

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 and riding public transit

Is it safe to ride public transit?

Riding public transit is safe. We strengthened cleaning procedures on bus, light rail and paratransit vehicles and continue to monitor guidelines from Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For now, we continue with rear-door boarding while installation of operator doors continues through spring and summer. Riders should continue to social distance and face coverings are still required on all transit services.

What can riders do to prevent spreading COVID-19?

- If you feel sick, stay home.
- Wear face coverings while on transit and at station platforms.
 - From the CDC, [cloth face coverings](#) are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Pick up a free face mask at Phoenix transit centers and libraries. Pop-up distribution points are also occurring at light rail stations. To date, more than 40,000 masks have been distributed.
 - We encourage all riders to continue to practice social distancing of six feet, if possible, while waiting and onboard public transit.
 - Consider skipping a row of seats between yourself and other riders if possible.
 - Look for social distancing instructions or physical guides.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before traveling and again when you reach your destination.
- Avoid contact with high-touch areas when possible.
 - Wash or sanitize your hands after contact with high-touch areas.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Try to use buses and trains when it is less busy. Leave earlier or later for work if possible.

What are you doing to clean vehicles?

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we have implemented several new cleaning techniques and increased sanitization frequency to help slow the spread. We will continue to conduct fogging on both buses and light rail vehicles as a regular cleaning technique. Fogging is an anti-viral/anti-bacterial vapor misting system that disinfects large spaces by leaving a longer, residual clean.

- Buses are now being fogged three times a week. On the other days of the week, all high-touch areas are cleaned with an anti-viral cleaning solution.
 - Many buses are also being cleaned at the end of the route with anti-viral cleaning solution.
- Light rail vehicles are fogged once a month with a two-step process that lasts longer. The high-touch areas are cleaned every day with an anti-viral cleaning solution. Light rail vehicles are also cleaned at the end of line with anti-viral cleaning solution.
- Paratransit vehicles are cleaning with a broad-spectrum disinfectant nightly. Drivers are also wiping down high-touch areas with disinfectant throughout the day.

What should riders do if they have concerns or see a vehicle that needs attention?

Riders with concerns or see a transit vehicle that needs attention, please contact Customer Service at (602)253-5000 or csr@valleymetro.org. Additionally, if you are on light rail, you can use our safety and security app, [AlertVM](#), to receive an immediate response. The response team can send out cleaning crews or additional resources to address the issue.

What are you doing to protect operators? Sometimes they aren't wearing PPE.

Our operators have ample supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to use. Operators are required to wear face coverings when entering and exiting the vehicles or interacting with passengers. When inside the cabin or behind a health barrier, operators may remove their face coverings.

When will the service levels return to normal?

Early morning and late-night service levels were reduced on May 4, 2020 as a response to reduced demand and to save on operations costs. Early morning service was reinstated with October services changes on October 26, 2020. For trips to return to pre-COVID service levels, the Phoenix City Council must vote to reinstate service levels. For more information on the Phoenix City Council decision visit phoenix.gov/newsroom/public-transit/1161.

Has there been a decline in ridership since COVID-19?

When our state closed in April 2020, there was a decline in ridership since many people started teleworking and taking essential trips only. Nearly a year later, many people are still working from home, but as people get vaccinated, we have seen an increase in ridership since the start of the pandemic. For the time being, this is a good thing as riders have more space to social distance.

When are the passenger limits being expanded or changed?

The passenger limits onboard buses that began on April 13, 2020 was a decision made by the Phoenix

City Council. Passenger space on buses is limited for the safety of the operators and riders. If the rider capacity is reached, bus operators can deny passenger boardings until additional capacity is available. To return to pre-COVID passenger levels, the Phoenix City Council must vote to remove the passenger limitations. For more information on the Phoenix City Council decision visit phoenix.gov/newsroom/public-transit/1078.

When will we be allowed to board through the front doors again?

We began installing operator doors in the fall of 2020 to help provide protection for riders and operators. Once all buses are equipped with operator doors, we will resume front door boarding and collecting fares through the farebox. There is no specific date set yet, but we anticipate late summer 2021.

Do I have to pay a fare?

Riders are expected to have fare onboard. Bus riders should hold up their pass as they enter. Rail riders should be prepared to show their pass to fare inspectors when on a train or platform.

Where can I buy fare?

All Valley Metro light rail stations have fare vending machines to purchase passes. A light rail one-ride ticket is not eligible on the bus. All other pass types are accepted on the bus. There are additional retail locations where bus and light rail fares may be purchased. To find a retail location near you visit valleymetro.org/where-to-buy.

Are transit centers open?

All transit centers are open for bus and rail service. Select transit center windows are closed to purchase a pass but are providing face coverings. For more information on specific transit centers visit valleymetro.org/COVID19.

Will any projects under construction or in planning be impacted due to COVID-19?

As of right now, planning and construction of light rail construction is continuing on schedule. To find out more, go to the [project pages](#) and sign up for [regular email updates](#).

Where do I get on-going COVID-19 information from Valley Metro?

We have created a dedicated webpage to all things relating to COVID-19 at valleymetro.org/COVID19. This webpage has the latest information on service updates, traveling during COVID-19 and any additional changes to Valley Metro due to the pandemic. You can also [sign up for regular email updates](#) from Valley Metro.

