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San Diego – To comply with the latest health order changes by the County of San Diego related to coronavirus, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System will require all passengers to wear face coverings while using the transit system beginning Friday, May 1. This includes on vehicles, at transit centers and at bus stops.

“Our number one priority is the safety of our passengers and frontline employees. Face coverings are a proven approach to slowing the spread of coronavirus,” said Paul Jablonski, MTS chief executive officer. “We want to ensure we are doing everything we can to offer safe, essential trips in a sanitized environment. Face coverings are another step in that direction.”

Over the course of this week, MTS is asking that passengers become familiar with face coverings and the agency will be educating passengers and operators on what is acceptable. Basic rules include:

- Face coverings must be worn at all times when riding transit
- Face coverings must cover the rider's nose and mouth
- Per the County of San Diego website, face coverings include: masks (purchased or homemade), bandanas, scarves and neck gaiters
- Passengers can view the California face covering guidance webpage for more information
- Passengers can view the CDC guidelines for making and using a homemade face covering

Violations of the County of San Diego’s health order could result in a misdemeanor and fine up to \$1,000 or six months in prison according to the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department.

Since California’s stay-at-home order was issued in March to slow the spread of coronavirus, MTS has implemented strict sanitizing procedures on all vehicles and stations. Additionally, strategies have been implemented to help with social distancing. Highlights include:

Rear-door boarding:

- Only allow passenger boarding from the rear door on buses to increase distance between passengers and the bus operator

Social distancing:

- Kept service levels at 75 percent even when ridership has declined by 65 percent to help passengers practice social distancing on vehicles
- Increased the distance separating passengers from the bus operator to six feet
- Posted social distancing messaging on all electronic signage and at Trolley stations

Employee protection:

- Provided every bus and Trolley operator with hand sanitizer, gloves and masks
- For security personnel checking fares on Trolleys, all inspections are done on station platforms instead of onboard Trolleys. Visual inspection of fares is also allowed

Sanitizing efforts:

- All MTS vehicles are cleaned daily, with additional deep cleanings using bleach to disinfect, and other solutions recommended by CDC
- Disinfectant is used to wipe down exposed surfaces nightly
- Posted personal hygiene rules on vehicles
- Established handwashing stations at all Trolley stops
- Increased daily cleanings on the internal and external surfaces of trolleys and at major transit stops

MTS continues to operate about 95 bus routes and three Trolley lines. Frequencies and spans have been modified temporarily due to COVID-19. Updated schedules can be accessed on the MTS website. MTS asks that only essential trips be made on public transit, that people wear face coverings and practice physical distancing at all times.

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