



CTAA Recommended COVID-19 Safety Protocols

The following set of COVID-19 safety protocols has been developed for CTAA members by collecting — in a single place — all of the guidance from a variety of federal agencies. Where no (or limited) actual guidance is available, we've collected the best practical advice from public and community transportation operators in the field. As it has been since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, CTAA's overriding recommendation to its members is to err on the side of safety (of both transit staff and the riding public) in all decision making.

Document Summary: These recommendations include guidance on masks (for passengers and drivers), driver compartment barriers, at-risk drivers, vehicle/transit facility cleaning and disinfecting, essential trips, fare collection, wheelchair securement and transporting a COVID-19 positive patient.

These recommendations are not legally binding in their own right. Conformity with these recommendations is voluntary only. This document is intended only to provide clarity to CTAA members regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. If you have questions relating to COVID-19, please contact the CDC and your local public health agency directly. Of course, you can always call CTAA, as well.

01 Masks



For Passengers: CTAA recommends all of its member agencies require masks of all passengers (this is for the safety of both operators and passengers). Where possible, it is advisable for systems to offer masks (cloth) to passengers seeking to board without one. Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

- CDC guidance on cloth face coverings:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

For Drivers: CTAA recommends N95 masks (or the Chinese equivalent KN-95). CTAA recently sent contact information for a KN95 mask manufacturer to all members. Please email klocke@ctaa.org should you want this information.

If you are unable to acquire N95 (or the Chinese equivalent KN-95), CTAA recommends the use of masks/face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

- CDC Guidance on use (and re-use) of N95/KN95 masks: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidance.html>
- FTA Guidance on implementing policies and procedures for face coverings: https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2020-04/FTA-Safety-Advisory-20-01-COVID-19_0.pdf
- CDC Guidance on strategies to conserve, extend, and respond to shortages in the supply of NIOSH-approved filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs) used in non-healthcare worksite: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/conserving-respirator-supply.html>
- CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/disinfecting-transport-vehicles.html>
- CDC Guidance for Bus Transit Operators, which includes a recommendation for wearing cloth face coverings in public settings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/bus-transit-operator.html>

02 At-Risk Drivers



As we've seen many members do immediately, CTAA recommends placing at-risk drivers on administrative leave. At-risk drivers include those with underlying conditions that the CDC had identified as high-risk. If feasible, systems should extend this policy to drivers over the age of 60 and/or those who are living with someone over the age of 70 with pre-existing conditions. CARES Act funding will allow urban and rural transit operators to continue to pay any at-risk drivers placed on administrative leave.

- CDC guidance on people who are at higher risk for severe illness: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
- FTA guidance on using CARE Funds to pay for administration needs due to COVID-19: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19#COVID-19FFER>
- Society for Human Resource Management guidance on HR policies and procedures during COVID-19: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/pages/communicable-diseases.aspx>
- CDC guidance for business and employers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

03 Driver Compartment Barriers



CTAA recommends that each of its members establish — as best as they can — driver compartments that separate drivers from passengers. In some cases, members are doing this using shower curtains and other full-length clear plastic draping. In others, systems are cordoning off several front rows of seats from use to create a six-foot barrier between driver and passengers. Additionally, if possible, require bus passengers to enter and exit the bus through rear entry doors. Consult your bus manufacturer/dealer for possible suggestions and ideas.

- CDC Guidance for bus transit operators: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/bus-transit-operator.html>
- FTA guidance on social distancing: https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2020-04/FTA-Safety-Advisory-20-01-COVID-19_0.pdf

Based on guidance from the CDC, CTAA recommends that drivers should close doors/windows between driver/passenger compartments before bringing the rider on board, and use open windows or the ventilation system in non-recirculated mode to allow for proper and safe ventilation/air circulation within the vehicle. CDC recommends isolating drivers from patients when possible by keeping pass-through doors and windows shut. In addition, CDC guidelines recommend using vehicles that have isolated driver and patient compartments that can provide separate ventilation to each area.

- CDC Guidance for EMS: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>
- CDC Guidance for Administrators and Leaders of Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>
- CDC Guidance (see pg 4): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>

04 Social Distancing

In addition to limiting trips to essential purposes only, CTAA recommends the social/physical distancing of passengers both between the passenger and driver, and between passengers within a vehicle. CTAA recommends following the CDC's minimum 6-foot distance guidance between passengers and drivers to ensure maximum protection against virus transmission. Agencies should consider strategic deployment of ongoing services and routes to avoid, as much as possible, overcrowding buses. Some CTAA members are limiting the number of passengers per vehicle, or even adopting a 'one driver, one bus' rule to allow for reduced cross contamination. Other members have roped off certain seats in the bus to ensure that passengers don't sit too close to one another. To that point, drivers should avoid picking up multiple passengers who would not otherwise be riding together on the same route. CDC has also recommended that the use of larger vehicles such as vans is recommended when feasible to allow greater social (physical) distance between vehicle occupants. CTAA urges members to consider social distancing for staff in such areas as driver ready rooms, routing and scheduling departments and call centers.

- CDC Social Distancing Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

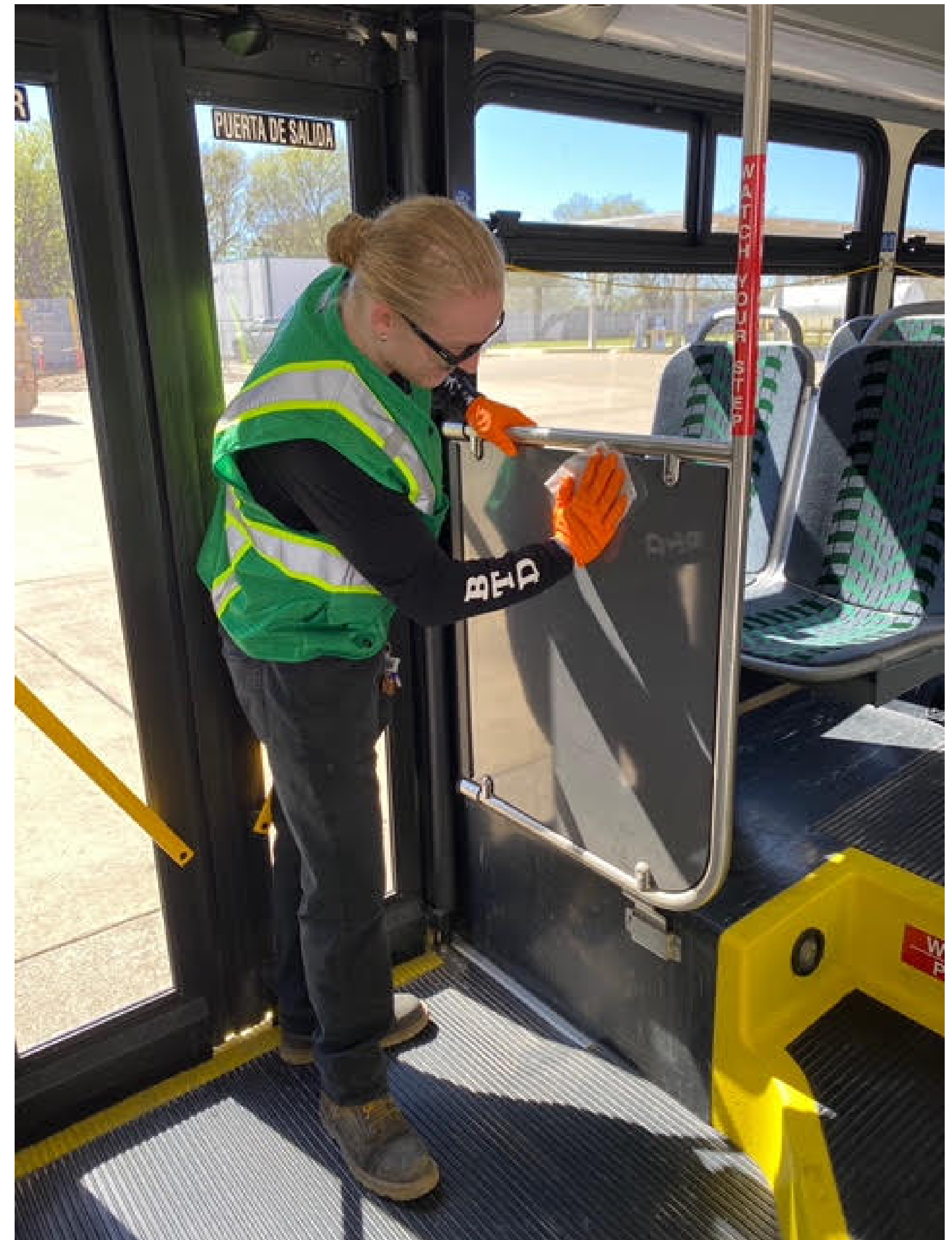
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Vehicle and Transit Facility Cleaning and Disinfecting

In addition to CTAA’s [previous suggestions](#) to members about proper vehicle and transit facility cleaning, CTAA recommends disinfectant fogging of vehicles on a regular schedule. If anyone on the vehicle is known COVID-19 positive — particularly relevant for NEMT operations — systems should perform, as immediately as possible, a full cleaning and disinfectant fogging of the vehicle.

If an agency is unable to procure a disinfectant fogging machine, CTAA recommends that all high-touch surfaces be properly cleaned and disinfected multiple times throughout the day. High touch surfaces include kiosks, turnstiles, benches, railings, handrails, garbage cans, bike racks, door handles, payphones, restroom surfaces (faucets, toilets, counters), poles, handrails, seats, benches, grab bars, and exit buttons.

CTAA recommends that while cleaning, transit staff wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the process, including handling trash.



- EPA list of products that meet criteria use against COVID-19: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- FTA guidance on cleaning and disinfecting: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- CDC guidance for transit station workers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/transit-station-workers.html>
- CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-Emergency Transport Vehicles: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/disinfecting-transport-vehicles.html>

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Fare Collection

For safe social distancing reasons and to reduce community spread of the virus, CTAA recommends that its members abandon fare collection policies for the duration of the pandemic. Some members have placed donation boxes in the passenger area of vehicles.

Please note: while we recommend against enforcing fare collection policies, some CTAA members have alerted us that this may lead to an increase in riders. Agencies should be prepared to enforce “essential-trip only” policies in instances where this may happen.

- FTA guidance on reimbursing lost farebox revenue with CARES Act funding: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

07

Essential Trips



While operating under government-mandated stay-at-home orders, CTAA recommends all its members restrict services to essential trips only. From a wide variety of discussions with member agencies, the following trip types have emerged as truly essential:

- Employment trips for front-line healthcare workers;
- Employment trips for first responders;
- Employment trips to individuals working in groceries and pharmacies, as well as in restaurants;
- Trips to purchase food and medicine; and
- Non-emergency medical trips (CTAA recommends reviewing or contacting your state Medicaid agency for additional guidance on NEMT trips).

To enforce these essential trips-only policies, CTAA member agencies have widely communicated such policies within their communities via social media, traditional media and even with specific signage at high-traffic stops/transfer centers/trip generators. Some agencies have provided drivers with questions to ask of each passenger, allowing them to deny non-essential trips. Small-urban CTAA members have stationed personnel at high-traffic stops/transfer centers/trip generators to enforce essential-only trips.

- CDC Guidance on Running Essential Errands: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html>
- Department of Homeland Security guidance on the essential critical infrastructure workforce: <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Guidance-on-the-Essential-Critical-Infrastructure-Workforce.pdf>

08

Wheelchair Securement

Wheelchair securement cannot be done effectively without a driver coming into direct contact with the passenger. CTAA has issued a set of [guidelines](#) for wheelchair securement from its PASS Master Trainers. For drivers securing passengers in wheelchairs, agencies must provide top-level personal protective equipment including, but not limited to, gloves, masks/shields as well as absolutely requiring passengers in wheelchairs to wear masks. At this time, many states are recommending public transportation and NEMT operators refer COVID-19 positive patients to local EMS providers for transportation. However, if as a provider you choose to transport COVID-19 positive passengers in wheelchairs, CTAA recommends following CDC policies on equipment and cleaning for nurses and doctors working directly with positive patients.



- CDC guidance on potential exposure to COVID-19 patients: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>
- CDC guidance for healthcare personnel on hand hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hand-hygiene.html>
- CDC guidance for healthcare personnel on PPE: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>
- CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

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Transporting a COVID-19 Positive Patient

For those operations who are unsure of whether or not they should transport COVID-19 positive patients, CTAA recommends you check with your state's Public Health Department and Medicaid Agency, regardless of your status as an NEMT provider. A large number of states are recommending against the transportation of COVID-19 patients by public transportation and NEMT providers, and encouraging partnerships with local EMS providers to safely transport these patients. Whatever decision you may choose, it should be made in conjunction with your local public health officials.

If you are not transporting COVID-19 positive patients, CTAA recommends that before each trip the dispatcher or driver screens the rider with a predetermined set of questions asking about symptoms and trip purpose.

Suggested screening questions:

- What is the essential service destination for your trip today?
- Have you had a fever in the last 72 hours? If so, the passenger may not board.
- Have you been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days? If so, the passenger may not board.
- Have you experienced any cold or flu-like symptoms in the last 14 days (cough, sore throat, respiratory illness, difficulty breathing, etc.)? If so, the passenger may not board.
- Have you been in contact with anyone who has experienced any cold or flu-like symptoms in the last 14 days (fever, cough, sore throat, respiratory illness, difficulty breathing, etc.)? If so, the passenger may not board.

Additionally, for any operations undertaking the transportation of COVID-19 positive passengers, CTAA recommends the use of larger vehicles where feasible to allow for greater social (physical) distance between vehicle occupants. CTAA also suggests, reserving a limited collection of vehicles for such trips, thereby limiting potential exposure and necessary additional cleaning and disinfectant procedures. For those providers transporting either known or suspected COVID-19 positive riders, CTAA also recommends the reviewing and following [CDC's Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-Emergency Transport Vehicles](#), which while similar to existing guidance specifically focuses on NET/NEMT trips.

- CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-Emergency Transport Vehicles:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/disinfecting-transport-vehicles.html>
- FTA guidance on how a transit system can inform riders they are not transporting COVID-19 patients:
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Have questions? Reach out to CTAA's Membership and Business Development Director Loreal Lance (lance@ctaa.org)

CTAA is here for you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us regarding any challenges you're facing.

