

## Mask Update

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Members,

Today the NSW Government announced that people using public transport in the Greater Sydney Area, including staff, must wear masks. Because this measure is being put in place without adequate preparation, many of the questions members will have are still being worked through. Below are some of the things we do know.

The rule of thumb is that if the mask your employer gives you makes doing your job more dangerous in any way, a risk assessment should be done or talk to your delegate.

Q- Who should wear a mask?

A- Anyone that is doing a job where they can be seen by the public. At a depot or mealroom, you're not required to wear one.

Q- What if I don't want to wear a mask?

A- A Public Health Order is a legislative change- that means it has the force of law. Unless you have a valid reason, you can be fined \$200.00 for not wearing one.

Q- Can I get fined by my employer?

A- No. Only the police can issue fines for breaching the Health Order.

Q- What is a 'valid reason' for not wearing a mask?

A- Valid reasons for not wearing a mask will be detailed in the Public Health Order, but generally medical reasons backed by a certificate or other evidence, or that wearing a mask introduces a hazard into the workplace (makes your job more dangerous, as described above).

Q- Are there enough masks?

A- Yes, there are currently about 1.5 million masks stockpiled, and more are being ordered.

Q- What is the 'Greater Sydney Area'?

A- A hard boundary has yet to be decided, the Public Health Order will set those boundaries.

Q- Who enforces wearing a mask?

A- NOT YOU! Only the police have the power to issue fines, it is absolutely not up to any RTBU member to enforce this. It is also illegal to refuse service to people for not wearing a mask. If you have a location or service where it's an issue, report it to your line supervisor after your shift and police can be directed there in the future.

Q- Where do people have to wear a mask?

A- Anywhere past an Opal machine basically. That means all Train and LRV platforms, as well as on buses and at bus stops.

Q- Can I get in trouble for not wearing a mask?

A- First, without a valid reason (work risk or medical exemption) you can be fined by police. Second, wearing a mask is considered a 'lawful reasonable direction' given the Public Health Order and declaration of a pandemic. Refusing means it becomes a disciplinary issue. The RTBU has sought urgent and clear direction from TfNSW to all employers on how this is to be dealt with, and that it should be done with a very light touch if at all.

This week will see a lot of fine tuning and another meeting is scheduled for Tuesday so TfNSW can clear up some of that we've asked them. As soon as we have more information it will be sent out to

all members ASAP. Remember, just like physical distancing, masks are just one of the measures that can help protect you and your families, as well as help us get back to a more normal lifestyle faster. The RTBU supports health advice for the safety of our Members and the travelling public.