Transportation (Car, Van, and Shuttle)

As URI prepares to return to in-person instruction for fall semester 2020, one of the most elemental planning considerations is how students, employees, and visitors access and move about our campuses. The following guidelines address on-campus shuttle transportation as well as other types of transportation involving University vehicles (ex. experiential learning programs, field trips, etc.)

The shift in the academic calendar for fall semester 2020 means that most of the semester will take place during ideal bicycling weather. The University should consider how to incentivize biking to alleviate parking system impacts. Encouraging walking, telecommuting or safe carpooling also can have positive impacts on parking system capacity.

Overview

All members of the campus community will comply with COVID-related transportation guidelines issued by the URI COVID-19 Task Force, and with verbal instructions given by shuttle drivers and staff. Failure to adhere to do so may lead to loss of access to campus transportation.

People who are sick or have recently had a close contact (closer than 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) to a person with COVID-19 should not use public transportation or the Rhody Shuttle system and should stay home except to seek medical care.

Rhody Shuttle system

Occupancy of Rhody Shuttle busses is limited to 66% of normal capacity and passengers are expected to maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet when possible. All shuttle drivers and passengers must wear face coverings at all times unless they have an accommodation due to a medical condition. (See URI COVID-19 Guidelines for Face Coverings for more information.) At shuttle stops and onboard shuttles, passengers should look for instructions or guides to promote physical distancing. Passengers are required to comply with verbal instructions from shuttle drivers or they may be barred from using shuttle transportation.

URI Transportation and Parking (TAP) will prepare and implement a COVID-19 Control Plan in accordance with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) emergency regulations.

The Rhody Shuttle system will adopt enhanced cleaning protocols to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- High-touch hard surfaces including stanchions, handholds and seat backs will be disinfected throughout the day with disinfectant wipes approved by the EPA for use against the SARS-CoV-2 family of viruses, the cause of COVID-19.
- Wheelchair securements will be disinfected before and after each use as well as nightly at closing.
- Buses will be disinfected throughout the day using a disinfectant sprayer. The sprayers use hospital-grade disinfectant solution approved by the EPA for use against the SARS-CoV-2 family of viruses. The sprayers emit the solution with a static electric charge, which allows it to adhere to all bus surfaces, including upholstery and cracks and crevices throughout the vehicle.
- Bus drivers will disable recirculating airflow at all times. All HVAC units will be set to draw fresh air from outside when possible.
- Medical-grade nitrile gloves will be made available to drivers. Drivers should wear gloves when disinfecting bus surfaces and when performing other tasks that require touching shared surfaces like wash wands or fuel pump handles.
Seating and traffic flow at transportation hubs (e.g. shuttle stops) will be modified to allow for greater physical distancing. Most University-operated bus stops have fixed seating that cannot be moved. Where practical, seats will be blocked off at bus stops to encourage physical distancing between passengers waiting for buses. Prominent signage will be placed at all Rhody Shuttle stops with greater than 10 boardings per hour encouraging physical distancing. This signage will encourage passengers to wear masks or cloth face coverings at bus stops. Signs will outline rules and protocols expected on the bus.

Disability Services student shuttle

The Disability Services for Students (DSS) shuttle will continue to operate on the Kingston Campus as usual. However, capacity of the DSS shuttle will be limited to 4 plus the driver. All shuttle drivers and passengers must wear masks at all times unless they have an accommodation due to a medical condition. (See URI COVID-19 Guidelines for Face Coverings for more information.)

University vehicles (cars and vans)

To facilitate physical distancing and reduce the number of people in close proximity, the occupancy of University vehicles is restricted as follows:

- **Car/station wagon:** Maximum of 2 people including driver
- **Pickup truck:** Maximum of 2 people including driver
- **Minivan or SUV:** Maximum of 3 people including driver
- **10 passenger van:** Maximum of 5 people including driver
- **12-15 passenger van:** Maximum of 6 people including driver

Drivers and passengers must wear face coverings at all times unless they have an accommodation due to a medical condition. (See URI COVID-19 Guidelines for Face Coverings for more information.)

Drivers should avoid recirculating air through the car’s ventilation system during passenger transport. Drivers are strongly encouraged to open windows or allow the passenger to lower the vehicle windows, in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Pool/shared vehicles

The number of individuals sharing pool vehicles should be minimized when possible. Vehicle drivers are responsible for cleaning procedures after every use as described below.

Individually assigned vehicles

Individually assigned vehicles must be wiped down at least once per day by the assigned user except for days when the vehicle is not in service (i.e. weekends.)

Course-related trips and field studies

For field trips and field courses that primarily occur outside, transportation is likely to be the riskiest part of the activity. Whenever possible, faculty should attempt to find local field sites that are accessible via walking or biking. When this is not possible, faculty should consider and prioritize locations that are proximate to the University to limit travel time in vehicles. When vehicle travel for field trips is necessary, the following is required:
• All students, instructors and teaching assistants must wear masks or cloth face coverings at all times while inside shared vehicles.
• All occupants of shared vehicles should sit in the same seat in the same vehicle for the duration of the trip (i.e. seats are assigned).
• Trip organizers must provide hand sanitizer and/or a portable handwashing station and require vehicle occupants to wash/sanitize hands whenever they are entering or leaving the vehicles.
• Group leaders should take steps to reduce vehicle occupancy (see University vehicles above), including using more vehicles than would otherwise be necessary.
• If using vehicle heat or air conditioning, recirculating vehicle air should be disabled.
• Students should be allowed to drive separately in their own vehicles if they wish to do so. Faculty should make sure that students are aware that this is an option.
• Faculty should keep a log of vehicle passengers to assist with contact tracing if needed.
• Faculty should be prepared to make changes to field trips due to spikes in COVID-19 cases.

Note that these requirements, including vehicle occupancy limits, also apply to non-University vehicles while being used in conjunction with University activities such as field trips.

Enhanced cleaning

Drivers must wipe down vehicle surfaces after each ride with disinfectant utilizing the product’s written instructions for use. This includes, but is not limited to, high-touch surfaces such as door handles, seat belts, and arm rests. Drivers should wear gloves when cleaning the vehicle.

If a vehicle has been used to transport an individual with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, special cleaning and disinfecting procedures should be completed in accordance with the CDC’s Cleaning and Disinfecting for Non-Emergency Transport Vehicles guidance.

Protective measures

Physical distancing: During travel, try to keep at least 6 feet (2 meters) from others — for example, when you are waiting at a bus station or selecting seats on a shuttle.

Practice hand hygiene: After leaving the transit station or stop, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. When you arrive at your destination, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Drivers should wash or sanitize hands on a routine basis. At a minimum, this should be done after each ride. Drivers should carry personal hand sanitizer.

Avoid touching surfaces: Avoid contact with surfaces frequently touched by passengers or drivers, such as the door frame and handles, windows, and other vehicle parts. In circumstances where such contact is unavoidable, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol as soon as possible afterwards.