

TIPS FOR COMMUTING SAFELY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

For Washington University in St. Louis commuters

As WashU campuses are preparing to gradually and safely re-open in the Fall of 2020, employees and students will be re-assessing their ways to get to and from work. When making commuting decisions, it is critical not only to consider our personal health, but also the one of our community.

While driving alone may seem like the safest option in the short term, personal vehicles are a huge contributor to air pollution, which in turn has been linked to increased COVID-19 deaths due to its impact on the respiratory system. Between carpooling, public transit, and biking, there are plenty of ways you can commute and move around while simultaneously preventing the worsening of our air quality and preserving your personal health.

Below you will find WashU go-to resources as well as safety tips for all alternative transportation modes to inform your new commute selection.

WashU Resources

- Before returning to campus, review the [Return to Campus page](#) on the HR website, which includes the requirements you have to meet in order to return to campus (including taking a one-time online training as well as screenings prior to each day you will be on campus), as well as health and safety guidelines for working on campus.
- The [WashU Together website](#) and the [Medical Campus COVID-19 updates page](#) – outline the plan for the fall semester and provides regular updates on the university's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As both our local and campus transportation systems and programs have had to adjust to the health crisis, visit the [Parking & Transportation Services website](#), which is updated regularly to reflect these changes.

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SAFETY TIPS FOR EACH TRANSPORTATION MODE

Safety tips regardless of your mode

- Maintain physical distancing: Keep a minimum of 6 feet (2 meters) apart from others to slow the spread of germs when possible.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before you leave and after you reach your destination.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Throw away used tissues, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after coughing or sneezing.
- Take extra precautions to avoid injuries while traveling in order to avoid catching COVID-19 during treatment and taking away hospital beds from COVID-19 patients.
- Keep the following items on hand while commuting:
 - Mask or other face covering
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Tissues / paper towels
 - Mobile ticket if taking transit
 - Water and/or snacks so you don't have to stop and buy anything along the way

Safety tips for public transit

- Stay up to date with Metro Transit's latest information. Many transit routes in the St. Louis area have been altered – find information about [St. Louis Metro Transit's service changes, guidelines, and safety precautions here](#).
- Follow signs and regulations: Vehicles may have restricted seating to ensure physical distancing. Be sure to adhere to those guidelines.
- Be flexible and patient: Because of the requirements for physical distancing, you may not be able to ride or board a particular train or bus. Be mindful of that when planning your commute.
- If you don't have a Metro U-Pass, buy your ticket before boarding with Metro Transit's [new mobile ticketing system](#) integrated into the Transit app to avoid any in-person transaction.
- Consider traveling at off-peak hours when there are fewer riders.
- Leave a few seats between yourself and others.
- Avoid touching frequently touched surfaces such as kiosks, restroom surfaces, and handrails.
- Wear a mask or face covering at all times when inside a train, bus, or station.

Safety tips for university shuttles

- Stay up to date on any changes to the shuttle operations by visiting Parking & Transportation Services' [COVID-19 Updates webpage](#) for details.
- Follow signs and regulations: Vehicles may have restricted seating to ensure physical distancing. Be sure to adhere to those guidelines.
- Pay attention: If something doesn't look clean or right, ask your driver and bring it to the attention of your supervisor or appropriate contact.
- Plan for delays: Leave additional time in your commute for unexpected delays.
- Avoid touching frequently touched surfaces within the vehicle.
- Wear a mask or face covering at all times when inside the shuttle.



SAFETY TIPS FOR EACH TRANSPORTATION MODE (2)

Safety tips for biking & scooting

- Avoid riding on crowded paths or trails where you cannot keep a 6-foot distance between yourself and others.
- Ride alone or with other members of your household that are in good health and have no symptoms.
- Don't forget standard cycling/scooter safety practices like always wearing a helmet and easily visible clothing, using a light if it's dark outside, obeying all traffic laws, and riding predictably.
- Familiarize yourself with the [WashU Bike Policy](#) and the [Motorized Transportation Device Policy](#).
- When possible, leave distance between your vehicle and the next parked vehicle when parking at your destination.
- Be mindful about the surfaces you touch when you're out on a ride. For instance, use your elbow to touch cross walk buttons instead of your hand.
- If you are using a rental bike or scooter, wipe it down before and after riding. Be sure to bring wipes to clean off the handlebars, seat, brakes and any other commonly touched parts.

Safety tips for walking

- Walk where you can maintain 6 feet between yourself and other pedestrians.
- Choose your route carefully to avoid high traffic areas.
- Be mindful about the surfaces you touch when you're out. For instance, use your elbow to touch cross walk buttons instead of your hand.

Safety tips for carpooling

- Limit carpools to no more than one person per row of seats to create as much physical distance as possible in the car. Sit diagonally from each other when possible.
- Reduce exposure by riding with the same people each day and avoiding "drop in" riders.
- Maintain appropriate physical distancing when entering and exiting the vehicle.
- As an extra precaution, only the vehicle owner should touch the dashboard buttons.
- Wear a mask at all times when inside the vehicle.

Safety tips for vanpooling

- Keep surfaces clean: Regularly clean surfaces inside the vehicle, including keys, steering wheel, center console, cup holders, gearshift, door handles and panels.
- As an extra precaution, only the driver should touch the dashboard buttons.
- Wear a mask at all times when inside the vehicle.

This list of tips compiles information from three main sources: "[Supporting Commuters Returning to Worksites During COVID-19](#)" by the Association for Commuter Transportation, "[COVID-19: How to Stay Safe During Outdoor Activities](#)" by the Cleveland Clinic, and "[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Frequently Asked Questions](#)" by Johns Hopkins Medicine.

