



March 31, 2020

## **COVID-19 UPDATE**

Island Transit is following the lead of other transit agencies in providing information about COVID-19. An Island Transit coach operator reported on Friday, March 27, that they tested positive for COVID-19. This employee had not worked in the public since Thursday, March 19. Island Transit received notice on Saturday, March 28, that another coach operator tested positive, as well. That employee had not worked in the public since Saturday, March 21. We send our best wishes to each and hear they are making good progress in their recovery. Public Health authorities believe these two cases are part of the ongoing community spread of the COVID-19 virus in Island County.

Unfortunately, we expect more cases among our community and our employees. For transparency, we are sharing these first known cases of a coach operator reporting a COVID-19 positive diagnosis. We will not be announcing every new illness or positive diagnosis in our workplaces since that could lead to individuals being identified and could cause other spaces to be mistakenly seen as being without risk. Additionally, if employees fear their privacy will be compromised, they may not seek needed medical care, which hinders the ability of public health officials to respond.

We can't emphasize enough that, at this point, we all have to assume there is a risk of exposure in any public space and act accordingly. Island County Public Health is reporting that the COVID-19 virus is widely spread in our county. That's why it is so important that everyone follow all social distancing and hygiene guidelines to keep themselves and those around them safe.

At Island Transit, any employee diagnosed with COVID-19 is directed to stay home, seek medical care, and self-isolate for at least 14 days. And, while the signs of COVID-19 can be similar to other conditions, all workers with possible symptoms are sent home and directed to seek medical guidance. At Island Transit all employees follow a health screening process each day before they report to work.

In consultation with Island County Public Health, Island Transit has taken a number of steps to respond to COVID-19. We have minimized driver-to-passenger interaction by removing from



service those seats nearest the driver, directing riders when possible to board at rear doors and stay behind any sectioned off areas, and asking passengers to distance themselves from one another and the coach operator. We have provided hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, masks and gloves to our coach operators. When possible, the buses are being wiped down at the end of shifts, and at the end of every day each vehicle is sanitized and cleaned deeply. Our facilities are also being cleaned and sanitized daily. We're also dedicated to continuous improvement and constantly working to adopt our procedures and protocols as more is learned about the virus.

Coach operators have always been relied upon to provide safe, reliable, and friendly service. As we respond to COVID-19 and so many of us have been asked to stay home, transit employees are essential personnel who serve our country by stepping forward. Transit drivers are relied upon by workers at essential businesses like grocery stores and health care facilities, and our neighbors who need public transportation to get food and medical care. Island Transit thanks all of our drivers and other employees for their dedication and service.

We ask the public to comply with Governor Inslee's "Stay home, Stay healthy" directive and travel only for essential trips.

During this unprecedented time, Island Transit is committed to keeping our drivers, passengers, and community members as safe as possible while providing the essential service Island County relies on.

For more information about COVID-19:

Island County Public Health – [www.islandcountywa.gov/Health/Pages/COVID-19.aspx](http://www.islandcountywa.gov/Health/Pages/COVID-19.aspx)  
Call Center # 360.678.2301, Mondays through Fridays (8:00am – 4:30pm), Saturdays and Sundays (9:00am – 4:00pm)  
WA State Department of Health – [www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus).  
Call Center # 1.800.525.0127, Sunday through Saturday (6:00am – 10:00pm)