

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (April 19, 2020) - Starting tonight, Port Authority will take added steps to comply with a new state health order directed at riders not wearing face coverings.

There is no change for riders who are already wearing face coverings on vehicles. Those who board without a face covering, however, now will be questioned by the operator and asked to cover their face while on the vehicle. Only those citing economic or health reasons may ride without a face covering. Also, children ages two or under do not require a face covering.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health last evening issued a clarification to Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine's April 15 order that applies to mass transit systems in the state. The change will be implemented at 8 pm tonight.

"The state's order clearly means riders should wear face coverings while on transit vehicles," said Port Authority CEO Katharine Kelleman. "We want to do our part to uphold this statewide order and protect both our customers and employees."

Port Authority already has been encouraging riders to wear face coverings on vehicles, and also implemented additional measures to better protect customers and operators. These included implementing a rear-door boarding policy and limiting the number of riders on a vehicle to provide more space and prevent overcrowding.

Tonight's change means that a rider boarding a vehicle without a face covering will be questioned by the operator. If the customer cites one of the state-allowed exceptions, the rider may continue to board without a face covering. Otherwise, the operator will ask the customer to cover their face while on the vehicle.

Riders who refuse to wear a face covering, but not cite one of the exceptions, will cause a delay in service as the vehicle will not proceed. Port Authority will not forcibly remove these riders from vehicles. The Authority will address these cases individually in a safe and reasonable manner.

The Pennsylvania Health Department has resources available on its website [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov) on how to make a homemade mask.

For the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, visit [www.alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus) or sign up for notifications via phone, email or text message by visiting [www.alleghenycounty.us/alerts](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/alerts).

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