

Vaccination Prioritization for Transit Workers

Background:

Public transit is critical to our nation's economy. The public transit industry directly employs 435,000 workers and supports millions of additional private-sector jobs. Transit also connects people to jobs and opportunity each and every day. Prior to COVID-19, Americans rode public transportation nearly 10 billion times a year. Beyond the sheer number of people that transit moves each day, the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the essential lifeline that it plays in our communities—getting health care workers, first responders, and grocery store clerks to their jobs each day.

Talking Points:

- COVID-19 has hit transit frontline workers hard.
- Several thousand agency employees have tested positive for COVID-19, and hundreds of these heroes have been lost to their communities.
- To ensure the safety of their workforce, transit agencies have been increasing the cleaning of vehicles and facilities and purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE). Demand for PPE has been great, and transit agencies compete with health care, first responder, and other essential businesses for inventory.
- Transit Workers have been designated by the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS/CISA) as Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers, whose performance of critical functions places them at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 infection.
- The prioritization for testing and eventual vaccinations, when available, should be part of a layered approach to mitigate risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission and should apply to essential workers performing critical functions.
- The transit industry requests that transit workers are included in Phase 1 of the vaccine distribution plan.
- Transit service will be even more critical to communities' recovery as people return to work and the lives they desire.
- Public transit is essential for our community to survive and thrive. We get people to jobs, school, health care, entertainment, sports and the arts, and life's essentials.
- In a crisis, we are on the job and on the frontlines.