

Workers at the Township of Langley take safety precautions such as wearing masks, opening windows, and staggering seating when their work requires them to travel together in a vehicle.

# Driving with co-workers? COVID-19 safety starts before you turn the key

By Gillie Easdon

If you share a vehicle with co-workers to get to work or a worksite, it's important to do a daily health check before you head out on the road. Practise the same COVID-19 safety habits you would in any other indoor setting.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live and work in many ways. We are advised to keep our distance from other people — including our co-workers — as much as possible. But what if your work involves travelling in the same vehicle as your co-workers, either to and from work or to worksites?

It is common for workers in agriculture, construction, landscaping, municipalities, or hospitality to travel together in vehicles for cost and fuel efficiency. Effective COVID-19 workplace safety begins before you get into a vehicle with your co-workers. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

## Perform daily health checks

You must complete a daily health check before entering your workplace. Health checks are mandatory self-assessments conducted by workers. As part of the health check, you must confirm with your employer, verbally or in writing, that you have reviewed the complete list of entry requirements and none of the criteria apply to you.

If your day starts with travelling to a worksite in a vehicle with your co-workers, you should do your daily health check before you get into the vehicle.

“If you're travelling in your employer's vehicle to get to a worksite, you should consider the vehicle an extension of the workplace, because it is,” says Sat Combaw, a manager of Prevention Field Services at WorkSafeBC. “Take the time to do your full health check before you get into the car or other mode of transport. It only takes a moment, but it can make a world of difference.”

## Take measures to reduce the risk

Remember that protocols should remain in place for now, even if you and your co-workers have been vaccinated. Here are steps you can take to help protect your health and the health of others:

- 1 Travel in separate vehicles when possible.** It's generally not possible to physically distance by six feet in a regular-sized vehicle, so plan to drive on your own if you can.
- 2 Keep your distance and wear a mask.** When separate vehicles are not an option, use all reasonable distancing measures. Sit as far away from one another as possible (using the driver and rear right passenger seats, for example). If possible, consider using larger vehicles and stagger seating between rows to ensure maximum spacing, or take multiple trips. Masks are strongly encouraged, especially where safe distancing cannot be maintained.
- 3 Travel with the same people.** When you must travel together, create a cohort of workers who work together regularly. If cohorts are already in place, only co-workers in the same cohort should travel together, if possible.
- 4 Open windows to increase air flow.** When appropriate, open windows and set the vehicle's ventilation system to bring in outside air instead of recirculating.

**5 Avoid eating or drinking.** Any other activity that requires you to remove your mask should also be avoided.

**6 Clean high-contact areas and wash your hands.** Seat belts, headrests, door handles, and controls should be cleaned and disinfected between trips or when swapping vehicles. Use hand sanitizer or wash your hands before and after your trip.

"Effective COVID-19 safety practices need to be in place to keep you and your fellow workers safe," says Combaw.

He adds, "If you choose to carpool to work, we strongly recommend that you follow the same safety precautions, and consider doing your daily health check before getting into the vehicle."

If you have questions, be sure to speak up and ask your supervisor or manager.

## Find out more

For more information on [COVID-19 safety in vehicles FAQ](#) search "COVID-19 FAQs" on [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com).

The list of entry requirements for the daily health check can be found by searching "[entry check poster](#)" on [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com).

Vancouver Coastal Health has developed a [Carpooling During COVID-19](#) information sheet, and the B.C. Ministry of Health and BC Centre for Disease Control have developed a [carpooling and rideshares](#) information sheet. 📄



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