

Our Current Actions to Reduce COVID-19 Exposure Risks on RTS Access

May 7, 2020

We are using these practices at RTS Access until further notice to keep you and our employees safe.

1. Action Number One: We changed the service to provide social distancing.
2. Action Number Two: Our Operators know about personal protective equipment, sanitation, and social distancing.
3. Action Number Three: We put more distance between the customer and the Operator on the bus.
4. Action Number Four: We disinfect and clean every bus thoroughly.
5. Action Number Five: We have rapid response protocols to control contamination.

Our actions are proving effective in reducing exposure and keeping people safe. To date, we have zero contamination incidents and zero COVID-19 issues directly related to our transportation services. We commend our Operators and Bus Washers specifically for their ongoing care and diligence.

Number One – Changes to Limit Direct Contact with Other People

We run our shared-ride service only when it is necessary, which is during the early morning and late evening.

Otherwise, we are performing direct trips. In general, a direct trip has the Operator, you, and whomever you include. At a minimum, two people are on the bus: yourself and the Operator. We recommend no more than four people on the bus: the Operator, you, your PCA, and one companion. Operators go to your destination directly without making other pickups during the trip.

When you reserve a trip, we encourage you to consider the importance of social distancing and keep the number of people traveling with you to a minimum when possible. We also encourage you to prioritize your direct trips for essential travel (medical appointments, pharmacies, and grocery stores).

We stopped sedan service, collecting fares, and functional assessments. We continue to send 90-day and 60-day recertification notices. If your recertification is due between March 15 and May 30, we are giving you a one-year extension to allow you to complete the recertification process.

These practices could continue to change based on direction from our elected leaders.

Note: Advanced reservations and same-day trips still work the same. If your trip involves children, the recommended maximum still applies (three riders plus the Operator). However, we would count one child as a companion and the second child as the PCA.

Number Two – Operator Education

All Operators wear a mask and nitrile gloves. They know how to remove and dispose of their gloves correctly, when to use hand sanitizer, and how to wash their hands properly.

Operators have gloves, masks, and Castle® Complete 360™ on the bus. Castle Complete 360 is a cleaner that destroys the COVID-19 virus. The CDC and EPA recommend the product. These supplies equip and empower the Operators to sanitize the bus throughout the day. When they sanitize, we have instructed them to open the windows and spray seats, seat belts, securement belts, handrails, posts, and interior and exterior door handles.

We require you to comply with New York State Executive Order 202.17. If you are over age two and can medically tolerate a face-covering, you must cover your nose or mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when unable to maintain social distance. Wearing a mask is especially important if you use a wheelchair, and the Operator must be close to you to secure the wheelchair or assist you on the lift. If you do not have a mask, the Operator will give one to you.

Operators will secure wheelchairs and accept your reasonable modification requests. These are situations when you need to cover your nose and mouth with a mask. Still, the Operators will maintain as much physical distance as possible during the process.

We encourage you to wear your own disposable or washable gloves if you have them and can do so without adverse effect.

If it is comfortable for you and the Operator, the windows may be open slightly during the trip.

Number Three – Space on the Bus

We stopped using the first row of seats on the bus. This adds 4 ½ feet of extra space between you and the Operator. We installed plexiglass to create a protective barrier between you and the Operator area.

Signs on the bus remind sighted customers about social distancing and wearing masks.

Number Four – Disinfection and Cleaning

We disinfect and clean the bus at the end of the service day. We wear respirator masks, goggles, gloves, and Tyvek® suits. We apply Castle® H-110™ to the bus surfaces. Castle H-110 is a hospital-grade disinfectant that destroys the viruses and bacteria found in hospitals and nursing homes. The EPA approves using Castle H-110 against the COVID-19 virus. Here is a checklist of the surfaces we disinfect:

- Seats, belts, and straps;
- Lift control box;
- Steering wheel, hand brake, touchscreen device, and radio;
- Handrails and posts;
- Walls, door handles, customer door, and glass.

We discard the gloves and put on new gloves. We use these products to clean the bus: Castle Complete 360 or Castle H-110 in the mop water, Castle 222® on hard surfaces, and glass cleaner on windows. Here is a checklist of the items we clean:

- Ceilings and walls;
- Floors, step treads, and step-wells;
- Wheel wells;
- Seats and seat frames/supports/partitions;
- Handrails and straps;
- Doors;
- Windows and windshield;
- Interior mirrors; and
- Dashboard and all instruments.

Number Five – Response to Contamination

If an Operator feels sick when they arrive at the office, we send them home and assign their trips to another Operator. We check the trips the sick Operator made during the last two days and inform the Department of Health.

If the Operator has COVID-19 symptoms while driving, we respond immediately. All trips go to another Operator and bus. If customers are on the bus when the Operator has symptoms, we send another bus as soon as possible.

We isolate and transport the sick Operator on a separate bus. We quarantine the buses from the general public at the RTS Access facility and apply signs to the buses to indicate they are contaminated. We inform the Department of Health. The Department of Health will provide notifications as necessary.

We disinfect and clean the buses. We put the bus into service only after we complete all the quarantining, disinfecting, and cleaning.

Note: Our actions are subject to change based on how the situation develops and direction from elected leaders and health experts. Information, directives, and best practices from health experts and elected leaders change each day as we learn more about the pandemic. We will maintain the flexibility to adjust our procedures and policies in response to the rapidly changing environment. We will do our best to keep you informed.

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