Essential work related use of vehicles

A COVID-19 Factsheet

How to apply the COVID-19 physical distancing rules

**Application**

This guideline applies to all Transport for NSW workers, including Professional Services Contractors and Labour hire employees. It applies to the use of motor vehicles specifically, however, the requirements within this document can also be considered in the context of mobile plant such as rollers, excavators, graders etc.

Whilst this guide can be used to consult with and assist Industry Partners, it is not specifically applicable to them. This is particularly the case where TfNSW has appointed an Industry Partner/Contractor as a Principal Contractor.

These guidelines do not apply to public transport such as trains and public buses.

**Basic Principles**

Prior to using a work vehicle, confirm that the work related use of vehicles is essential and ask the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the travel?
   1. Can the purpose be completed another way such as video conference, virtual site visit, using essential personnel already on site to conduct inspections?
   2. If travel is required, what is the most appropriate means of transport considering the 1.5m distancing requirements?
   3. Can the task be delegated to reduce the number of personnel going to site?
2. If, after answering these questions use of a work vehicle is the only choice, the following considerations are to be made prior to travel:
   1. How many people need to travel?
   2. How can 1.5m physical distancing be maintained? For example:
      1. If 5 people must travel to site – a 20 seater bus may be a practicable option with each person sitting in the window seats and a row apart
      2. Up to two people per vehicle – and where a rear cab exists the driver and one passenger seated in the rear curb side seat.
3. Have hygiene requirements recommended by the government been met?
   1. Where will the vehicle be refuelled and what is an appropriate process for refuelling? What method of payment will be made? (If the fuel purchase is kept to under $100 paywave can be completed without touching the payment console).
   2. What other control measures are needed in the vehicle to ensure hygiene is maintained e.g. hand sanitisers, PVC disposable gloves, etc.

Further specific information is provided in the following sections.

When considering the below, the associated risk factors should be assessed to allow for selection of the most appropriate control measures in accordance with the hierarchy of controls. That is, eliminating risk exposure before reducing risk through the highest level of controls so far as is reasonably practicable.

## Health and hygiene

Workers who are unwell or displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home and not

travel to any TfNSW or other workplace.

Workers using vehicles are to practice [good hygiene](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others-from-coronavirus-covid-19/good-hygiene-for-coronavirus-covid-19). This includes:

* covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
* disposing of tissues properly – this may require the vehicle to have a small container or rubbish bag to allow for effective disposal
* washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using hand sanitiser prior to entering a vehicle
* cleaning and disinfecting high contact surfaces prior to and after use
* washing body, hair (including facial hair) and clothes thoroughly every day.

Some key items that may require cleaning in addition to the vehicle high contact surfaces are:

* Ratchet and tie down straps
* Keys
* Toolbox doors
* Secondary device controls, e.g. vehicle loading crane controls
* Trailer hitches and associated equipment
* Wheel changing tools such as jacks and spanners.

Smoking is prohibited in TfNSW vehicles. Cigarette butts must not be disposed of in the ash tray or other similar space in the vehicle.

It is recommended that each vehicle is hygienically cleaned prior to the start of the shift by a

competent person who has read and understood this guidance to clean the surfaces effectively and maintain appropriate hygiene practices consistent with cleaning TfNSW offices.

To implement social distancing requirements so far as is reasonably practicable, the following should be applied.

## Split travel to and from worksites

## Where practicable, up to two people per work vehicle – and where a rear cab exists, the driver and one passenger seated in the rear curb side seat

## In this case an assessment to consider new hazards should be undertaken – i.e. fatigue and increased number of vehicles within the worksite. Guidance on these risks can be sourced from other procedures and documents

## Consider the use of the worker’s own vehicles to travel to site. Additional implications should be considered including:

## additional or new risks (as above), insurance implications, the ability to undertake assurance that the hygiene standards above are maintained

* The potential for any passenger in the vehicles
* Site implications such as site rules, parking arrangements.

## Allocate vehicles for designated use

As far as possible, allocate work vehicles for designated use by specific teams and drivers.

A record of who has used a particular vehicle on a particular day is necessary for possible contamination tracing should an exposure later be identified. Any passengers also need to be recorded.

## Transporting a crew of more than 2 people

Where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate multiple persons within the same vehicle, the following controls should be implemented:

* Confirm that each worker is well and has no flu or cold like symptoms before travel
* Endeavour to stay more than 1.5 metres away from others when in the vehicle. If this isn’t possible, the following additional measures are to be implemented so far as is reasonably practicable
  + All passengers to verify that they are well with no respiratory symptoms
  + All to perform hand hygiene prior to entering vehicle
  + No direct contact between individuals
  + Open windows
  + Minimise talking
* Consider other solutions such as installing a shield in the vehicle to form a physical barrier between the driver and other occupants (this is commonly installed in metropolitan taxis).
* Consider undertaking ‘ferry runs’ where transporting work crews or multiple staff of more than 2 people – an assessment is to be undertaken to consider any new hazards that this may introduce such as fatigue, isolated workers, access to emergency assistance such as first aid kits, medical services in the event of an injury, etc.
* Provide adequate supply of hand sanitiser and handwashing facilities at the beginning and end of trip.

## Facilities during travel

## The following steps are recommended for confirming the availability of safe facilities during travel to worksites:

* Monitor the availability of amenities and facilities and the cleaning practices implemented, through a combination of worker feedback and proactive engagement with the operators where possible
* Call ahead to check that the amenities and facilities you plan to stop at are available and are being regularly cleaned
* Plan routes based on what you and your colleagues know about availability of regularly cleaned amenities and facilities
* Obtain additional sanitising or cleaning agents if possible (e.g. additional hand-sanitizer, or disinfectant wipes to wipe down tables and seats at the stop location)
* Use contactless payment for fuel or supplies
* Use cleaning agents where provided (e.g. where disinfectant or paper towels are provided for use at the petrol bowser).

## Fuelling of vehicles

Vehicles should be fuelled at a location that is hygienically clean and outside a hotspot identified by NSW Health.

If a vehicle is to be fuelled other controls to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are to be implemented.

This can include:

* Using PVC type disposable gloves (not cloth) before and during refuelling and then removed immediately after fuelling the vehicle, using the correct removal technique to ensure no contamination. The gloves are then to be placed directly into the rubbish bin.
* Use hand sanitiser before and after using the fuel nozzle and prior to paying for the fuel.
* Payment should be made by contactless payment, either TfNSW P-Card or a fuel card without a pin. If this is not possible, use sanitiser to clean your hands after using the payment console.

More information from SafeWork NSW about **Minimising the risk from COVID-19 on building and construction sites** can be found via this [link](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/preparing-workplaces-covid-19/building-and-construction-minimising#workers-in-the-building-and-construction)