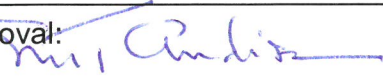




The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority Administrative Policies and Procedures

Subject/Title: COVID – 19 Policy on Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and Transportation Hubs	Effective Date: 2/12/2021
	Approval:  Chief Executive Officer

Purpose:

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an order requiring masks be worn by all persons during interstate transportation and at transit hubs, including airplanes, mass transit, taxis and trains.

The order, effective as of February 1, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. EST, requires that masks be worn by "all persons on public conveyances" traveling into or within the United States, including airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis and ride-shares. Masks will also be required at transportation hubs like airports, bus terminals, trains and subway stations. The CDC directive follows an Executive Order issued by President Biden on January 21, 2021 directing agencies to "immediately take action" to require masks be worn during all public transportation and at transit hubs.

Agency and Employee Responsibilities:

- Operators of public conveyances and transportation hubs must use best efforts to ensure that any person on the conveyance wears a mask when boarding, disembarking, and for the duration of travel or while entering or on the premises of the transportation hub. Depending on the circumstances, operators must take the following actions:
- Board/allow entry only people who wear masks;
- Instruct people that wearing a mask on the conveyance/premises is a requirement of federal law and that not complying with the requirement is a violation of federal law;
- Monitor the conveyance/premises/vehicle for any person who is not wearing a mask and seek compliance from such a person;
- At the earliest safe opportunity, disembark/remove from premises any person who refuses to comply; and
- Notify people of the requirement to make sure they are aware of and comply with the requirement to wear a mask. Examples of such notifications are messaging in apps, on websites or through email; posters in multiple languages with illustrations; and printing the information on tickets.

RIPTA operators are instructed to call Dispatch for Street Supervision help if a passenger refuses to comply.

The following persons or situations are exempt from the mask requirement:

- Children under the age of two;
- Anyone with a disability who cannot safely wear a mask;

- Persons may remove their mask “for brief periods” if they need to take medication, or if they are having difficulty breathing or experiencing shortness of breath until they are able to resume normal breathing with the mask. Otherwise, passengers and operators are required to wear their masks at all times.
- RIPTA operators are instructed to call Dispatch for Street Supervision assistance if a passenger refuses to comply.

RIPTA will require that any person, attempting to travel on a RIPTA vehicle, that is unable to wear a mask based on a disability, to seek an exemption from the mask requirement in advance of travel in order for RIPTA to determine their best options for safe travel. Please call Customer Service at 401-784-9500 ext. 2012.

Per the Order, RIPTA may consider additional requirements and/or conditions on persons requesting an exemption from the mask requirement such as requiring medical certification, evidence that the person does not have COVID-19, by means of a negative test or has recovered from COVID-19, by means of medical confirmation. Further, RIPTA may utilize additional protective measures, whenever possible, such as ensuring that the exempt person can maintain proper social distancing at all times during travel by either scheduling their travel during less crowded times or being able to situate the individual in less crowded sections of conveyance, if available.

The following fulfills the mask requirements:

- A properly worn mask that completely covers the nose and mouth.
- Masks should be secured to the head with ties, ear loops, or elastic bands that go behind the head.

The following DO NOT fulfill the mask requirements:

- Masks worn in a way that does not cover both the mouth and nose
- Face shields or goggles (face shields or goggles may be worn to supplement a mask that meets above required attributes)
- Scarves, ski masks, balaclavas, or bandannas
- Shirt or sweater collars (e.g., turtleneck collars) pulled up over the mouth and nose.

This Policy is being implemented in accordance with the President’s Executive Order as well as the CDC’S order, in order to achieve the following objectives:

- Preservation of Human Life;
- Maintaining a Safe and Secure Public Transit system;
- Mitigating the further introduction, transmission and spread of COVID-19 within the Community;
- Supporting response efforts to COVID-19 at the Local and State levels.

This Policy is being issued in conjunction with and in direct response to the President’s Executive Order and the CDC’s Order entitled *Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs* and is intended to offer additional guidance in order for RIPTA to maintain compliance with said orders. Both orders should be fully reviewed for further clarification of any topics addressed in this policy.