



25th March 2020

# NOTICE TO MEMBERS

## Re: Covid-19/Coronavirus

Members will be aware that the NBRU has been campaigning for the proper and appropriate protection measures for some time. Since the start of this crisis we have issued and received the following correspondence, which was followed up by phone calls and emails to ensure the safety of all frontline workers:

- 27<sup>TH</sup> February – Letters to the CEO's of Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and Bus Eireann
- 2<sup>nd</sup> March – letter from the Irish Rail CEO to the NBRU
- 04<sup>TH</sup> March – Letter from the Dublin Bus CEO to the NBRU
- 04<sup>TH</sup> March Letter from the Chief People Officer, Bus Eireann to the NBRU
- 06<sup>TH</sup> March – Letter to the Head of HR, Irish Rail
- 9<sup>th</sup> March – Letter to the NTA
- 11<sup>TH</sup> March – Letter to the CEO's of Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Irish Rail
- 12<sup>th</sup> March – Letter from the Irish Rail CEO to the NBRU
- 12<sup>TH</sup> March – Email from the Chief People Officer, Bus Eireann
- 13<sup>th</sup> March – Email from the Chief People Officer, Bus Eireann
- 13<sup>th</sup> March – Letter to the CEO's of Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Irish Rail
- 13<sup>th</sup> March – Notice to Members at Bus Eireann
- 13<sup>th</sup> March – Letter from the CEO of the NTA to the NBRU
- 14<sup>TH</sup> March – Letter to the Chief People Officer, Bus Eireann
- 15<sup>th</sup> March – Letter from the Chief People Officer, Bus Eireann to the NBRU
- 15<sup>TH</sup> March – Letter to the CEO of the National Transport Authority
- 15<sup>th</sup> March - Letter to the CEO's of Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Irish Rail
- 16<sup>th</sup> March – Press Release to the media
- 16<sup>th</sup> March – Letter from the Head of HR, Dublin Bus
- 16<sup>th</sup> March – Notice to Members, Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Irish Rail
- 16<sup>th</sup> March Letter from the CEO Irish Rail to the NBRU
- 16<sup>TH</sup> March – Email from the CEO of Bus Eireann to the NBRU
- 16<sup>TH</sup> March – Notice to Members
- 18<sup>th</sup> March – Notice to Members
- 19<sup>th</sup> March – Letter to the CEO, Irish Rail
- 24<sup>th</sup> March – Letter to the Chief People Officer, Bus Eireann
- 24<sup>th</sup> March - Letter to the CEO's (GP Access) of Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Irish Rail

- Letter this evening (24<sup>th</sup> March) to CEO's of Dublin Bus & Bus Éireann on Social distancing
- Twitter has been a vital communication tool throughout the crisis.

The NBRU , as the **singular solely dedicated Transport Union**, has led from the front on behalf of all Public Transport workers, we are proud to be able to reach back to the time of our founder members, led by the great colossus that was Tom Darby and stay true to their values.

The immediate implementation of a disinfectant/cleaning regime of Dublin Bus driver work areas, following our warning to the Company, that we would not allow for driver/commuter, Wayfarer interaction if such a regime was not in place, **came about because of our desire to stay true to those values.**

This warning came following an Emergency NBRU National Executive Council Meeting last Sunday week, at which we demanded that frontline Transport staff be given due consideration and recognition of their fundamental role in providing a vital transport service on behalf of the Country.

The introduction of vital sanitisers across Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann last Monday week, again following warnings from the NBRU, also clearly demonstrated the value of a dedicated frontline oriented Trade Union.

We did not make such interventions for just NBRU members, we sought from the outset, **to achieve the vital protection measures for all colleagues.**

We recognised the unique circumstances of Bus Éireann operations, the lack of protective screens is a glaring distinction between this Company and others.

The NBRU sourced 500 Tubs of antiseptic/disinfectant wipes and placed them on those Bus Éireann vehicles that have no screens.

**Sometimes actions do actually speak louder than words.**

We will continue to insist that, as long as Public Transport is required to operate during this Crisis, protection measures will need to be maintained.

We have lobbied Government, opposition parties and politicians throughout the Crisis, to highlight that the fact that the Publicly owned State Transport Companies are practically the 'last man standing' among all the Bus Companies that have been operating across this State over recent years.

Bus Éireann is **the only so-called commercial operator left**, not alone, servicing towns and villages, but more fundamentally, hospitals, doctor surgeries, nursing homes and other vital services.

The NBRU is determined to show that most of the Bus Éireann Expressway Routes are not commercial services, but are in fact an essential Social Service, **and must be reclassified as PSO (Public Service Obligation) operation.**

Iarnród Éireann is providing a pivotal link to regions in the Country that might otherwise struggle; again, our members and colleagues are working in the face of shortages of protection equipment to provide a vital service to Citizens. The numbers of those travelling have dropped alarmingly across the three Companies.

The NBRU made an impassioned plea over ten days ago to the CIE Group, to convene a meeting of all three Companies under its umbrella (CIE) to publicly demonstrate that CIE and its Subsidiaries are effectively the 'only show in town' when it came to providing vital transport links into our Communities.

We were able to persuade the media to report this initiative by publicising it through various media platforms, we have used Social media to demonstrate the value of Publicly owned Transport Companies.

The NBRU desire, shared by colleagues, is to keep those wheels turning, ensure the continued provision of vital protection equipment, and try as best that is possible, to maintain the jobs and earnings of transport staff at this crucial time in our Country's history.

**Of course, it is paramount that transport provision is measured against the understanding that some of those same transport workers will get sick themselves, family members may fall ill, staff may have to (some already have) self-isolate, some may have to decide to take time off to care for, or mind family, this should be facilitated without question.**

The NBRU is essentially a family oriented organisation, **we are Public Transport, our Ethos, driven by our membership, is TO SERVE.**

The NBRU will keep members and colleagues updated.

**Issued by  
NBRU Tom Darby House**



# National Bus & Rail Union



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Mr Jim Meade  
Chief Executive Officer  
Iarnród Éireann  
Connolly Station  
Dublin 1

Mr Ray Coyne  
Chief Executive Officer  
Dublin Bus  
59 Upper O'Connell Street  
Dublin 1

Mr Stephen Kent  
Chief Executive Officer  
Bus Éireann  
Broadstone  
Dublin 7

24th March 2020

**Re: CMO & GP Role during Covid-19**

Dear Sirs,

I refer to the above and the NBRU concerns regarding access to General Practitioners by Staff during these unprecedented times.

Quite a number of NBRU members have already highlighted the fact that they are having difficulties in contacting their designated General Practitioner over recent days.

You will recall that I did (on Monday week last), raise the issue of the CMO role and the requirement for his office to be proactive in communicating with all staff during this crucial period.

One of the issues that concerns us is the potential for staff, that cannot make contact with their GP, to come to work if they are showing symptoms of Covid-19, the advice from the HSE is to contact one's GP if concerned

You will be aware that there are mixed views regarding the role of the CMO in the day to day relationship with staff across the four Companies, now is not the time to allow prejudices to interfere with the absolute necessity for staff to be able to make contact with their GP.

Whilst many staff across Córas Iompair Éireann and its subsidiaries have shown enormous social responsibility in continuing to provide Transport during these difficult times, it is now time for the CMO to, as it were, step up to the plate and ensure that staff that are concerned can make contact with their GP within a reasonable timeframe. To that end, the NBRU require some system to be put in place to ensure this vital access.

Yours Sincerely,

Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary

Cc: Mr Lorcan O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Córas Iompair Éireann



# National Bus & Rail Union



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Ms Sinead Kilkelly  
Chief People Officer  
Bus Éireann  
Broadstone  
Dublin 7

23rd March 2020

## **Re: Appointment of probationary drivers**

Dear Ms Kilkelly,

It has been brought to the attention of these offices that quite a number of probationary drivers who have successfully completed 12 months service are not being appointed, because of an inordinate delay in medicals at the CMO's Department.

Whilst in the midst of the biggest global crisis the likes of which have not ever seen, it beggars belief that a cohort of drivers who are all effectively appointed, should be disadvantaged because of administrative or capacity issues at the offices of the CMO.

When An Garda Síochána can swear in 100's of new members after just two months, Bus Éireann can surely waive the need for a medical under the current circumstances.

Failure to do so will mean no access to pensions and welfare scheme benefits. It's deeply ironic that Management expects these drivers to put themselves in harm's way by handling cash and driving coaches without protective screen yet, simultaneously blocking access to sick pay should they be unfortunate enough to get ill!

The depots where this problem has been raised with the NBRU include Galway, Tralee, Cork and Broadstone.

I am now formally requesting that you immediately appoint all such drivers.

Furthermore I ask, that given the risk that this virus presents to all drivers who are risking their personal safety by continuing to drive public transport vehicles during this pandemic, that all non-appointed drivers be granted benefits under the Córas Iompair Éireann Welfare Scheme.

Yours sincerely

Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary





19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **NOTICE TO MEMBERS**

### **Coronavirus and Drivers Assault Screens/ Dublin Bus**

Following enquires from drivers in relation to their personal safety and the risk of contracting the Coronavirus through the openings in the assault screens, the NBRU contacted Management to have these openings sealed as a matter of urgency.

The NBRU have just been informed that Dublin Bus have obtained the services of a contractor to fill in these holes on every bus in the fleet.

This union will continue to monitor events and take appropriate steps to safeguard the health and wellbeing of drivers whilst trying to ensure everyone remains in secure employment.

Members will be kept updated on any developments

Issued by Tom Darby House



National  
Bus & Rail  
Union



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20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

# NOTICE TO MEMBERS

## ***RE: Walk around Check***

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and to help with social distancing for the present crisis we would ask that Drivers remain in their Cabs and let the Driver Assistant or Yard Inspector check the indicators and lights during the first bus walk around check.

Drivers still have to visual check for any panel damage and visually look at the tyres.

This is just a safety precaution for our members and hopefully the status quo will resume shortly.

Brian Young  
Branch Secretary

National  
Bus & Rail  
Union



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20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

# NOTICE TO MEMBERS

## *RE: Clean Cabs*

We would ask that members be mindful in these unusual times to take any litter, unfinished fruit and empty cups with them when handing over their bus either in the City Centre or their Depot.

This is to maintain a level of cleanliness within the cab area and also show some concern for the next Driver.

Brian Young  
Branch Secretary



# National Bus & Rail Union



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Mr Jim Meade  
Chief Executive Officer  
Iarnród Éireann  
Connolly Station  
Dublin 1  
19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Re: Covid-19/Social Distancing/Frontline Staff

Dear Sir,

I refer to the above and am to advise that a number of concerns remain regarding the absolute necessity to ensure that protections are not alone put in place, but are regularly repeated at appropriate intervals.

The disinfecting/cleaning of driver cabs is not an issue for debate, needs to be done consistently.

Customer service personnel should be advised to remove themselves from any unnecessary interaction with Customers.

Those crew, other than drivers, that are required to travel and ensure trains operate in a safe manner, should exercise, practice and observe the social distancing and recommended hygiene practices.

We are being informed that some offices are still applying the 'norms' around staffing levels; this should cease immediately. Social distancing is paramount to prevent the spread of this virus and having office staff at work for the 'sake of it' would be unforgivable during this unprecedented crisis.

If staff cannot work from home, then a staggered rotation, with limited personnel should **ONLY** be required.

Staff canteens remain a concern, the social distancing is not being adhered to. We are hearing stories of operational staff being held in canteens unnecessarily? Immediate action must be taken so that this practice ceases.

The NBRU is aware that these are difficult times, all personnel are doing their utmost to deliver a service.

The observations above and the requirements therein need to be applied as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary





18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

### Re: Salary payments by cash/ cash handling by staff

Members are advised that due to the current Coronavirus pandemic crisis Management have informed this Trade Union that it will be necessary to temporarily suspend cash payments to those workers who still get paid in cash.

This suspension of cash payments will be lifted as soon as the Coronavirus crisis is over and is been done in the interests of health and safety.

Management have stated that normal cash payments will resume when the crisis has passed.

Those workers paid in cash are asked to provide bank details as soon as is practicable to avoid any disruption to wages.

Drivers engaged in services that require cash handling should eliminate this work practice immediately.

Issued by Tom Darby House



## Questions from Trade Unions

Firstly, given the unprecedented situation that we find our ourselves in, can you confirm that employees, who are out of work as a result of the corona virus, will receive their full attendance bonus (should they otherwise qualify)

**The certified period of self-isolation (2 weeks) will be excluded from the reckoning for attendance bonus.**

That all employees infected will be paid sick pay at A scale level.

**All employees certified as confirmed infection with Corona Virus will be paid the equivalent of the A scale minus their social welfare entitlement for the first 2 weeks, after which they will revert to their normal CIÉ welfare entitlement.**

That employees who can't work as a result of the virus not to be entered or progressed in the ACP as a result

**In line with ACP guidelines each individual case will be dealt with on its own merit.**

Can you please clarify what the employee needs to do and how he/she will be paid in the following circumstances e.g. if the employee is returning to work following a holiday and is asked to self-isolate for 2 weeks

**They must contact the HSE or their panel doctor and submit medical certificate confirming the need to self – isolate.**

**Employees will be paid the equivalent of A scale minus their social welfare entitlement for the 2 weeks of self-isolation.**

If an employee has been in contact with a person who has now tested positive for the corona virus and is told to self-isolate for a period

**They must contact the HSE or their panel doctor and submit medical certificate confirming the need to self – isolate.**

**Employee will be paid the equivalent of A scale minus their social welfare entitlement for the 2 week period of self- isolation.**

As you are aware, employees with normal conditions already have problems getting appointments with their GP and this will obviously get worse given the

circumstances. I expect that the company will acknowledge this and will not penalise employees in relation to the ACP if extra days are missed as a result of this

**As most GP practices are handling cases by phone employees with normal medical conditions should not experience undue delays in getting appointments. Again, each case will be dealt with on its own merit.**

### **Other issues**

In relation to PPE, why are gloves (similar to what engineering have) not available to drivers now?

**The advice of our Chief Medical Officer is that gloves do not offer protection against the virus and recommends washing hands, using hand sanitiser at regular intervals as the most effective means of protecting.**

What is the position in regard to reducing capacity on our buses to facilitate social distancing?

**As customer usage has decreased significantly on all services customers are adopting the social distancing policy. We are also liaising with Government Departments, the HSE, NTA and all transport providers on a daily basis and will follow any guidelines as advised.**





16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

### **Re: Meeting with Bus Eireann Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March Facilitated by CIÉ Group**

The Company did not indicate any objection to most of the measures which we suggested overnight (Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March).

The NBRU reiterated our position regarding supporting staff that choose not to handle Cash, the Company, from its perspective, laid out the current environment in which they operate:

- **Five Year Direct Award Contract with National Transport Authority**  
this means that the Bus Eireann's Revenue on its PSO Routes is from two sources, i.e. from the NTA awarded Contract and the Fare/s from passengers.
- **Expressway is a Commercial operation which relies exclusively on Passenger Revenue for the 500 jobs it supports.**

There is no other way of explaining Bus Éireann's operations, there is little point in trying to mollycoddle the message, you the member would ultimately not thank us if we were not straight with you. Expressway cannot keep running if no money is collected. Some of our colleagues have come up with novel ways to collect fares without handling cash, Exact fares direct into cash bags with no change given.

We did remind the Company that the Expressway continues to operate when others in the field have gone off to hibernate. Expressway serves a multitude of Hospitals, something will need to be done (probably post crisis) to reconcile the social service/obligations that the Company and its staff are fulfilling at this crucial time and the notion that it (Bus Eireann) can commercially 'wash its face' through dramatically reduced Revenue.

Neither can we afford to ignore or dismiss the harsh realities of where Ireland's economy now finds itself (and its fluid) as a result of the coronavirus, headlines that read of:

- **140000 job losses to-date**
- **Prospect of a further 200000**

Our role as a Trade Union is essentially to protect members terms and conditions through hard times, and work towards improvements through better times.

**We can obviously dispense with the latter for the here and now. The job of the NBRU is trying to keep all staff in gainful employment whilst trying to keep workers safe.**

Our concentration is in ensuring that members across Public Transport can continue to work and earn a living for themselves and their families.

This of course must be balanced with ensuring that the conditions and environment to continue operations is such that the recommended protection measures are put in place. We have managed to receive a number of assurances on this front (see separate correspondence from Company), however, the advice that the Company have received from the Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the HSE is that handling Cash **has very little risk and can be reduced to negligible if drivers avoid touching their faces after handling cash'**

**The NBRU cannot, nor should not put itself in a place where it disputes Medical opinion, we can however continue to support our members that make a conscious decision not to handle Cash.**

That said, the NBRU has been fielding a number of queries from Drivers indicating that the handling of Cash, or not, should be left to the individual driver themselves (pointing out that some drivers are at varying levels of their employment contract with Bus Éireann).

The NBRU is a Union that listens to its membership and their representatives, we did issue correspondence (twice) to Bus Éireann in advance of the weekend indicating that we would support any member that made a conscious decision not to collect cash, **we can now reiterate that position.**

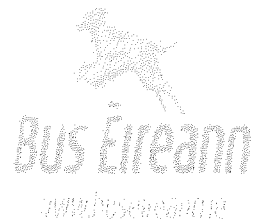
**To be clear, the NBRU will not entertain, engage with, or partake in any interactions with Bus Éireann should the Company choose to discuss or attempt to discuss instances of individual members not handling Cash.**

**In fact, we would consider it to be a disproportionate attack on Bus drivers and react in a manner which would undermine services, the complete opposite as to what is now in the National Interest.**

Issued by NBRU

Tom Darby House

Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary  
National Bus and Rail Union  
Tom Darby House  
54 Parnell Square  
Dublin 1



16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Dermot

I am writing in reply to your letter of last night 15<sup>th</sup> March which was followed by our constructive meeting this afternoon along with our CIE group colleagues and broader members of the Trade Union group.

I would like to firstly acknowledge the commitment from the NBRU leadership to working together in this unprecedented crisis with the dedication to community service for which our public transport is known. That said we have significant challenges that we face today, and will face in the days and weeks ahead as the crisis unfolds before us. At all times we are following the advice of the HSE which is guiding the nation through this period.

With the safety of our own people first and foremost, I am relieved to be able to confirm that we have today received the first substantial supply of hand sanitizer (760 large units and so one per vehicle) which is currently being despatched across the network. We have worked relentlessly to secure this rare supply and will continue to do so with a further commitment of a significant supply of units by end of this week. A significant supply is expected also by end of week of disinfectant wipes for on vehicle. Tonight, our Chief Customer Officer met with our vehicle cleaning contractor to agree a new effective procedure for overnight cleaning which will be in place over the next two days and will target all vehicles and address the cab and all customer touch points, in line with the discussion today.

The handling of cash is unfortunately an everyday challenge for us, and while up to 50% of our transactions are now Leap based, we still have, by the nature of our customer base, a significant number of cash-based transactions. We have, and will continue to put in place actions to support our drivers in relation to cash handling which as explained today, is an essential part of our ability to sustain our business, particularly our Expressway operation.





Mr. Dermot O'Leary,  
General Secretary,  
NBRU,  
54 Parnell Square,  
Dublin 1

16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Dermot,

Thank you for your letter of 15<sup>th</sup> March.

I am grateful for and heartened by the commitment of our colleagues, the NBRU and indeed the wider Trade Union Group in ensuring we in Iarnród Éireann do all we can to maintain essential services during this crisis.

I can assure you I will be stressing this commitment and contribution to all government, regulatory and other stakeholders throughout this crisis and beyond.

I also appreciate you collating proposed measures to protect the health and wellbeing of customers and colleagues as discussed at your National Executive Council, the majority of which align with actions already underway or planned to commence imminently. I will address the points you have raised individually:

- **Social distancing seating designation:** we are in the process of updating HSE advisory posters in stations and on trains with the new advisory stressing social distancing. Allied with the dramatic reduction in numbers travelling, this will facilitate social distancing, and we will review with the NTA and other transport operators if further measures are necessary.
- **In-cab cleaning and disinfecting:** this will be undertaken, and I'm happy to confirm that we received a shipment of sanitiser today.
- **Hand sanitisers / disinfecting wipes to drivers / frontline staff:** As stated above, I am pleased to confirm that the supply of personal hand sanitisers has arrived today, and will be distributed immediately, with drivers / frontline staff and other staff with limited access to handwashing facilities prioritised.
- **Train fleets to be disinfected:** This is taking place, and will continue to be in line with any updated advices from our health authorities.



16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

*Re: Meeting with Dublin Bus Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
Facilitated by CIÉ Group*

The NBRU did reiterate our position to the Company (Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>) that drivers could not be expected to engage in customer/driver interaction **without the necessary protection measures in place to facilitate such interactions.**

The Company informed the meeting that they are now committed to having 100 extra Cleaning Contractors from tonight to 'deep clean' the entire Fleet, with particular emphasis on the Drivers Cab, inclusive of the Wayfarer. Dublin Bus have issued correspondence in this regard (circulated separately) which addresses some of the concerns of Drivers:

.....'we (Company) have now finalised the arrangements for Contract Cleaners to implement additional bus cleaning measures effective from tonight, Monday 16<sup>th</sup>. The scope of the clean will be to disinfect all frequently touched hard surfaces, including the following:

- Drivers cab - frequently touched surfaces including steering wheel
- Ticket machines
- Card Readers
- Coin Vaults
- Handrails - upper and lower deck
- Handrail - stairwell
- All passenger bell-push buttons
- Seat grab rails

The foregoing has totally vindicated the position adopted by NBRU last night on behalf of members and driver colleagues.

The fact that the Company have now given assurances around the concerns highlighted by the NBRU, i.e. the absolute (imperative) necessity to roll-out the necessary cleaning and disinfecting materials to ensure continuity of service, **enables the NBRU to advise members that the customer/wayfarer interaction can now be facilitated with reasonable confidence.**

Issued by NBRU  
Tom Darby House



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Mr Dermot O Leary  
General Secretary  
N.B.R.U

Mr John Murphy  
ASST.Industrial Organiser  
SIPTU

Mr Sean Heading  
Regional Secretary  
TEEU.

Mr Willie Quigley  
Regional Officer  
Unite Union

Mr Pat Mc Cusker  
Senior Irish Organiser  
TSSA

16/03/2020

### Re: Covid -19 measures

Dear Sirs,

I refer to recent correspondence regarding the above and to our meeting this afternoon 16<sup>th</sup> March.

We find ourselves in unprecedented and very challenging times. As transport providers we have been requested by the State to maintain public transport services.

I would like to put on record my appreciation to all our employees in all grades for their total commitment and professionalism in continuing to provide vital transport links for our customers during the current situation. I would like to assure you that we are working closely with the Department of Health, HSE and relevant Government agencies and are following and implementing relevant guidelines and advice.

We are communicating with our employees via face to face, Posters, Email, Sharepoint and Yammer. We also have a dedicated Covid -19 information hub on our First Stop Sharepoint with all the latest information available including frequently asked questions section which is monitored and updated on a daily basis.



In an effort to provide a safer environment for our drivers to carry out their role we have put in place the following measures.

- Personal hand sanitisers have been issued to all our drivers effective from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March
- We have mounted hand sanitiser units in all depots which we continue to stock with product
- We have put in place social distancing in our canteen locations
- We have put in place social distancing in our offices

In addition we have now finalised the arrangements for Contract Cleaners to implement additional bus cleaning measures effective from tonight, Monday 16<sup>th</sup>. The scope of the clean will be to disinfect all frequently touched hard surfaces, including the following:

- Drivers cab - frequently touched surfaces including steering wheel
- Ticket machines
- Card Readers
- Coin Vaults
- Handrails - upper and lower deck
- Handrail - stairwell
- All passenger bell-push buttons
- Seat grab rails

I trust the above clarifies our position and provides you with the assurance that we continue to prioritise our employee welfare and will adhere to all HSE and Government guidelines throughout the current crisis.

We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you advised of any further developments.

Yours Sincerely

Philip Donohue

Head of Human Resources and Development  
Dublin Bus.





16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## NBRU PRESS RELEASE

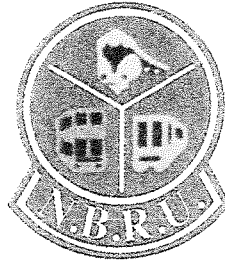
**NBRU call for Immediate Protection Measures for Frontline Transport Staff to Keep the Wheels Turning at this Vital Unprecedented Time in our Country's History.**

General Secretary Dermot O'Leary said:

"Members of the NBRU and frontline transport colleagues, are ordinary decent workers with families themselves, they have the same fears and concerns of those that are visiting each and every home at this unprecedented time. They are as equally concerned as are all frontline colleagues, across the public services, regarding the prospect of contracting and/or spreading the coronavirus to others, particularly those in their immediate and extended families. Despite these concerns those that operate our public transport system, those public service ethos driven men and women want to play their part in ensuring that those Citizens that have to go to work, particularly those in our health services, can get to their destination.

However, transport workers can only provide this service if they are given the tools required to operate through this crisis, they cannot, nor will not operate the service without the recommended protection measures being in place to do so. The NBRU has been calling for Social distancing to be immediately implemented for the last week, we have demanded that the Companies they work for has to supply hand sanitisers across Public Transport, alternatives to purchasing of tickets will have to be put in place, our members will not handle cash, the NBRU did write to the NTA last week to request that frontline Transport workers have representation at the 'decision making table', with other stakeholders, this reasonable request was, appallingly treated with disdain. We are, along with Trade Union colleagues, meeting with Dublin Bus, Iarnrod Eireann and Bus Eireann this afternoon to discuss if public transport can continue to operate. This meeting is being facilitated by the CIE Group who are the preeminent Public Transport provider in Ireland"

# National Bus & Rail Union



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Mr Jim Meade  
Chief Executive Officer  
Iarnród Éireann  
Connolly Station  
Dublin 1

15th March 2020

*Re: Emergency NBRU National Executive held today, Sunday 15th*

*&*

*Urgent Protection Measures to Ensure Continuation of Public Transport*

Dear Sir,

I refer to the above and wish to advise that the NBRU convened an emergency National Executive Council meeting today to discuss the very serious and unprecedented coronavirus crisis.

Our meeting discussed the impact on the public transport system and our ability to ensure the continuation of whatever level of public transport is deemed necessary by Government.

We informed our National Executive Council that a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow (Monday) afternoon at which the Principals of all Trade Unions, along with Management personnel from the three CiÉ subsidiaries will discuss the current crisis and the role of Public Transport.

The NBRU is acutely aware of our responsibility towards staff and commuters during these unprecedented and worrying times.

We note that a plethora of Commercial Companies have already cancelled or scaled back services, some are disgracefully using the Covid-19 crisis as a prop, citing concerns about staff and customers as opposed to the reality that is at the heart of their (Commercial) *raison d'être*, i.e. Profit.

We further note that tomorrow's meeting is being facilitated and organised by CiÉ, the preeminent Public Transport provider in Ireland, it is only at times of crisis that we, as Citizens see and appreciate the peerless value that the Publicly-owned Transport Companies, staffed by those of us that have service to the public as our core motivator, bring to the table.

The NBRU did write to the National Transport Authority (NTA), suggesting that the employee representative bodies should be invited to join with the Covid-19 PSO operator forum. The response we received was nothing short of mealy mouthed, an extraordinary slight on those workers that are expected to take on the responsibility of providing Public Transport when others in the transport sphere are looking at Maps and scheming to undermine the very fabric of our social contract with Citizens.



This crisis is crying out for leadership, Public Transport staff will not be found wanting.

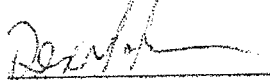
We sincerely hope that our politicians and civic leaders will recognise the contributions of our Public service/s and its value long after we have (hopefully) conquered this horrible virus.

Monday's meeting is, from the perspective of the NBRU designed to address how we can, as part of our civic duty, contribute to ensuring that Citizens can move around the Country, whilst at the same time significantly reducing or eliminating (where possible) the staff/customer interaction.

The NBRU is aware that the supplies of certain sanitation/anti-bacterial equipment have been targeted (as the National Emergency should warrant) towards those heroic medical personnel in the HSE. Notwithstanding this, it is imperative that the CIE Companies move as a matter of urgency to roll-out the necessary cleaning and disinfecting materials to ensure continuity of service/s. I have attached for your perusal, measures which we contend are vital towards ensuring such continuity, a number of which will require immediate implementation.

I trust that you will appreciate that the NBRU and fellow representative colleagues are endeavouring to ensure that we can all 'do our bit' as we grapple with this unprecedented crisis.

Yours Sincerely,



Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary

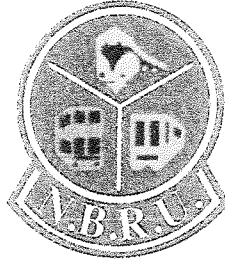
## Iarnród Éireann

### Emergency Coronavirus/Service Provision Staff & Customer Protection Measures

- Social distancing required to be introduced through identifying the Seats in Carriages which should be designated (using Covid-19/Coronavirus signage) as non-seating area/s.
- In-cab (Loco/Dart Driver) cleaning and disinfecting will require to be undertaken at regular intervals, we will require the Company to be in a position to outline a comprehensive schedule of this vital element of protection.
- Hand sanitisers/Disinfecting wipes to be made available to Drivers and other frontline operational personnel.
- Train Fleets will require to be disinfected at regular intervals throughout the period in which the fleet is in service.
- All Staff not directly required to physically operate Trains should not be travelling.
- This would include Customer Service Officers (CSO), Ticket checking/RPU, Catering personnel, it is recognised that there is a Safety requirement for Train Hosts on Mkiv Dublin/Cork services, such personnel should travel in isolation from commuters and should only be used on board or through the Train if absolutely necessary.
- A minimisation of the train host safety requirement might be facilitated by using Inter City Railcars (ICR's) where possible.
- Station/ticket checking staff that are normally deployed at Train entry barriers should not be deployed in this fashion for the duration of the crisis.
- Whilst there is broad acceptance that flexibility may be required, such flexibility should work both ways in certain circumstances e.g. childminding and the necessity to be available to look out for, or after sick relatives.
- Dedicated personnel and resources to be detailed to ensure safe and secure access to public transport for Wheelchair users and those with Mobility difficulties.
- Clerical Staff should not be grouped in Offices, this includes Booking Office staff
- Such staff should either be facilitated with time off (the least number of workers that are required will reduce risk) or necessary interventions should be put in place to allow staff to work from home.
- Staff Canteen areas will need to be reconfigured to provide for social distancing. They will need to be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals. The optimum in this regard of course, would perhaps be to reduce or eliminate the requirement to have staff congregating in canteens for the duration of the crisis.
- Commuters should be informed that there will be no Cash transactions (with immediate effect) for the duration of this Crisis.



# National Bus & Rail Union



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Ms Anne Graham  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Transport Authority  
Dún Scéine  
Harcourt Lane  
Dublin 2  
D02 WT20

15th March 2020

*Re: Response to NBRU Correspondence on Stakeholder Engagement during Covid-19  
Crisis*

Dear Ms Graham,

To say that I am dumbfounded by your response to my recent letter regarding the concerns of our members and their role in providing Public Transport during this unprecedented crisis, would be a major understatement.

I think it is of the utmost importance that we put a context around what is at play here, these are not normal times, in fact these are extraordinary times, unprecedented in fact.

For your office to respond in a manner which would appear to have you talking down to frontline Transport workers is not alone insulting, it smacks of an organisation that is detached from what people are feeling and experiencing at the Coalface of Public Transport provision.

You 'advise that it would be more appropriate for the NBRU and its members to engage directly with their employer on particular issues in their workplaces'

Ms Graham, we are not talking about every day, run of the mill issues here, we represent ordinary decent hard working people who have the same concerns as their fellow Citizens, they do not however have the ability to go into lock down or hide away in a bunker somewhere to wait out this Virus.

On the contrary, they are some of the most socially minded dedicated group of people one could ever be proud to represent, their desire to continue to operate services for the Citizens of our Country is something that should be admired, they do not deserve to be treated as 'peasants' scratching around for crumbs of comfort from the decision making table where the 'big guys and gals' sit and hand out diktats.

Your correspondence goes on to heap insult on insult:

Other key stakeholders? Worth typing again, the implication being that frontline Transport workers are NOT key stakeholders, the same staff that drive Buses, drive trains, drive trams, fuel the transport fleet, maintain the transport fleet, signal the trains throughout the system, look after/look out for commuters, engage in necessary, vital supervisory and Clerical support, these people are not Key Stakeholders?

I can only but despair, your response ill-behoves an institution (Authority) tasked with regulating and overseeing Public Transport, both PSO and Commercial.

**What is even more damning here is the call from our Tánaiste Simon Coveney this morning, 'for everyone to work together' and how his call sits with the NTA position of dismissing the necessity to have one of the pivotal stakeholders (workers) directly involved in the decision making process.**

What is also particularly illuminating here is the fact that a number of the operators that were given licences to 'compete' with State's National Carrier (Bus Éireann), have now decided to hibernate, having the audacity to advance the 'care' of staff and customers as the reason for cancellations. Bus Éireann in the meantime, continues to provide their so-called Commercial services, the reality being that the Citizens that rely on such services to get to Hospitals, Doctor's Surgeries and Chemists/Pharmacy's, will have Bus Éireann and its staff available to them.

Our members are acutely aware that we are living in unprecedented times, they are aware that there is a National crisis, our members will, with the appropriate recommended protection measures in place, continue to deliver public transport services which are so necessary for the people of Ireland who need to access their employment and critical services at this time.

They (members and colleagues) will do so, not because of the NTA, but despite it.

**The Citizens of our Country, particularly those that rely on public services, of which Transport is absolutely vital, will, when this horrible crisis is over, remember those that went the extra yard and put their shoulder to the wheel in a time of need.**

Yours Sincerely



Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary

Copy/ An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar  
Mr Michèal Martin, Fianna Fáil  
Ms Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin  
Mr Eamon Ryan, Green Party  
Mr Brendan Howlin Labour  
Ms Catherine Murphy/ Ms Roisin Shortall, Social Democrats

Mr Richard Boyd Barrett, PBP  
Mr Peadar Tóbin, Aontú  
Mr Paul Murphy, Rise

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Dear

In light of COVID-19 and following on from the advice of An Taoiseach on social gatherings and social distancing, Dublin Bus want to be able to guarantee all employees payment of wages whether they are self-isolating at home or working.

With this in mind it has been decided that, for this emergency period which we see lasting minimum up to 29 March 2020, that we will put all cash employees to a bank payment during this time.

This is to enable Dublin Bus to guarantee payment of wages to all employees during the period.

Please contact your manager in your garage and submit your BIC and IBAN codes or contact Helen Byrne, Human Resources (01 7033119).

Credit Union or An Post accounts can be used as long as you have a BIC and an IBAN code.

Employees will be reverted back to cash payment when this emergency period is over.

Thank you all for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

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**Philip Donohue**  
**Head of Human Resources & Development**



**From:** Thomas O'Connor <thomasoconnor1973@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday 16 March 2020 17:01  
**To:** National Bus & Rail Union

## Press Release

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**Daa Unions call for suspension of State dividend to allow supports for airport workers**

Date Released: 16 March 2020

The daa ICTU Unions, SIPTU, Mandate, Forsa, Connect and Unite have today called for the daa to suspend the planned dividend to allow for the funds to be used to support airport workers over the coming period.

The Unions have been in correspondence with senior management in daa seeking support for the suspension of the planned dividend.

In 2019, daa paid a dividend to the State of €37.4 million and it was expected that a similar payment would be made later this year.

SIPTU Organiser Neil McGowan said: Given that the Aviation Industry will be severely impacted by this unprecedented crisis, it is essential that airport workers, who have been and remain on the frontline as the situation develops are supported by every means possible. With the expected significant reduction in flights there is a real possibility that workers providing services at the airports could suffer a significant reduction in earnings and we believe by suspending the dividend to the State these funds could be used to financially support these workers over the coming weeks."

SIPTU represents 2000 members across all grades at Dublin and Cork Airports and the Shared Services Centre in Limerick.

**Thomas O'Connor**  
**National Bus and Rail Union**  
0868426197

nbru

**From:** Kilkelly Sinead <Sinead.Kilkelly@buseireann.ie>  
**Sent:** Sunday 15 March 2020 17:56  
**To:** nbru; dermot o'leary; Thomas O'Connor  
**Subject:** RE: Cash handling and Bus Éireann drivers

Attention Mr Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary  
NBRU

Dear Dermot

I refer to the correspondence below and note the position outlined.

As you are aware, the advice by the HSE is being updated on a daily basis and we are very much working to stay current with that advice in terms of our practices and advice to our people.

In our meeting on Friday with NBRU representatives we outlined the efforts being made to secure sanitizer – exhausting every option and doing so persistently to get our drivers a personal supply. Due to the extraordinary demand in the community and prioritisation of the health care sector this is proving very challenging but we continue to work hard on this. About 40% of our fleet have screens – those providing city/town service – and we want to provide a supply for all our drivers whether they have screens or not.

Following the advice from the national CMO's office on cash on Friday night we focused both yesterday and today's leadership Coronavirus morning meeting on the identification of a range of additional actions that we have and will continue to put in place to support our drivers in relation to cash handling. This includes increased customer communications and signage being produced, bus station customers being directed to TVMs, Leap promotion. We have already initiated a radio and on-line campaign to promote non-cash. Together with the other PSO operators, we are meeting with the NTA early on Monday morning and will work with them to drive the change away from cash and promote the safety of our drivers.

We will meet again tomorrow as part of the broader TUG engagement on Covid-19 and appreciate your support as we all try to do the right thing for our people.

Regards  
Sinead

SINEAD KILKELLY

Bus Éireann, Broadstone, Dublin 7.

+353 1 703 3239 087 720 2765

Making Better Journeys

Bus Éireann



**From:** Thomas O'Connor [mailto:thomasoconnor1973@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** 14 March 2020 17:55  
**To:** Kilkelly Sinead <Sinead.Kilkelly@buseireann.ie>  
**Subject:** Cash handling and Bus Éireann drivers

Dear Ms. Kilkelly,

Please see the below communication from the General Secretary of the NBRU, Dermot O'Leary, in relation to drivers handling cash during the current Coronavirus pandemic.

A hard copy of this communique will follow in the post on Monday.

Yours Sincerely,

Thomas O'Connor  
National Bus and Rail Union  
0868426197