

Port Authority

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 2, 2020) - Port Authority has partnered with the Allegheny County Health Department to offer some useful tips to help prevent the exposure to and spread of germs and illness while riding public transit in our region.

While general in nature, these tips are particularly helpful in light of an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus disease 2019, named COVID-19, which has infected more than 80,000 people worldwide, causing nearly 3,000 deaths.

At this time, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania. Should conditions change, Port Authority would increase the frequency it cleans and disinfects the inside of buses and light rail vehicles and distribute hand sanitizer to employees who interact with the public.

Port Authority customers are encouraged to be proactive and to take the following precautions to limit the spread of germs, regardless of the virus:

1. Wash your hands

Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs, particularly after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

Follow these five steps every time:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice, or “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Carry alcohol-based (60-95% alcohol) hand sanitizer when you aren’t able to wash your hands.

2. Change your seat

If you notice someone near you who appears to be visibly sick, move away from them if possible.

If escaping the path of someone’s cough or sneeze isn’t an option, respectfully pivot in the opposite direction, being sure to face away from the trajectory of their cough or sneeze.

3. Sit down

While an entirely hands-free commute probably isn’t possible, it’s best to avoid holding on to poles and

straps as germs can survive on these surfaces. If possible, opt to sit, keeping your hands in your pockets to avoid touching unnecessary surfaces. This option is more of a best-case scenario, as trains and buses are often full during peak travel hours, and individuals with physical disabilities should always have first priority for seating.

4. Use good judgement

If you are sick, stay home. If that's not an option, don't cough or sneeze into your hands. You're more likely to touch something and spread germs that could infect others. Instead, cough or sneeze into your shoulder, sleeve or elbow.

Additionally, it has been an active flu and respiratory disease season. The CDC and ACHD continues to recommend getting a flu shot - it's never too late.

For the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, visit www.alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus.

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