



COVID-19: GUIDE OF PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR NATIONAL LIMOUSINE ASSOCIATION (NLA) OPERATORS

Disclaimer:

Below are some practical measures that you could implement into your business during this difficult time. You know your business best so only you can determine which are appropriate. Always check with your labor attorney, tax accountant, and other professionals where appropriate before implementing any of these measures.

OPERATIONS

- Review and evaluate your dispatch grid to ensure you are covering trips in the most efficient manner
 - i.e. reduce vehicles passing each other empty and unnecessary deadhead time
- Cease/suspend all subscriptions, periodicals, newspapers, magazines, etc.
- In states where a State of Emergency has been or will be declared, check insurance policies and contact agents
- Review local farm-outs and cover all local trips in-house when possible
- Inquire about loan deferments with bank/lending institution

MARKETING

- Market your assets in ways you typically wouldn't to attract clients you do not normally serve.
 - i.e. Taking a photo in front of a popular wedding venue and leveraging that as social media marketing in your local Facebook groups that are designed and utilized by local brides/planners.
- Visit local funeral homes and showcase sprinter, van, limousine, and private car options that complement the offerings they already have.
- Visit your top 10 local clients and thank them for their business.
- List a specific service type on local resources for sale such as Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace, OfferUp
- Many people are choosing to drive as alternative to train/plane – market to them to encourage black car/SUV/group transportation
- Get out there and sell your business!

BUDGET

- Reduce inventory purchases such as fleet supplies (oil filters, windshield wipers, etc.)
- Don't fill the fuel tank until day of trip for vehicles that do not have immediate commitments
- Add LED light bulbs to areas that require lighting most frequently
- Add motion-activated light switches in bathrooms, stock rooms, anywhere else they can be used
- De-clutter and sell anything that has been in storage more than 3 months (Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, OfferUp)
- De-activate/suspend any devices such as tablets, phones, toll tags, GPA devices that are sitting idle and unused
- Consider removing a portion of your fleet from the road to save on insurance costs
- Extend vehicle payments to the extent possible
- If your office lease is up soon, consider implementing a remote workforce to save on office costs

STAFFING

- Reduce/eliminate staff overtime
- Encourage staff to take a day off and connect with family (they have likely ignored this in exchange for working in a 24/7 business)
- Evaluate your staff, find ways to keep “top performers” so they do not look elsewhere
- Evaluate the necessity of any non-essential personnel
- Consider furloughs for non-essential staff
- Have manager or other salaried employee conduct meet and greets instead of hourly employees
- Have overnight dispatchers assist accounting to close out trips to cut back on hourly accountants
- Allow cross-training of other departments if time allows (i.e. reservationist to a dispatcher)
- Evaluate reduction in hours for dispatch/reservation departments
- Where possible, schedule staff for four-day work week

PREPARATION FOR SBA LOAN APPLICATION

Document Financial Losses

After some past disasters, the U.S. Small Business Administration has made financial assistance available through “Economic Injury Disaster Loans”. We urge you to be prepared in advance should these loans be offered. In general, the SBA will need to compare your financial condition and operating results preceding the disaster with those during and since the disaster period. Most likely you will be required to produce balance sheets and operating statements for similar periods of time as well as other documents to establish loss.

[SBA Guidance on Coronavirus](#)

PREPARATION & STRATEGY

In preparation for COVID-19’s likely effects on the private ground transportation industry, the NLA recommends that all operators take the following steps to best protect the health and safety of employees and passengers:

- Conduct a thorough cleaning of vehicle interior surfaces with Clorox or bleach-based disinfectant wipes after each ride
- Remove all printed and reading materials from seat-back pockets
- Cease offering any refreshments (i.e., candy, mints, water, etc.) that are not individually packaged or sealed, unless specifically requested by the client, and immediately remove using a paper towel or gloves such refreshments after the ride is completed
- Limit all physical contact or materials sharing between chauffeurs and clients where possible
- Clean and disinfect all office, dispatch and working areas daily
- Encourage all staff to see a doctor immediately if they feel unwell and do not allow sick employees to report for work
- Visit the [CDC’s website](#) twice daily to stay continuously updated on the organization’s recommendations

In order to most effectively deal with the potential impact of COVID-19 on your business, it is recommended to plan for all potential occurrences. In order to optimally prepare, consider developing the following:

- An internal company chain of communications for any instances related to COVID-19, including but not limited to the following:
 - Contact with a sick passenger
 - A sick chauffeur or employee
 - Government recommendations on travel that impact business
- Protocol for an employee sick with COVID-19
- Messaging and protocol if a passenger is later determined to be sick with COVID-19

As with any situation that may impact business as usual, it is important to monitor the situation and ensure that you are current on all developments – globally, nationally, regionally and locally. To this end, the NLA recommends that all operators:

- Visit the [CDC's website](#) twice daily to stay continuously updated on the organization's recommendations
- Maintain regular communications with your insurance provider and any other agency partners (PR, advertising, digital/website)
- Regroup with employees and staff daily, and ensure that they are sharing any comments, conversation or feedback regarding COVID-19 from clients, partners or other staff members
- Monitor social media channels, industry resources and third-party websites for industry updates as well as any chatter relating to your organization or competitors

COMMUNICATIONS

CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS

You have most likely received questions about COVID-19 from clients who are concerned about their health and safety as it pertains to their travels. In order to reassure clients that your business is taking all appropriate precautions to prioritize their wellbeing, the NLA urges you share a personal letter with your clients. You may use the below as a template or guide, adjusted as needed.

To Our Valued Clientele:

The health and safety of our passengers, partners and employees is our top priority. As questions and concerns arise as a result of COVID-19 (commonly referred to as Coronavirus), our company has taken a number of precautionary measures to provide the highest level of protection for our customers and staff.

A thorough cleaning of vehicle interior surfaces with Clorox or bleach-based disinfectant wipes is conducted following each ride, and all company working areas are cleaned and disinfected daily. Furthermore, we have instructed all employees to seek medical attention immediately if they feel unwell, and we do not allow sick employees to report for work under any circumstances.

You may notice some changes to your regular service as a result of these precautions, such as the removal of all printed and reading materials from the seat-back pockets, the cessation of candy, mints, water or beverage offerings that are not individually packaged or sealed, unless requested, and the limiting of all physical material sharing between passengers and drivers wherever possible.

We appreciate your understanding and are dedicated to continuing to provide you with the highest level of service that you have come to expect. We wish you the best of health and look forward to serving you again soon!

Sincerely,

<Member Logo>

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

With the recent increase in media attention surrounding COVID-19, you may be contacted by local and national media. Should this occur, we strongly suggest that you **do not engage with media**, even with the statement, “no comment.” Simply not responding to the inquiry is the best course of action.

A **holding statement** [*an initial statement that states the basic facts of an incident and lets people know you are actively dealing with a crisis*] should be prepared in advance and at the ready, in the event a response is deemed unavoidable. An effective holding statement will afford an organization or an industry crucial time to better understand what has happened and issue a more detailed communication. It will also help prevent the spread of rumor and speculation. Your statement should be clear and concise, reflecting awareness, empathy, and guidance for additional information or updates. The last sentence of your holding statement should refer media to the [CDC's \[LINK\]](#) website for additional information regarding COVID-19.

MANAGING THE SITUATION

The key to successfully managing a situation is preparation. The NLA advises that all executives review the below three-phased strategy that, when implemented effectively, will maintain and lessen the negative effects of COVID-19.

PHASE ONE

- Determine the most likely crisis situations your business may face and outline plans for each, including sample holding statements
- Select crisis management and crisis communication teams
- Designate a spokesperson (national and regional/local if needed)
- Implement and practice scenarios with employees

PHASE TWO

- Develop an initial (holding) statement as soon as possible
- Gather information and ensure accuracy before sharing
- Control the flow of information – do not respond to speculation or rumors
- Respond to media quickly and respectfully, sharing only what you know, and only what is DIRECTLY related to your business
- Defer to any investigative bodies before releasing sensitive information
- Be active, not just reactive to questions and comments from media, on social media and from the general public