

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). Riders should continue to social distance and face coverings are required by a [federal mandate](#).

Several [studies](#) during the pandemic have proved the COVID-19 virus is not easily spread on public transit.

What can riders do to prevent spreading COVID-19?

- If you feel sick, stay home.
- Wear a face covering at all times while on transit vehicles. The federal mandate was extended to January 18, 2022 and requires passengers to wear a mask when riding.
 - 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. To date, more than 73,000 masks have been distributed.
- We encourage all riders to continue to practice social distancing of six feet, if possible, while waiting and on board public transit.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before traveling and again when you reach your destination.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- We encourage all riders and employees to get the vaccine to help protect passengers, operators and our communities.

What are you doing to clean vehicles?

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we have implemented several new cleaning techniques and increased sanitization frequency. We continue to conduct fogging on both buses and trains 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 ends-of-line with an anti-viral cleaning solution.
- Paratransit vehicles are cleaned 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. All of our buses are now equipped with health barrier doors for additional protection for operators and riders.

When will the service levels return to normal?

During the pandemic, we reduced service minimally to maintain as much service on the street and for our essential workers as possible. As we've monitored ridership across this year, we've restored service as needed and will continue to do so to meet demand. If you have feedback on specific route(s), please connect with Customer Service at csr@valleymetro.org or 602-253-5000.

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

When our state closed in April 2020, there was a decline in ridership as many people started teleworking and taking essential trips only. Many people are still working from home, but as people continue to get vaccinated, we have seen an increase in ridership since the start of the pandemic.

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

Front door boarding is resuming on Monday, October 11, 2021. All passengers should have fare ready before entering and are expected to wear a mask.

Do I have to pay a fare?

Riders are expected to have fare on board.

Beginning Oct. 11, bus riders should have fare ready as they return to entering through the front door of

the bus. Rear doors will be for exiting only. Fare inspections on light rail will resume on Oct. 11 as well.

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. Until Oct. 8, select transit center windows are closed to purchase a pass but are providing face coverings. Beginning Oct. 11, all transit center windows will have fare passes available for purchase. 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.

