

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1) What is the purpose of Governor Northam’s mandate for face coverings in public spaces, including on public transportation?**

The safety of the traveling public, especially those who utilize public transportation systems, continues to be of utmost importance as more and more Virginians begin to return to normal travel routines during Virginia’s phased recovery.

The Governor and his team have reviewed mandatory face covering policies issued in other states as they pertain to public transportation use, including Maryland and the District of Columbia, jurisdictions served by Virginia public transportation operators and used by Virginia residents. With the forecasted increase of public transit riders in the days and weeks ahead, it is now prudent to require face coverings for the safety of the traveling public and transit operators alike.

**2) When does the Executive Order go into effect? When does it expire?**

Governor Northam issued [Executive Order Sixty-Three](#) on Tuesday, May 26, and it is effective Friday, May 29, 2020, or until otherwise amended or cancelled.

**3) Does the mandate apply to all transportation providers?**

Face coverings shall be worn on public transportation systems, as operated by local governments, regional commissions, or other bodies empowered by the Commonwealth for such purpose.

This includes all local public transportation agencies, providers, and non-profit organizations providing human service transportation. With the exception of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s *Virginia Breeze* rural intercity bus service, the order **does not** include private intercity or charter buses, nor other private transportation services.

**4) How will public transportation agencies in Virginia comply with the order? What penalties exist for non-compliance?**

Public transportation providers, with few exceptions, must require all customers and employees alike to wear face coverings when using public transportation services. A face covering includes anything that covers your nose and mouth, such as a mask, scarf, or bandana. Where possible, transit agencies are encouraged to provide face coverings for riders that do not have them. The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will encourage transit agencies to develop policies and procedures appropriate for their operators and employees to follow in enforcing this requirement.

**5) How will local, state, and federal government resources be used to support the order?**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently notified the Commonwealth that it intends to provide numerous facemasks to be distributed to public transit agencies across the Commonwealth. DRPT will work with state agency partners to assist with the distribution of that equipment to transit agencies as it becomes available.

Transit agencies may also utilize federal funding provided through the CARES Act to procure facemasks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to comply with this order.

- 6) **For transit agencies whose services cross state boundaries (e.g., WMATA, Loudoun, PRTC, Bristol), how does Virginia's Executive Order compare with regulations in other states?** [Executive Order Sixty-Three](#) aligns Virginia with social distancing requirements already implemented in the District of Columbia and Maryland. WMATA, other regional public transit systems, and Amtrak, which serve customers in all three jurisdictions, have already implemented a mandatory face coverings policy.

Additionally, [Executive Order Sixty-Three](#) supports two prior Executive Orders Governor Northam issued regarding public transit, which strongly suggest the use of face coverings among other policies that support the safety of operators and passengers alike.