

**From:** TfL Press Office  
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**Subject:** TfL Press Release - Small minority of people failing to wear face coverings on public transport warned 'wear one or face a fine'

Press release



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Thursday 8 Oct 2020

TfL Press Release - Small minority of people failing to wear face coverings on public transport warned 'wear one or face a fine'



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PN-086

- **Operations underway across TfL's Transport networks targeting people ignoring the law and risking Londoners' health**
- **Ignoring the law on face coverings could result in a fine of up to £6,400**

Transport for London (TfL) has today warned the small minority of people breaking the law by failing to wear a face covering on public transport that they must wear one or face a hefty fine.

Since 15 June, it has been mandatory for customers to wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth for their entire journey, including in stations and on platforms, unless they are exempt. The vast majority of people on London's transport network who are not exempt are protecting others by correctly wearing a face covering, with more than 90 per cent compliance at the busiest times of the

day. But a small number of people continue to put public health at risk by flouting the law. This selfish minority will be penalised and could face prosecution.

TfL's enforcement officers, alongside police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service (Met) and British Transport Police (BTP) are carrying out enforcement operations on the transport network every day at locations across the capital. Last week, enforcement operations – which target people failing to wear their face covering properly as well as those without one - took place on buses, trains and at stations across London, including Stratford; Notting Hill Gate; King's Cross; Bexleyheath and Stamford Hill, with the vast majority of people able to produce or correct their face covering, or having a valid exemption.



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TfL uses information provided by bus drivers, station and other frontline staff about where there are issues of non-compliance, which it uses alongside other intelligence to determine where to deploy its officers.

Since 4 July, when TfL enforcement officers moved to an enforcement phase after previously explaining the requirement and encouraging compliance, officers have carried out around 105,000 interventions with people not wearing a face

covering or not wearing it in the correct way covering the nose and mouth. Most complied after being spoken to by an officer. Around 7,600 were stopped from boarding and 1,800 people removed from services. Fixed penalty notices are a last resort, as the majority of Londoners do want to keep themselves and others safe, but they are used where necessary – with around 400 fines issued by TfL officers to those refusing to comply. Following new measures introduced by the Government, TfL and the police have powers to issue stronger penalties and to prosecute those more persistent offenders.

Today, BTP and TfL enforcement officers carried out a joint operation at King's Cross St Pancras Tube station.

**Siwan Hayward, Director of Compliance, Policing Operations and Security at Transport for London (TfL), said:** “To help protect everyone’s health and control the spread of the virus, it is essential that people wear face coverings. It is also hugely important for giving Londoners confidence to travel.

“The vast majority of customers are protecting others by wearing a face covering properly unless they are exempt, and most people are very responsive when they are spoken to and will put one on or adjust it. But sadly, there is a selfish minority who are showing a complete disregard for everyone around them and who think it is ok to ignore the law. It is those individuals our enforcement officers and the police are targeting through our enforcement operations, which are taking place across London at all times of day. My message to these individuals is: you will be caught and face a hefty fine or prosecution. We would rather people were sensible and follow the law, but we will take enforcement action when we need to.”

**Heidi Alexander, Deputy Mayor for Transport, said:** “Wearing a face covering properly on public transport is vital to help control the spread of the virus, and it’s encouraging that 90 per cent of passengers are doing so during the busiest times of day. But we need everyone to play their part and comply, unless they are exempt. The police and TfL’s enforcement officers are working hard to ensure that the selfish minority who are not complying are targeted, and if necessary, refused entry to the network and fined. Only by working together and following the

rules can we fight the virus and keep our public transport network as safe as possible.”

**Sean O’Callaghan, Assistant Chief Constable at BTP, said:** “Wearing a face covering whilst travelling is becoming a part of our everyday routine and we are all contributing to stemming the spread of Covid-19 cases nationwide. Wearing one in the vicinity of others significantly reduces the transmission of the disease and saves lives.

“We are pleased to report that compliance with this law has been high across the Tube and rail network. However, a small percentage of people are failing to comply with the requirement. We therefore continue to deploy officers across the network to ensure compliance rates remain high on-board trains and in stations, anyone who fails to comply without an exemption are being removed from the network and in some cases where appropriate issued with a fixed penalty notice.

“Our officers are not only there to challenge those deliberately flaunting the law, but to provide confidence in travelling to those who do comply with the law or are exempt.”



**Superintendent Gary Taylor from the Met's Roads and Transport Policing**

**Command said:** "Months have passed since it became a legal requirement to wear a face covering on public transport, therefore there is no excuse for people to ignorantly flout this rule and refuse to wear one. Officers across the Roads and Transport Policing Command have challenged thousands of people for not wearing a face covering and unsurprisingly, most people respond positively to officers' advice and put one on. Of course, officers remain sympathetic to those people who are exempt and will only use enforcement action as a last resort."

**Professor Kevin Fenton, London regional director for Public Health**

**England, said:** "Cases of COVID-19 are increasing in London and we need to take action now and do everything we can to slow the spread. Wearing a face covering is one of the simple steps we can take to protect each other from coronavirus – the best evidence shows that covering your nose and mouth reduces the risk of passing on the virus to those near us. This is especially important when other measures like social distancing are more difficult, such as on public transport."

"Many Londoners rely on our public transport system, so help keep it safe and wear your face covering properly by covering both your nose and mouth, wash your hands regularly and use hand sanitiser points across the network, and keep your distance from others where possible. If Londoners pull together, all of these small actions can make a big impact on infection rates in our city."

**Emma Gibson, Director of London TravelWatch, said:** "Our research shows that many Londoners are worried about their fellow passengers not wearing face coverings, and that affects their confidence about using the tube or bus. Some people are exempt from wearing them, but for those people who are choosing not to wear a face covering, this increase in enforcement will be welcomed by the majority of Londoners."



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TfL is running an extensive advertising campaign to remind customers of the requirement to wear a face covering, as well as sending millions of customer emails, and targeting people through social media and on the TfL website. Extensive signage is also being displayed in stations and on trains, alongside regular PA announcements.

The requirement to wear a face covering is one of a number of measures introduced to the transport network to ensure that the public transport network is clean, safe and well-managed during the pandemic. An enhanced cleaning regime is in operation, which uses hospital-grade cleaning substances that kill viruses and bacteria on contact and provides ongoing disinfection.

Key interchanges are frequently cleaned, and all regular 'touch points', such as poles and doors, are regularly wiped down with a strong disinfectant. Trains are

also cleaned with a long-lasting anti-viral spray which also helps to protect customers.

More than 1,000 hand sanitiser points are available across the transport network for customers to use, and a partnership with Dettol on the London Underground is accompanied by an advertising campaign about the importance of using hand sanitiser to help protect others.

Signage to remind people of the face covering requirement is present across the transport network, as are posters and platform stickers helping everyone to maintain social distancing. In addition, one-way systems and queuing arrangements will continue to be in use wherever needed.

## Contact Information

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## Notes to editors

- The British Transport Police is deployed on the Underground, rail and trams networks. The Metropolitan Police Roads and Transport Policing Command covers the bus network and will support TfL's activity to improve compliance in taxi and private hire vehicles
- In line with Government rules, face coverings must be worn for the full duration of journeys on the public transport network. This includes on the vehicle or train and in stations. Face covering must cover both the mouth and nose and should not be removed mid-journey unless you need to eat, drink or take medication.
- A list of face covering exemptions, and information on face covering exemption cards or badges can be found on the TfL website here: <https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/face-coverings>

## Downloads



**TfL Image - BTP officers onboard Tube train-2**

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**TfL Image - face covering enforcement on buses-2**

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**TfL Image - Face covering poster OnMeansOn**

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**TfL Image - Face covering poster**

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**TfL Image - Face covering enforcement**

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**TfL Image - Enforcement officers**

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