



MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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WeGo celebrates Federal mask mandate onboard public transit *Ongoing safety measures aim to keep customers, operators safe*

NASHVILLE – This week, WeGo Public Transit is celebrating the Biden Administration and Center for Disease Control (CDC) for signing into action a federal mask mandate requiring masks to be worn on all forms of public transit operating within the United States.

WeGo has required face coverings to be worn onboard all vehicles since June 2020, when the Metro Public Health Department issued Public Health Order 8, enacting a local face covering mandate within Davidson County. Since then, WeGo has taken a number of steps to provide, promote, and encourage wearing face coverings while riding public transit service, including the WeGo Star and regional bus routes to surrounding counties.

The agency worked immediately to provide personal protective equipment, including masks, face shields, and gloves to all front-line employees such as bus operators, custodial workers, maintenance crews, and Customer Care staff.

WeGo also instituted an Onboard Mask Initiative, allowing staff to ride buses on routes where compliance with the face covering mandate was observed to be lower. Since the campaign began in August 2020, staff has ridden along routes nearly 70 times to educate customers on the face covering requirement, how to wear a mask properly, and to distribute face coverings if necessary. WeGo also has an ongoing partnership with the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPd) for a formal enforcement of mandate by citation should a customer refuse to wear a mask.

Since June 2020, the agency has handed out approximately 23,000 masks to the greater Nashville community.

In addition, WeGo maintenance staff has increased onboard safety for all by completing the installation of operator compartment shields between the driver's seat and front door boarding area. Installation was completed in late 2020 on all buses currently in operation, and these shields will come standard on all future vehicles purchased.

This federal mandate comes as Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) has recently announced a schedule to return students to in-person learning over the next month. WeGo has a large student ridership through a partnership between the agency and MNPS, allowing students grades 9 through 12 to ride public transit for free to and from school. While we do not expect a dramatic increase in student ridership due to the return to in-person learning being voluntary, WeGo is preparing for a possible increase in ridership due to students returning to school. Extra buses will be staged near higher ridership routes and those providing service to schools to alleviate passenger loads and support social distancing.

For more information on WeGo's efforts to keep customers and its staff safe since the coronavirus first appeared in Middle Tennessee in early March 2020, visit bit.ly/WeGoCOVID-19.

Members of the public are encouraged to sign up for WeGo's newsletter, follow them on social media, and visit WeGoTransit.com for continuous updates.

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Editor's Note: To request this info in an alternative format, call 615-862-5950 for the ADA Coordinator.