

Sent by email to
Heidi.alexander@london.gov.uk



Heidi Alexander
Deputy Mayor for Transport
City Hall
The Queens Walk
London, SE1 2AA

24th July 2020

Dear Heidi,

Guidance on safe taxi use

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to re-open the capital and get London moving again. As you will be aware, Government guidance on travelling safely during the pandemic has changed from only essential travel on public transport, to using it where walking and cycling is not possible. This shift and further changes expected from 1st August are key to encouraging more people back into central London and boosting the economy.

I am writing to urge you to issue updated travel guidance and specific guidance on safe taxi use, which recognises the important role that black cabs play as a socially distanced form of transport and as an alternative to public transport for those not able to cycle or walk.

Promoting safe taxis use will not add any new vehicles to London's roads – in fact, the number of taxis has fallen significantly as a result of the pandemic. It is also a way to deter people from turning to private car use and to help avoid damaging car-based recovery.

Other transport authorities have done this effectively and we ask that you follow their example. Transport for Greater Manchester and the Mayor of Greater Manchester published guidance on *Safely Reopening Greater Manchester*, which states “*taxis and private hire services are an important part of our transport network and critical in helping our economy recover...*”

Their guidance includes a specific section on “safe taxi and PHV use”. It states that “*Taxis and private hire services...can support our pub, bar and restaurant sector, and wider leisure industry, as they reopen. They can help people get to and from where they need to while protecting themselves and others by following guidance to use them safely.*”

It also notes that, “*with capacity on public transport still limited, taxis and private hire services are a convenient alternative for occasional or longer journeys, particularly for trips in the evening*” – recognising that cycling and walking are not always a viable option.

Similarly, *guidance for employers* encourages them to “*ask staff if they can use taxis or private hire vehicles as an alternative [to public transport] at night.*”

TfL should issue similar guidance as soon as possible to better promote the range of safe transport choices available, give people the confidence to return to and travel around central London safely and help bolster the struggling taxi trade.

This is a vital step to promoting recovery for the taxi trade and for London. I hope you will take it forward. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve", with a stylized flourish underneath.

Steve McNamara

General Secretary, The Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association (LTDA)

cc. Andy Byford, Commissioner, Transport for London
Helen Chapman, Director Licensing, Regulation and Charging, Transport for London