

# Medical Transportation During COVID-19

COVID-19 is a virus spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19, or with surfaces they have recently touched. Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to those for influenza or other respiratory illnesses. The most common symptoms include fever, cough, and extreme tiredness. Symptoms of more serious illness include difficulty breathing. Precautions must be taken to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.

NIHB recognizes that during a pandemic public health officials may recommend that the public limit non-essential travel to slow the spread of the disease. Additionally, nations may use discretion in determining which non-essential trips will be supported. There is an expectation that medical transportation will continue to be provided for urgent trips, such as clients traveling for dialysis, OAT, cancer treatment, or other urgent medically necessary trips.

Prior to transporting a client with symptoms of a respiratory illness, consult with a health professional. Where possible dedicate a medical transport vehicle and driver to the transportation of individuals with respiratory illness to minimize exposure.

## Transport Requirements

- Ask the client to perform hand hygiene. If possible, have clients with respiratory symptoms put on a mask. Once mask is in position, ask client to once again perform hand hygiene. A mask is important as it prevents the droplet spread of the virus from the symptomatic client to those around them.
- Instruct client to use respiratory hygiene (coughing or sneezing into tissues or a bent elbow) and apply hand sanitizer after coughing, sneezing, or touching face.
- Place client and escort in seat furthest distance from driver to observe a 2 metre distance.
  - If the client cannot wear a mask and spatial distance cannot be maintained consult with CDC.
- The client's escort should assist the client with entering and exiting the vehicle. If the driver will be assisting a symptomatic client with entering or exiting, the driver must wear a procedure mask, gown, gloves and eye protection.
  - In the event that the driver is required to wear the PPE, appropriate instructions should be provided for donning and doffing.
- Only transport one symptomatic client (and their escort) at a time to maintain isolation of the client.

## Supplies

Stock each medical transport vehicle with:

- At least two bottles of alcohol-based hand rub (70% alcohol or more), one for the driver and one for the client
- Procedure masks
- Garbage bin with liners and lid
- Supplies for cleaning and disinfecting
  - Cleaning and disinfection products
  - Disposable gloves
  - Gowns
  - Eye protection
  - Paper towels



## Cleaning and Disinfection

Clean and disinfect vehicles after each client. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as:

- Seats/seat back
- Door handles
- Overhead grab handles
- Windows
- Lock buttons
- Seat belts/buckles
- Center console
- Arm rests

**Cleaning** refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. Cleaning does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface. Cleaning should be conducted prior to disinfecting surfaces.

**Disinfecting** refers to using chemical to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned.

- Use a **disinfectant** that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a virucidal claim follow the instructions on the label to disinfect effectively, or
  - Prepare a bleach water solution that is **1 part bleach and 9 parts water**. This solution can be kept in a labelled spray bottle. Prepare a new solution daily.

### Cleaning and Disinfection Steps:

1. Identify areas to be cleaned and disinfected.
2. Put on disposable gloves. Direct contact with body fluids should be avoided. During cleaning avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, and mouth). When cleaning a vehicle after transport of a suspected COVID-19 case, also put on a procedural mask, gown, and eye protection. Closed shoes/boots should be worn at all times.
3. Clean visibly soiled surfaces with detergent/cleaner. Ensure only disposable cloths, such as paper towels or wipes, are used.
  - a. If body fluids are present (nose/mouth excretions, blood, vomit, diarrhea, etc.) use paper towels to absorb prior to cleaning. Place used paper towels in garbage bin.
4. Apply the disinfectant to the surface as per manufacturers' instructions. Allow to air dry.
5. Remove gloves, and any other PPE, and dispose of in garbage bin.
6. Perform hand hygiene.

**NOTE: Concerns regarding unprotected exposure should be directed to Community Health.**

Sources:

PHAC - Annex: Environmental Sanitation Practices for Airlines to Control the Spread of Novel Coronavirus

Rational use of personal protective equipment for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
[https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPPE\\_use-2020.1-eng.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPPE_use-2020.1-eng.pdf)

WHO Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) technical guidance: Points of entry and mass gatherings  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/points-of-entry-and-mass-gatherings>