



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*

**Department of Youth Services**

*Guidance for Transportation during COVID-19*

This Guidance establishes the guidelines and procedures that all Department of Youth Services (DYS) state and contracted provider staff must follow as DHS resumes increased transportation of youth. DHS reserves the right to revoke or modify this protocol and these procedures at any time, if it determines that the public health and/or safety of youth and staff are at risk, or to comply with state and federal guidance.

During the COVID-19 crisis it is important that Department of Youth Services' employees, its contracted partners and the youth we serve follow the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC recommendations for protection against COVID-19. This protocol establishes guidelines and provides procedures for all DHS state and provider employees to ensure a safe and sanitary environment is maintained before, during and after the transport of youth.

Employees responsible for planning and executing a transport of youth must ensure that the following items are available and in possession before departing from their assigned location:

- Plastic clipboard for documents
- DHS Sanitization Checklist
- *DYS COVID-19 Screening Questions for All Entry to DHS Facilities*
- Disinfectant Spray approved for the eradication of COVID-19
- Hand sanitizer – with an alcohol content greater than 60% ethanol and greater than 70% for isopropanol as recommended by the CDC for hand hygiene
- Disinfectant wipes – must be approved to eradicate viruses including COVID-19
- Approved Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as disposable gloves, face shield/goggles, surgical gown and surgical masks
- Disposable bag – for the disposal of used PPE and cleaning supplies

Prior to transporting youth in a secure vehicle please ensure the following guidelines are adhered to:

- No more than two youths at one time are being transported in a DYS Secured Van. Each youth must be placed in a separate compartment of the secured van. The third compartment will be left vacant during COVID19.
- No more than one youth will be transported in a DYS Sedan or SUV (Ford Explorer) unless they have remained in the same program for a fourteen-day quarantine period.

DYS Caseworkers will continue to use their personal vehicles for transportation of youth and families. State vehicles will also be an option when available. Access to the state vehicles will require proper planning and scheduling; availability may become challenging as transportation needs increase.

Staff conducting any transport must ensure the following protocols are followed:

- Staff and youth are wearing the approved personal protection equipment (PPE)
- All disinfection requirements have been satisfactorily met before and after transport
- The *COVID-19 Screening Questions for All Entry to DYS Facilities* is completed with each youth being transported
- In the event a youth refuses to answer the screening questions, staff will immediately notify their direct supervisor
- The DYS Sanitization Checklist is completed

The youth must wear a face mask during the entirety of the transport. Youth returning to a residential program should be encouraged to re-use the mask throughout the day according to the DYS Protocol for mask use and re-use. In the event that the mask becomes visibly soiled, saturated or damaged, a new mask must be provided to the youth

Additional information can be found in the *Congregate Care Programs 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID19) Interim Guidance* document.

