

TWU's 10-Point Transit Plan For a Reopened New York City

The Transport Workers Union of Greater New York, Local 100, and the Transport Workers Union of America Have Jointly Announced the Union's 10-Point Plan to Enhance Transit Worker and Passenger Safety in a Reopened New York



Joint Statement by

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And Transport Workers Union of America
International President John Samuelson*



“The Coronavirus has ravaged our country unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes, killing between 80,000 and 110,000 Americans. New York City has been the epicenter, and no workforce has suffered more than transit workers: more than 110 MTA employees have perished, more than 84 of them members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 who operate and maintain the bus and subway system.

“TWU Local 100, assisted by the TWU International, has worked with and fought with the MTA on many issues, ranging from the distribution of masks, the separation of riders from transit workers, the homeless problem in the subway and on buses, and tragically, the death benefits to the families of our fallen union brothers and sisters.

“New York State is starting to ease some pandemic restrictions. The MTA is making plans to increase bus and subway service. This crisis, however, is far from over. The danger of infection remains, and there is grave concern about a possible second major wave of infections in the fall.

“At this critical juncture, TWU Local 100 has drafted a 10-point plan for moving forward, starting with the granting of hazard pay for transit workers.”

1. Hazard Pay – You simply can't expect transit workers to keep coming to work without first recognizing the sacrifices they have made, the day-to-day conditions they have labored under, and the risks they continue to face in public service. Thanks and praise are welcome, but simply are not enough.

2. Personal Protective Equipment – No mask, no work. Supplies must be stockpiled. Larger sizes available to workers.

3. Testing and Tracing – Testing of TWU Local 100 members in large numbers (testing size to be determined by an expert) with the objective of curtailing the spread of the virus by workers who are asymptomatic. Assessment of the tracing staffing and a determination if there are enough personnel assigned. Hire more if needed.

4. Temperature Checks – Expand the program so any worker can be voluntarily checked before entering the property.

5. Shields – Protective shields completely separating Bus Operators from riders. Barriers that will still allow emergency exiting should also be installed to further isolate Conductors and Train Operators from public passenger areas in the cars where the workers' cabs are located. A 6-foot no-approach zone painted on train platforms

where Conductors point to the indication board. If a rider enters the zone, Conductors should shut their window.

6. Homeless and Mentally Ill – Humane removal 24-hours a day from the system by police and social workers with referral to necessary services.

7. Reasonable Accommodations – Reasonable accommodations, or assignments, for older workers with pre-existing conditions, including posts inside subway station booths and enclosed security booths.

8. Study, Investigate and Report – Establish an independent panel of medical experts, public health officials, and other occupational health and safety experts, jointly selected by the union and the employer, to investigate and report on why so many transit workers were infected and died. There should be an interim report on how to improve worker safety with recommendations.

9. Cleaning – Mandatory and scheduled (as recommended by the expert panel) decontamination and disinfection of buses, trains, stations and workplaces. Determine how many more cleaners are needed to be hired and any additional training they may require.

10. Riders Masks – Enforcement of a facial covering rule for riders. No mask, no entry.