



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE

Travelling safely during the coronavirus pandemic: level 3 guidance for the public

How to be safe when walking, cycling, and travelling in vehicles or on public transport during the coronavirus pandemic.

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This guidance is national guidance that applies across Wales.

Introduction

From 12 April 2021 travel restrictions were eased so that travel into or out of Wales is permitted as long the journey takes place to or from a country within the UK or wider Common Travel Area (Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel

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Islands). However, some countries within the Common Travel Area may still have travel restrictions in place which may prevent journeys without a reasonable excuse, for example, travelling for work or education.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020, have applied since Sunday 20 December 2020.

International travel will continue to be restricted by the quarantine regulations, which are kept under constant review.

This guide will help you understand how to travel safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions in Wales in the event it is essential you travel. It provides advice for travelling by foot, cycling and private vehicles (for example cars and vans) and by taxis and other public transport (for example trains, buses, ferries).

Restrictions

The regulations impose obligations on persons responsible for premises open to the public, or for work being carried out at any premises, for the purpose of minimising risk of exposure to coronavirus at the premises.

They require:

1. all reasonable measures to be taken to ensure that a distance of 2 metres is maintained between persons on the premises
2. any other reasonable measures to be taken - for example to limit close face to face interaction and maintain hygiene, and
3. information to be provided to those entering or working at premises about how to minimise risk of exposure to coronavirus.

The regulations provide for guidance to be issued about the practical application of the requirements imposed - and those subject to the requirements must have regard to that guidance.

For these purposes premises includes vehicles used as taxis as well as vehicles used for other public transport such as buses and trains.

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You are asked to at all times follow the instructions or advice given to you by operators when using public transport for your own safety and that of other passengers and transport staff.

Many people have made huge sacrifices to live within the rules since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. We now need to make sure that the effort we have made together is not wasted.

To do that, we all need to take steps to keep each other safe, and we must all keep living our lives differently.

The main things we are asking people to do are:

- Stay out of each other's homes, unless in certain very limited circumstances
- Limit the times you leave your home, and the distance you travel
- Please maintain social distancing, including outdoors
- Please meet people outdoors rather than indoors where possible
- Work from home if you can
- Wash your hands regularly and follow other advice on hygiene
- Self-isolate if you have or experience symptoms

For further information on what you should or shouldn't do, please see our: [Protect yourself and others from coronavirus](#).

If it is essential that you travel, you should:

- consider all other forms of transport such as cycling and walking before using public transport
- follow the instructions or advice given to you by operators when using public transport
- avoid the busiest times and routes – check changes to local services before you travel, services may be reduced.
- keep your distance when you travel where possible
- wash and sanitise your hands regularly
- wear a 3 layer face covering when using public transport or using bus or rail stations or other transport hubs.

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People from different households should not share cars.

Face coverings

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued its advice on non-medical face coverings. The widespread use of non-medical face coverings by healthy people in the community setting is not yet supported.

However the WHO recommended that governments encourage the public to wear 3 layer non-medical face coverings in specific settings where other more effective measures were not possible.

As demand increases this might mean that 2 metres physical distancing is difficult or not possible.

The Welsh Government has made it a legal requirement to wear a non-medical face covering on public transport, which includes taxis. Masks must also be worn in all indoor areas of bus and rail stations, ferry ports, airports and other transport hubs.

While the vast majority of people will be able to wear a face covering, some will be exempt or have a reasonable excuse not to do so. These include children under the age of 11 years old, and people with certain medical conditions. A full list of exemptions can be found in [our FAQs](#).

Transport for Wales (TfW) has introduced a personalised exemption note scheme for customers who are exempt or have a reasonable excuse not to wear face coverings on public transport.

A **homemade** or purchased 3 layer face covering might reduce transmission from one person to another if made, worn, handled and disposed of properly. Some face coverings could be washable and reusable.

This is only the case for non-symptomatic people. People who are symptomatic must continue to self-isolate for seven days and get a test.

Do not let wearing a face covering give you a false sense of security. Wearing a

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face covering cannot be an excuse for ignoring physical distancing measures. Maintaining physical distancing wherever possible is a more effective measure than wearing a face covering but both together where physical distancing is not possible may be of benefit.

Walking and cycling

Walk or cycle if you can. It is good for you and the environment. Walking and cycling will also reduce pressure on the public transport system and the road network.

Try to maintain physical distancing when you walk or cycle. For example when approaching or passing other cyclists or pedestrians or when waiting at crossings and traffic lights.

Where using bicycles including bicycles hired from docking stations, wash or sanitise your hands before and after cycling.

Public transport

Plan your journey

Work from home if you can. Transport services will be reduced. If you need to travel, both before and during your journey check with your transport operator for the latest travel advice on your route including the level of service and how busy it is.

Travel may take longer than normal on some routes due to reduced capacity and physical distancing measures. Allow sufficient time if your journey involves changes between different forms of transport.

Plan ahead by identifying alternative routes and options as there will be disruption to services.

Where possible, book your travel online through your transport provider's

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ticketing app or website. Consider contactless payment to buy tickets. If you are unable to purchase tickets in advance or to use contactless via a bank card etc - and have to use cash - check with the operator as some bus companies operate a non-change policy to protect drivers.

Taking a less busy route and reducing the number of changes (for example between bus to train) will help you keep your distance from others. Public Health Wales recommends keeping a 2 metre distance from others. Where this is difficult, you should keep the time you spend within 2 metres of other people as short as possible and avoid physical contact. You must also wear a face covering (Welsh Government advises you wear a 3 layer face covering) unless you are exempt or have a reasonable excuse not to do so.

Try to start or end your journey using a station or mode of transport you know to be quieter or more direct. For instance, walk the first or last mile of your journey, or alight at an earlier station, where this is possible.

If you need travel advice and assistance, for example if you have a disability or particular need, consult the relevant transport operator in advance to get advice and discuss what you need.

What to take with you

Consider making a list of items to take with you and minimise the luggage you take on transport.

This could include some warmer clothing: as part of our current advice (guidance) is that 'where possible, transport operators and businesses should ensure that a fresh air supply is consistently flowing through vehicles, carriages, and transport hubs to minimise the risk of transmission of Coronavirus'.

On your journey

There may continue to be a reduction in services and there may be cancellations with little warning.

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Have regard to physical distancing in bus queues at bus stops and at railway stations. Wear a face covering (Welsh Government advises you wear a 3 layer face covering). If you cannot get onto a particular bus or train, be patient in these difficult circumstances. Everybody will be trying their best. Don't rush the doors of a bus or train and cause a crowd or put other travellers with particular needs at a disadvantage.

When travelling, you should try to keep 2 metres away from people who are not in your household or extended household. There may be situations where this is difficult, for example when boarding or alighting, on busier services, at busier times of day or when walking through interchanges. If you come within 2 metres of others, you should avoid physical contact, try to face away from other people, and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of others as short as possible.

All passengers must wear a face covering (Welsh Government advises you wear a 3 layer face covering) on public transport and when in indoor areas of transport hubs such as bus stations, railway stations, airports and ferry ports. Wearing a **face covering** might be beneficial as a precautionary measure. It might provide some extra protection to you and could protect others if you are infected, whether or not you have developed symptoms. Make sure you wear your face covering properly so that it forms a tight fit over your nose and mouth. Do not let the use of a face covering give you a false sense of security: continue to physically distance and maintain good hygiene including washing your hands before putting a face covering on or taking it off and wash your hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser as soon as possible after completing your journey.

A face covering is a legal requirement when using public transport.

A face covering in this situation is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by health care and other workers such as social care workers as part of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We should continue to prioritise this higher specification PPE for health and social care workers and those in industrial settings for example where exposed to dust and other similar hazards. If necessary, if you want to use a face covering and are having difficulty getting one, it is possible to **make face coverings at home**.

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Dispose of used non-reusable face coverings carefully in litter or other receptacles provided for the purpose or take them home with you to dispose of later. Do not litter used face coverings: not only are they litter but they could be a source of transmission of the coronavirus.

Treat transport staff with respect and follow instructions from your transport operator. This may include:

- notices about which seats to use or how to queue
- additional screens, barriers or floor markings
- requests to board through different doors or to move to less busy areas

You might be stopped from getting on a bus, train or taxi if the driver or guard has reasonable grounds to suspect that you are about to fail to wear a face covering on or in the vehicle.

Be considerate to your fellow passengers and to transport staff:

- wait for other passengers to get on or off first before you board
- do not congregate near entrances, exits, under canopies, at bus stops, on platforms or outside stations
- be prepared to queue or take a different entrance or exit at stations
- wait for the next service if you cannot safely keep your distance on board a train or bus
- respect other people's space while travelling
- be aware of pregnant, older and disabled people who may require a seat or extra space, for example to secure a wheelchair
- be aware that some individuals may have hidden disabilities
- be aware of people who need particular assistance, for example if someone needs to lip read consider lifting your face covering while maintaining appropriate physical distancing
- if somebody near you is experiencing difficulty hearing, reading or seeing a notice or otherwise having difficulty accessing information, be prepared to help them out as you would in normal circumstances while maintaining physical distance

Be aware of the surfaces you touch. Try to touch as few surfaces as possible.

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Use hand sanitiser if you do. Be careful not to touch your face. Carry tissues and cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use something else like the elbow of your sleeve if you have forgotten any tissues, to minimise the spread of droplets. Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser at the start and end of your journey.

Seek assistance if you need it

If you require assistance when travelling and would normally contact your transport operator ahead of time, continue to do so, so they can prepare accordingly. If you have problems queuing or otherwise moving through a travel concourse or accessing public transport vehicles, speak to your transport operator in advance to get advice and explain what assistance you need.

If any problems arise or you feel ill during your journey, speak to a member of transport staff. In the case of an emergency, contact the emergency services as you normally would.

If you need help, maintain a 2 metre distance from members of staff. If this is not possible you should avoid physical contact and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of staff as short as possible.

Children on public transport

Physical distancing applies to children as well as adults in order to help minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. Children should keep 2 metres from others who are not in their household or extended household. If this is not possible they should avoid physical contact, face away from others, and keep the time spent with others within 2 metres as short as possible.

If you are the responsible adult or carer travelling with children, please try to ensure that children observe physical distancing.

Where travel is necessary, consider whether children should walk or cycle and whether they should be accompanied by a responsible adult or carer.

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All children in year 7 and older age groups should wear a face covering when using school transport, unless there is a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey:

- consider walking or cycling from the station or stop you arrived at
- follow local guidance
- wash or sanitise your or your children's hands as soon as possible

Taxis and Private Hire vehicles

Find [information for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers](#).

At taxi ranks try to keep a 2 metre distance from others as recommended by Public Health Wales.

Private cars and other vehicles

Plan your journey

Plan your route, including any breaks, before setting out. Routes may be different as local areas make changes to enable physical distancing on pavements and cycle routes.

If you normally share a vehicle with people from other households (other than your extended household), you should find a different way to travel – as people from different households should not share a car. For example, consider walking or cycling if you can. This means that car pools or other arrangements for sharing vehicles to travel to work if you cannot work from home, with people who are not part of your household or your extended household, are not recommended at the moment because it would be difficult to keep to the rules and maintain physical distancing.

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On your journey

Good ventilation (keeping the car windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission.

Be aware of the surfaces you or others touch. Keep areas such as the steering wheel and door handles clean.

If you come within 2 metres of others, you should avoid physical contact, try to face away from other and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of others as short as possible.

If driving, you should anticipate more pedestrians and cyclists than usual, especially at peak times of day. Allow other road users to maintain physical distance. For example, give cyclists room for a 2 metre separation at traffic lights.

Limit the time you spend at garages, petrol stations and motorway services. Keep a 2 metre distance from others and if possible pay by contactless. Wash or sanitise your hands when arriving and leaving.

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey, we recommend you:

- follow local guidance
- wash or sanitise your hands as soon as possible.

Cross border travel

Anyone who does travel to other areas of the UK should make themselves aware of the restrictions and guidance in areas to which they intend to travel.

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Air passengers

International travel will continue to be restricted by the quarantine regulations, which are kept under constant review.

There is UK wide advice [safer air travel guidance for passengers](#) if you live in Wales and have to travel overseas or you are visiting Wales.

International travel

International travel will continue to be restricted by the quarantine regulations, which are kept under constant review.

If travelling abroad, make sure you check the latest [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\) advice \(on GOV.UK\)](#) before travelling. Check with your airline, ferry or train operator on specific rules for each route and destination.

Bear in mind that quarantine rules may apply when you return to the UK.

From Friday, 15 January 2021, travellers arriving in Wales from outside the common travel area (i.e. the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland) must be in possession of a negative result from a qualifying COVID-19 test taken not more than 72 hours before departure.

From 8 March 2021, passengers travelling internationally from England will need to carry a new form that sets out their trip is permitted under the stay at home restrictions. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): declaration form for international travel](#) must be downloaded, signed before travel, and carried or downloaded onto a mobile phone.

Carriers will be checking the forms have been completed before boarding, either at check-in (online or at the check-in desk) or the departure gate. Passengers who do not have a valid form may be denied access to their booked service.

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): countries and territories exempt from advice](#)

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against 'all but essential' international travel

At all points in your journey it is important that you follow physical distancing guidelines and keep 2 metres away from others where possible. Where this might not be possible you should keep the time you spend within 2 metres as short as possible and avoid physical contact.

You should review and follow any government guidance set by your destination country, and check public health advice before returning to the UK.

Your transport provider might put measures in place to help you follow the guidance of the destination country.

When finishing your journey, we recommend you:

- follow all local guidance
- wash or sanitise your hands as soon as possible

Legal requirements and enforcement

The requirement in the **Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020, as amended**, is to take all reasonable measures to ensure a distance of 2 metres is maintained between persons on premises now applies to vehicles. As a result it applies, for example on buses and trains as well as in indoor areas of railway stations, bus stations and airports. It is however, recognised that there will be times when it is difficult or not possible to maintain 2 metres physical distancing. Passengers should seek to minimise the amount of time they spend in closer proximity to other people and take avoiding actions where possible. Additional guidance has been issued to operators of public transport about additional mitigations they should consider putting in place when it is not possible to maintain 2 metres physical distance. You should follow the instructions or advice of operators of public transport at all times.

Given the dispersed nature of public transport it will be very difficult to have official enforcement of any guidance and there will be a high dependency on the

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general public's acting on the advice and on self-regulation.

Additional advice may be provided by transport staff and others employed for the purpose as many of us will have seen at supermarkets where social distancing is being effectively managed in queues and inside shops.

It is not the intention of the regulations to make queuing for a bus unlawful but the public need to be clear about their responsibility to maintain physical distancing wherever possible. Furthermore, employers have an overarching duty to their workers under the Health and Safety at Work Act. That may have an increased relevance for staff in the public transport system as demand increases.

The provisions for official enforcement are set out in the regulations and ultimately if an offence may have been committed the Police, British Transport Police or CPSOs may become involved and there is provision for fines to be imposed where offences have been committed.

Important: please read before proceeding further

Checklists for safer travel

Plan your journey

If travelling in Wales:

- walk or cycle to your destination if you can
- check the latest travel advice from your transport operator
- ask for any assistance you think you may need
- have you booked your travel ticket online or checked if contactless payment is possible?
- have you planned your journey to minimise crowded areas and to allow for delays?
- are you taking the most direct route to your destination?

If travelling outside Wales:

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- are you aware of any local requirements with which you should comply?
- have you checked public health advice before returning to Wales or the UK?

What to take with you

- a plan for your journey
- contactless payment card
- phone (if needed for travel updates, tickets, contactless payments)
- tickets
- hand sanitiser
- essential medicines
- food and water
- tissues
- a face covering or more than one if your journey is a long one or you will be travelling back later

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