

Log of operational recovery issues for Tram Operations Covid-19 social distancing maintained.

PART 1 - VEHICLES

Passengers

- Open systems – no gates or barriers.
- Different trams have different layouts - door placement (boarding and alighting), seat layout, standing areas (usually door vestibules), 'level-floor provision' varies from system to system.
- Majority of passenger capacity caters for 'Standing' passengers.
- Seated passenger capacity is typically no more than 70 seats per vehicle. Normal passenger capacity can be up to 270 passengers.
- Seated passengers will be required to use isles and door vestibule areas to board and exit the vehicle.
- Trams saloons are typically greater than 30 meters in length and CCTV does not always show saloon cameras to the driver. It is unlikely to be feasible for a tram driver alone to 'police' loadings of a tram.
- Window seats are further from isles but some seats face each other. Alternating available seats between Aisle and Window (chequer boarding) may assist with social distancing. However, this method will still put passengers in the close vicinity of others when boarding or alighting.
- Physically altering the internal design of trams (taking out seats or making certain seats unusable in some way). Other measures could be used to indicate which seats can and cannot be used – seat coverings, vynls etc.
- Tram saloons could be compartmentalised. Physically, ropes, tape, hoarding or by instruction. Emergency evacuation routes and impact risks might mean that this is not possible if otherwise normal operation is to remain unchanged (e.g. review of operating speeds etc.)
- Passenger behaviour (either wilfully or accidentally not following the social distancing rules and guidance at all or any time)
- Enforcement of social distancing (especially where there are any nuances in individual interpretation) and what the guidance to staff (local and control centre) might be.
- Needs of different types of disabled passengers – visually impaired, those with hearing loss, wheelchair users and so on ...
- Rules on boarding and alighting – seated passengers take longer to do both.
- Availability of apps for passengers that can advise on occupancy of vehicles
- More targeted push digital information to passengers about availability of capacity for journeys they usually make.
- Capturing data on occupancy and demand in order to inform adjustments to service provision.
- Separating them from customer facing staff.
- What happens if there is a breakdown in service (blockage of the line etc.),
- How emergencies would be handled - detrainment provision reviews.

Staff (VEHICLES)

- Drivers isolated from salon but those that are travelling from and to distant relief points (travelling in the cab not an option or as a shared occupant of a car not an option) – alternative arrangements need to be made (depot only crew changes, staff only trams, hiring buses?).
- Revenue protection or fare collection. On tram, prior to boarding or when alighting. Open system – feasibility of closing platforms.
- PPE guidelines – is the equipment available can it be distributed, how is it disposed of, does it affect function or equipment designed to monitor function.
- Responding to incidents, illness, injury or damage

Signage, branding and messaging

- What physical signage communicates most effectively to passengers what we are asking from them / and what they should do in relation to covid19 measures? Would it be better if this was integrated into wider general passenger info that other local transport providers undertake? What is the tone of the messaging on the calm/friendly to shout/scary spectrum?
- What can light rail learn from other business that have been serving the public during the outbreak of the pandemic (for example, supermarkets)
- If trams are only able to carry very low numbers, which is likely to be in excess of demand, then the messaging will be falling on frustrated ears.

Cleaning

- In service out of service? – normal cleaning operations, resource allocation is likely to require significant review?

PART 2 – STOPS, STATIONS and other INTERCHANGES (Maintaining social distancing)

- Queues at stops which may be located next to shops or other busier locations or on narrow pavements – should these stops be closed?
- Different people queuing for different services that serving the same stop
- Maintaining social distancing at busy stops served by multiple routes and modes of transport - passengers rushing from one to another (more prevalent if turn up and go services have significantly reduced) - cross paths avoidable? Liaison with other modes imperative.
- What will be the effect on journey reliability of extended dwell times at busy stops – seated passengers take longer to board and alight.
- Achieving social distancing in shelters including in relation to those with seating
- How you seek to promote the prioritisation of shelter / shelter seats for those who need to sit down.
- Weather conditions (hot sun, rain, snow, strong winds etc)
- Physical markers to indicate queuing positions – how is this done, how many queuing positions and so on – do they extend onto the highway (cross those of other business or transport modes.
- Information provision at stops and how people access that whilst socially distancing
- Plan for bottle necks.
- Interplay of stop positioning and moves to temporarily re-allocate road space for walking and cycling – special consideration where the tramstop is part of the pavement.
- Potential need for supervision by staff of queuing and boarding in relation to social distancing and the additional risks for staff of doing so.

- Availability or not of travel centres and other facilities.
- Queuing extending beyond the boundaries of the tramstop and how that is managed
- Longer the queues the more passengers won't be sure what they are queuing for and more the anxiety that they will miss their tram
- Greater use of PA announcements – long line (limited radius – encourages gathering to tramstop speaker) – mobile (puts staff at risk and further stretches a depleted work-force).

PART 3 – TRACK and VEHICLE MAINTENANCE (Social Distancing)

- Maintenance and fault rectification in areas with increased public presence. Keep the public away?
- Travelling to maintenance locations (response vehicle or public transport).
- Additional PPE – can the task be carried out with the recommended PPE.
- Communication protocols and limits of authority – have they changed? Is everyone aware.
- Has absence caused a backlog – are there critical task omissions that may require greater operational awareness.
- Are revised operating instructions required for defect reporting and response required?
- Are all critical response competencies on hand – or do contingencies need to be made in the interim. Is the organisation aware of what the critical competencies might be.
- Review of tasks that can be carried out whilst keeping away from colleagues without recommended PPE.

PART 4 – CONTROL CENTERS

- Revised contingency plans
- Absolute minimum levels of staff cover
- Recommended PPE – what are the options
- Availability of information to controllers on occupancy rates of vehicles and build up of passengers at stops and other key interchange points – tools to manage the network in real time.
- Capturing feedback from drivers.
- Understanding of priority routes
- Devolved command structure – client supplier clash?

PART 5 – SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

- What role will owners, authorities and operators be expected to play?
- Who is ultimately responsible?
- If people start to evade or abuse restrictions before they are lifted for their demographic or the purpose of their journey, who is responsible for policing this?
- Will the Government at the highest level stand behind owners, authorities and operators during what will be a very difficult period for the industry to manage?
- Is there a role for use of smart cards and registration to manage use of Light Rail networks and public transport?
- How will messaging to the public be coordinated? Is this expected to be managed by the stakeholders (UKTram, LRSSB, DfT, ORR, UTG), the Government or owners, authorities and operators?
- How will decisions by the private sector that impact us be managed, or will Government set guidance?
- In terms of lessons learned from the lockdown phase, how might we best work individually and collectively as an industry on the recovery phase in liaison with the other transport industry bodies (DfT/UTG/RDG/CPT)?

Part 6 - Service Provision and Staffing

- How do we best protect Staff and Passengers Health – PPE, Social Distancing, Hygiene and cleaning, Testing, Staff shift patterns, Customer announcements?
- How do we plan towards matching service provision to journey purpose given all the many variables there could be around the phased recovery and restrictions being lifted for different demographics and journey purpose especially with further potential sub-categorisations of these categories and potential rotations?
- What coordination is there going to be across all transport networks and modes?
- How will this be carried out, is it going to be done nationally or regionally?
- If social distancing stays in place as expected there will be a need to run more trams (and trains) as at current distancing only about 10-12% capacity can be reached per vehicle. This will be challenging operationally.
- Given social distancing there may be a need for more staff to control and regulate access to and use of services. Particularly challenging around systems without conductors of TSA's – like Manchester Metrolink, Nottingham Trams, Croydon Tramlink, and Tyne and Wear Metro.
- Social inclusion and practical issues around trams being lightly loaded due to social distancing and full by the time they reach latter stops.
- Is standing to be outlawed in the phased recovery as in some international cities?
- How will people react to social distancing guidelines on trams – will the inconvenience be accepted as it has been for supermarkets, for example or will it be ignored as has been reported in some cases?
- Revision of station and vehicle interiors including distancing lines marked on the ground. It may also be necessary to re-think station waiting areas, seating and circulating areas.
- Will passenger apps be used to help people to detect and avoid locations and services that are crowded and providing them with alternative options?
- Will the use of CCTV and other tech to identify and tackle crowding hotspots and passenger loading – what additional resource costs does this bring?
- Supply issues around PPE for staff and passengers, responsibility, grade, enforcement?
- Staff availability due to continuing and shifting patterns of self-isolation
- During the lock down there may have been a lag in vehicle and infrastructure maintenance, and in vehicle and equipment
- Staff certification and competency lapse while on furlough
- Time taken to bring people out of furlough.
- Time taken to draw up new staff rosters.
- Ensuring there is enough staff to deliver services, where staff may have been stood down, re-rostered or furloughed.
- Lag in staff returning to work
- When do travel information offices and help desks reopen?
- Expectation on passenger information and customer service ramp up, on-line, phone-lines and paper information on platforms, trams and trams stops?
- To what extent is the working from home culture retained at our organisations and for which categories of the workforce (and how does this relate to wider phasing of lockdown restrictions for different categories of workers)?
- How is longer term working from home supported?
- Is there a need to upgrade hygiene and cleaning regimes for offices of our organisations?
- How do you recognise and reward the different kinds of contribution that different kinds of staff have played during the crisis and honour those who have lost their lives?
- How do you ensure and prevent burn out of key staff?
- Holiday burden – as the year gets shorter holiday entitlement backs up.

Part 7 - Recovery Period

The length of the recovery period is unknown, even after the current lockdown is eased, the Covid-19 virus will not have disappeared. Until a vaccine is developed (estimates show this could be at least 18 months away) or general immunity builds up, the virus it could reappear in waves. If this should happen there could be partial or full lockdowns reintroduced either nationally or regionally. Some elements of social distancing or other measures could remain in place throughout the recovery period.

In the immediate recovery period it looks like there will be phasing lift of the lockdown, with restrictions being lifted partially or fully for different categories of the population or purposes at different times.

The likely categories could be schools/colleges, retail, work, leisure, bars and restaurants, entertainment, sporting and other mass events. There is also the potential for sub-categorise within those.

There may also be restrictions imposed to stagger the times at which these different types of trips are made to rotate passenger numbers and public exposure for example; different groups of pupils attending school on different days, or worker's split into shift patterns).

What is unclear at present is to what degree of variance will be given to English sub-national government to differentiate or influence national decisions, Scotland imposed restrictions before government set lockdown, whether this will be done in the recovery phase remains to be seen.

Despite ongoing correspondence it's not clear to what extent practical transport impacts are being taken into consideration with the Government's decisions on the lockdown easing off or how we (and the other Transport industries) are able to feed into the work to ensure the impact of measures on our networks are taken into account both before and during the easing of the lockdown.