

## Member update: COVID-19

Categories : [News](#)

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Dear members,

Firstly, thank you again for everything you are doing during these difficult times. The dedication and hard work of the state's transport workers is certainly not going unnoticed at the moment. Having a membership that stands together, remains calm under pressure, and is so dedicated to keeping our community safe is something we should all be incredibly proud of.

As we have mentioned in previous updates, the RTBU and other impacted unions have been in regular contact with government and health officials to ensure everything possible is being done to keep workers and commuters safe during the current coronavirus pandemic.

Today, we were again briefed by Transport for NSW on the latest situation in regard to COVID-19 and its impact on our transport services and transport workforces.

These briefings are weekly and are in addition to the regular day-to-day contact the RTBU is having with key authorities and are critical to ensuring that our governments and employers are kept accountable and that we as workers are kept abreast of the latest information.

Below is an overview of some of the key outcomes of today's briefing session, as well as some reviews of the general advice relating to workers. We will continue to provide additional updates to members as they arise, but of course if you have any questions you can always speak with your local delegate or contact the union office.

## **COVID-19 Special Taskforce established**

During recent briefings, the RTBU has continued to raise the importance of having a single source of truth and information coming out of Transport.

As a result of the RTBU and other unions' pressure, Transport for NSW announced it is setting up a COVID-19 special taskforce that will oversee the entire transport response to the current coronavirus pandemic.

This taskforce will be required to hold the regular briefing sessions with unions, ensure the best possible measures are being put in place to protect workers and commuters, and be on-call to address any questions and concerns coming from the memberships.

As we all know, the current situation is not only unprecedented, but it's also a moving feast, so having a single source of information is vital to ensuring clear information

## **Additional cleaning: all public transport**

While additional cleaning measures on our transport services have already been in place for some time now, TfNSW today committed to increasing the regularity and effectiveness of the cleaning systems.

We all understand the importance of sanitisation during a time like this, so it's critical that the current cleaning measures are being constantly evaluated.

## **Special leave**

## Government Employees

1. If you ARE SICK from COVID-19, you must use your sick leave first and then Special Leave will apply.
2. If you are NOT SICK but have been directed to not attend the workplace then you are entitled to up to 20 days Special Leave. This includes caring for family members returning from overseas and caring for family members who are sick or are otherwise directed to self-isolate (closed schools etc).

## Private Company Employees

1. Currently there is nothing that says private companies have to pay Special Leave, although all are doing so or have agreed to, on a case by case basis in certain circumstances.
2. If you get sick you have to use your sick leave.
3. If you run out of sick leave then you have to use other types of leave.
4. If no leave is available you can ask the employer for special consideration.

## What you can do to keep safe?

While it may seem simple, we cannot stress enough the importance of transport workers following the general community health recommendations in regard to COVID-19. These include:

- ***Washing your hands regularly with soap and water.*** A handy graphic on that is included below.
- Using hand sanitiser when soap and water are not available
- Covering your sneeze or cough with your elbow or with a tissue.
- Avoiding touching your face.
- Stay home if you're sick.

You can see the latest government information here: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>  
With a constantly growing list of Frequently Asked Questions here: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx>  
Transport for NSW has also set up a dedicated website here: [stayinformed.com.au](http://stayinformed.com.au).

The nature of a viral outbreak that many of us could be affected at some point. How badly people are affected will depend to a large degree on overall health and any pre-existing conditions. Only you know your medical history so if you have any respiratory issues in particular, you need to be extra vigilant.

**IMPORTANT: As always, inform the union if you are concerned about your safety**

If any member is concerned that adequate steps are not being taken to ensure your safety during this time, it is important that you send an email directly to the RTBU Office: [nswwho@rtbu-nsw.asn.au](mailto:nswwho@rtbu-nsw.asn.au).

The union is continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and, in addition to the weekly briefings, is in regular contact with key employers and officials to ensure communications lines are constantly open.

We will continue to provide you with information updates as things change.

Finally, it's more important than ever that we as a transport community band together. If you have workmates who aren't members of the RTBU, now is a good time to remind them of the benefits of being in a union.

The RTBU is here to advocate for your rights at work and support you in the unfortunate event that things go wrong. Your safety is always our number one priority, and we'll continue to do everything we can to ensure you and the commuters of NSW are kept as safe as possible.

Remember to continue to keep informed, calm, and follow health advice. We're all in this together.