



Customer Service Contact:
(831) 425-8600

CUSTOMER ALERT

March 20, 2020

Santa Cruz METRO Announces COVID-19 Service Changes

In response to the state's declaration of a State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19, and other recent federal, state and county guidance, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) is announcing sweeping changes, effective Monday, March 23, 2020.

On March 19, 2020 Governor Newsom ordered individuals living in the State of California to stay home or at their place of residence (shelter in place) except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of the federal critical infrastructure sectors. Included in the Governor's 16 critical infrastructure sectors is the Transportation Systems Sector – Mass Transit and Passenger Rail. This order goes into effect immediately and shall stay in effect until further notice.

Mass transit continues to be identified as an essential service or critical infrastructure in the State of California. Therefore, **METRO will endeavor to provide fixed-route and paratransit service for as long as possible during this health pandemic.**

However, in an effort to further **protect METRO employees and the public** during this health pandemic, the following changes will take place **effective Monday, March 23, 2020:**

- In an effort to respond to the severe decrease in ridership, and in an attempt to reduce METRO bus operators' exposure, all service provided by METRO Monday – Sunday (seven days/week) **will run daily on the Saturday - Sunday schedule** until further notice.

This change will result in fewer buses running; less frequency of service; later start times and earlier end times.

For further schedule/timetable information, customers should consult the METRO Headways Bus Riders Guide or the METRO website: www.scmttd.com

- All School Term Service (ST) was suspended on March 18th until further notice.
- In an effort to provide METRO bus operators with social distancing, METRO will reduce/eliminate the interface with customers at the farebox by **suspending the collection of fares** on buses and ParaCruz paratransit services until further notice.
- In an effort to provide bus operators with social distancing, all customers, with the following exceptions, will **enter and exit through the rear door** of the bus until further notice:
 - This applies to buses with two or more doors and is limited to buses in which the bus operator can actuate the rear door (newer buses). In all other cases, customers will continue to board at the front door and will not pay a fare.
 - Buses that will allow customers to enter at the rear door will have a sign on the front door directing them to do so.

- Any customer who wishes to continue boarding and exiting through the front door for ADA purposes will be allowed to continue doing so.
- In an effort to provide bus operators with social distancing, **flip seats at the front of the bus in the mobility securement area will be restricted to ADA customers using mobility devices only** – no ambulatory or general seating. This applies on all fixed-route buses, including Highway 17 commuter buses.
- To provide operators with social distancing, customers will be restricted from standing in the restricted securement area and will be required to sit in available seating toward the middle or rear of the bus, keeping at least six feet of separation from other customers.
- In an effort to provide social distancing for drivers and customers on ParaCruz services, on March 17th **ParaCruz paratransit services started prioritizing customers requiring service to/from essential services** such as doctor’s appointments and dialysis. All other trips will continue to be served, but not necessarily on the schedule requested by the customer.
- All METRO Customer Service and private vendor services, including restroom facilities, at both **Pacific Station and the Watsonville Transit Center will be suspended until further notice** and the lobbies are closed. **However, bus operations will continue at these facilities.**
- Customer Service calls will continue to be received at (831) 425-8600.
- METRO Administration is closed to the public until further notice.

How can customers help?

Customers should:

- Always avoid riding METRO when sick
- Reduce the use of METRO to essential trips only. For example: Doctor’s appointments, dialysis and work - eliminate all non-essential trips.
- While onboard a bus, to the greatest extent possible, observe “social distancing” (at least 6’ between people). If there are too many people on the bus, consider taking the next bus.
- Do not stand near the bus operator or in the restricted securement area
- Consider adjusting trips to off-peak periods (non-commute periods)
- Limit carry-on items and keep aisles clear. No items will be placed in restricted areas.
- Be courteous to other riders and the bus operator by following the CDC COVID-19 Prevention tips posted on the buses and the CDC website
- Consider that on March 10, 2020, the California Department of Public Health stated in part, that high-risk individuals should “Avoid crowds, mass gatherings or large events, and public transit, and stay home as much as possible.”

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/>

<http://santacruzhealth.org/>

About Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

Established in 1968, Santa Cruz METRO provides fixed route and Highway 17 commuter service throughout Santa Cruz County, with limited service connecting to Monterey Salinas Transit at our Watsonville Transit Center and Santa Clara County, transporting more than 5 million passenger trips a year. METRO also operates ParaCruz paratransit service throughout Santa Cruz County, providing about 72,000 trips per year. METRO’s operating budget in FY19 is \$52 million and is funded through a combination of farebox revenues, sales tax and state and federal sources. Today it operates a fleet of 98 buses on 26 fixed routes. For more information, visit www.scmttd.com