

March 12, 2020

VIA RAIL IS ENFORCING SPECIAL MEASURES FOR COVID-19

MONTREAL, March 12, 2020 – In response to the COVID-19 (also known as Coronavirus disease) outbreak around the world and in Canada, VIA Rail Canada's (VIA Rail) is enforcing special health and safety measures for its passengers and employees.

For the moment, the Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for the general population in Canada, but it could change rapidly. Therefore, at the moment, all of our trains are operating normally coast to coast, but this could change as the situation evolves.

"The health and safety measures of our passengers and employees is our top priority and we are focusing our efforts accordingly. At this point, all hands are on deck. All employees, whether in train stations, on board, in maintenance or call centres, are trained and informed on what they have to do to for safety and prevention", declared Cynthia Garneau, President and CEO. " The situation requires us to remain vigilant and to ensure we minimize the risk of contamination to the best of our ability. VIA Rail is deploying additional preventive and reactive measures to its corporate Illness Control Plan".

Contamination management

We have strict cleanliness and hygiene protocols for our trains, which entails regular and thorough cleaning of all hard surfaces in our cars including vestibules and washrooms (tray tables, armrests, doors, walls, windows, counters, etc.).

As for our stations, we have increased daily cleaning and disinfection. Special attention is being paid to hard surfaces like door handles, handrails, elevators, washrooms, switches, and more.

The current cleaning products we use have been approved by Health Canada and have are effective against COVID-19.

Hygiene

- Masks are being distributed to all major stations in our network and placed on board our trains. These disposable masks will be prioritized for passengers showing symptoms.
- Anti-viral products, such as hand sanitizer, are being distributed on board trains and in stations. We have also acquired more prevention equipment and we will be ready for distribution and deployment when it will be required.
- Messages in our stations and on board our trains invite passengers to exercise vigilance and good judgment and follow the usual guidelines for good hygiene. If they experience symptoms, we encourage them to avoid traveling in order to reduce the spread of infections.

Additional measures will be ready to deploy should the situation change.

Flexibility for clients

Passengers who choose to change their travel plan will be accommodated. For maximum flexibility, passengers can cancel or modify their reservation at any time prior to departure during the month of March and April and receive a full refund in addition to not incurring any service charges, regardless of when they purchased their ticket. This includes all travel up to and including April 30, 2020, as well as any travel after April 30, 2020, if their outbound train is on or before April 30, 2020.

Dedicated committee and communications

Daily communications are provided to keep passengers and employees informed. A multisectoral committee is proactively meeting on a regular basis and giving updates to all employees, including frontline – those who work in our call centres, stations, ticket offices, on board trains and in our maintenance centres – to keep them informed and remind of what to do if the level of risk changes.

VIA Rail continues to closely monitor the development of COVID-19 and we remain in close contact with public health agencies and the federal and provincial governments.

The most recent updates are available on our [website](#).

About VIA Rail

As Canada's national rail passenger service, VIA Rail (viarail.ca) and all its employees are mandated to provide safe, efficient and economical passenger transportation service, in both official languages of our country. VIA Rail operates intercity, regional and transcontinental trains linking over 400 communities across Canada, and about 180 more communities through intermodal partnerships, and safely transported over 5 million passengers in 2019. The Corporation has been awarded five Safety Awards and three Environment Awards by the Railway Association of Canada since 2007. Visit the "About VIA Rail" section at <https://www.viarail.ca/en/about-via-rail>.

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