

**Face mask engagement session with Dr. Robert Strang and Fred Crooks  
July 21, 2020**

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/staying-healthy/#masks>

**Questions and Answers**

1. Question around the role of OH&S or JOHSC committees. Is that related to a driver who witnesses someone not wearing a mask, and if so, what would be the expected role of an OHS committee given there is no expectation of enforcement? Or is that meant to be more about a driver who has a medical reason not to wear a mask? Thanks.

If the issue is around the driver wearing a mask, then it is OH&S and the use the existing OHS program and policy and JOHS Committees.

Issues related to interaction with the public are not so much about enforcement as about informing. Drivers should make effort to inform passengers that they should wear a mask unless there is a valid medical reason not to.

2. Passengers are on a bus for a relatively short period of time, while an Operator is on a bus for an entire shift - it would be great if they could have a break from the mask from time to time. If there is no one on the bus (empty), or very few people and they are at the back, is it permissible for the Operator to relax from wearing the mask for a short period of time?

People need to use common sense.

Under the public health order, masks must be worn by drivers and passengers at all times. If there is nobody else on the bus, then there would be no risk for others if the driver temporarily removes his/her mask and puts it back on as soon as another person gets on the bus.

3. Should Taxi Drivers have masks available for passengers

Yes. There will be people who do not have masks at the beginning. The province will help with initial supply. Over time, people will form the habit and will bring their own masks.

4. For personal vehicle transport services such as taxi, limo, shuttles, would the requirement for masks remain in the event a barrier is already installed in the vehicle?

It depends on the barrier. If it is a plexiglass barrier and there is no air flow around it, then a mask would not be required. But typically, barriers installed in vehicles allow air to move around so it does not replace the need for mask. A barrier would also not replace the need for passenger to wear a mask because many people will get in and out of the vehicle and residue, droplets will remain after they have left.

5. Do we have access to any current studies about what level of protection barrier / shields in vehicles can offer specifically for Covid (or just in general how Covid behaves in vehicles – travelling through ventilation etc.) which might be used in addition to masks or when a rider has a valid medical excuse?

There is a technical advisor committee at national level and that team has asked for discussion on role of air circulation. We are looking for guidance on that. We know that people wearing masks greatly decreases the amount of virus that can get out and around. Any issue with ventilation will be decreased if people wear masks.

6. With restricted space in a Taxi sedan, is there an expectation that the numbers of passengers is reduced.

The physical distancing rule and the gathering limit in the public health order do not apply to taxis. That said, your taxi company can choose to set a limit to the number of people through its COVID-19 prevention plan. You should check with your employer about this plan.

7. Some taxi drivers have stated that wearing of glasses with a mask is causing a problem with fogging. Do you have a recommendation on the type of mask to be worn to avoid this problem?

There are different strategies out there.  
We would recommend the use of masks with a nose bridge and consider antifogging spray.

8. I understand that the recirculation feature for AC in vehicles should be turned off as the virus can be potentially recirculated as well as the air in the vehicle. This is correct is it not?

As in answer #6 above – the question of ventilation is being explored.

9. Do Ferry Captains operating the Ferry vessel in the wheelhouse, away from public, have to wear masks (as per the order)...the discussion point was if the order is to mitigate risks associated with not maintaining social distancing, do masks have to be worn if social distancing can be maintained?

The requirement for masks to be worn on ferries applies to municipally operated ferries and applies to public areas on ferries. The wheelhouse is not considered a public area of the ferry and as a result masks are not required. When the ferry captain leaves the wheelhouse and enters the public area a mask must be worn.