed" signage to advise and discourage passengers who do not reside together from sitting next to one another. Passengers who reside together in

the same household (families and roommates) may sit together using seats marked “closed.”

- **Standing.** Tape “X” markings on floor indicate where passengers may stand while riding.
- **Facial Coverings (Masks) Required. All operators and passengers are required to wear facial coverings in accordance with the Ohio Department of Health Director’s Order effective July 23, 2020:**
 - **“Except as provided herein, all individuals, in the State of Ohio shall wear facial coverings at all times: “...while waiting for, riding, driving, or operating public transportation.””**
 - **Passengers to Provide Own Facial Covering.** Operators may have a limited supply of cloth facial coverings to provide on a case-by-case basis. Generally, passengers should have a facial covering anytime they anticipate waiting for or riding public transit. A facial covering is any material covering an individual’s nose, mouth, and chin.
 - **Exceptions as Applied to Public Transportation.** The requirement to wear a facial covering does not apply when:
 - The individual is under 10 years of age.
 - The individual in communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
 - A medical condition including those with respiratory conditions that restrict breathing, mental health conditions, or disability contraindicates the wear of a facial covering.
 - *PARTA* will evaluate requests for medical exceptions consistent with current HIPAA and ADA regulations.
- **Face Shields and Other Protective Equipment.** Additional protective measures are required when operators cannot socially distance from passengers, such as while:
 - Securing a passenger’s mobility device in the vehicle.
 - Attaching seat and shoulder belts for a passenger seated in a mobility device.

- Walking a passenger to and from the door.
- Collecting fares from passengers who require assistance.
- **Operator Requirements and Passenger Expectations.** Operators assisting passengers to perform the services described above shall:
 - Wear face shields over facial coverings, and use gloves at their discretion.
 - Prompt passengers to wear facial covering correctly, fully covering the nose and mouth and securely attached around the passenger's face.
 - Turn his/her head away from the passenger and request the passenger to turn his/her head toward the window/away from the operator.
 - Advise the passenger the operator will limit speaking while assisting the passenger and requesting the passenger not to speak unless necessary.
 - Ask the passenger to avoid sudden coughing or sneezing as much as possible.

PARTA will revise these COVID-19 Safety Measures as necessary to maintain ongoing compliance with directives, orders, best practices, and recommendations to protect the safety and health of bus operators and passengers within the environmental realities of the provision of public transit service.

ⁱ <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Transit/Documents/OPTACOV19TransportationGuidance.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/Directors-Order-Facial-Coverings-throughout-State-Ohio.pdf>