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COVID-19 outbreak Guidance for Taxi and Cab Owners and Drivers

The Public Health Authorities understand the potential for loss of business for drivers of taxis and light passenger transport vehicles during the COVID-19 outbreak. The guidance below has been developed to help you protect yourself and your passengers during this time.

You may determine that you do not want to risk working during this time. For some drivers, this may not be an option. Drivers may be asked to drive customers to a doctor's office, a health centre or hospital. This may put you at increased risk for COVID-19. Do NOT entertain requests to take persons to any of the swabbing centres.

Know the symptoms of COVID-19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus include one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Fever
- Shortness of breath

Other symptoms may include tiredness, sore throat, runny / blocked nose, headache, muscle pain, loss of smell, loss of taste, diarrhoea or vomiting.

In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia with severe acute respiratory distress.

If you develop these symptoms, please stay at home, contact your doctor and contact the Public Health team on (+356) 111 or 21 324086 for further advice and guidance. For more information on when to get tested, see guidance on www.covid19health.gov.mt

Practice Social Distancing in daily life

Avoid social contact with others, keeping a physical distance of at least two (2) metres in normal circumstances. Practice simple hygiene by covering your mouth when coughing and sneezing and wash your hands frequently.

Use of face masks or visors

With the lifting of certain restrictive public health measures instituted as part of the COVID-19 Public Health Response, the Public Health Authorities are advising individuals who are not ill to wear a mask in preference to a visor or in conjunction with it, outside their residence both when going to indoor and outdoor places. These are the latest mandatory guidelines on the use of face masks or visors in taxis and cabs:

- Drivers are to wear face masks or visors at all times whilst providing the transport service;
- Only passengers wearing a face mask or visor are to be allowed to board taxis or cabs;
- Passengers should be reminded that face masks or visors must be worn throughout the whole journey;
- Passengers are to wear a face mask or visor when waiting at taxi stands or booking a taxi from a taxi booth;
- Passengers are also to keep the social distance of 2 metres from all other persons at all times before boarding taxis and cabs.

Keep yourself and your passengers protected

To ensure you keep yourself and your passengers protected, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 70 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Keep all windows open wherever possible and do NOT use the air recycler.
- Ask passengers to sit in the back, preferably behind the passenger seat to create physical distance.
- Consider adding a partition (e.g. made from transparent plastic) behind the front seats, to create a physical separation from your client.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Request online payment or with a contactless card and avoid handling money, if possible. Otherwise, ask for the correct fare and consider wearing disposable gloves if you must collect money from customers. Use one pair of gloves per customer and throw them away safely after use.

- Have tissues and hand sanitizer at the back of the vehicle available for your passengers.

Clean and disinfect your car regularly

- Plan to clean your car as often as possible—especially after you drop off passengers who appear to be sick and after every passenger requesting a trip for medical reasons. Pay close attention to surfaces that are touched often by passengers.
- Water and household detergents and the use of common disinfectant products should be enough for cleaning and disinfection. Examples of recommended disinfectants include 70% ethanol and products containing sodium hypochlorite (such as household bleach). Always carefully follow the directions on the product label.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and safely dispose of them immediately after using them once.