

UIC COVID-19 TASK FORCE

# RAILsilience

How the rail sector fought Covid-19 during lockdowns

May 2020



INTERNATIONAL UNION  
OF RAILWAYS



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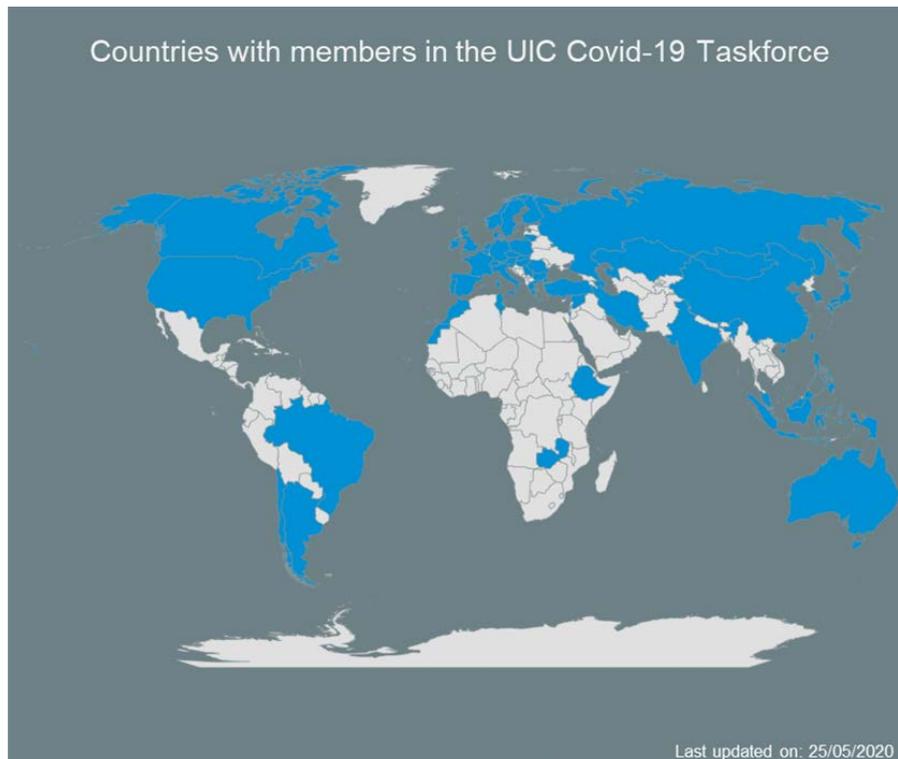
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# 1. UIC COVID-19 TASK FORCE

Amid the coronavirus disease outbreak, UIC set up a task force combining UIC member companies, experts and other relevant stakeholders (AAR, AFRA, African Union, ALAF, AllRail, ANPTrilhos, APTA, CER, CIT, EIM, EPF, ERFA, ETF, ETOA, IATA, OTIF, UITP and UNECE<sup>1</sup>) to work together to find ways to respond to this crisis that were adapted to the railway sector.

The UIC Covid-19 taskforce's main purpose is to provide a trusted space for our members and fellow transport associations to share information with one another regarding this crisis. As this is an unprecedented, global crisis, being able to come together and benefit from each other's experiences has been key in the fight to protect lives while still providing a minimum of our essential service: transport.



*Figure 1: A world map showing in blue the countries from which there are representants on the UIC Covid-19 Task Force, as of May 25th 2020*

1. AAR: Association of American Railroads, AFRA: French Association of Railways, ALAF: Latin American Railway Association, AllRail: Alliance of Rail New Entrants, ANPTrilhos: Associação Nacional dos Transportadores de Passageiros sobre Trilhos/National Association of Passenger Rail Operators, APTA: American Public Transportation Association, CER: Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies, CIT: International Rail Transport Committee, EIM: European Rail Infrastructure Managers, EPF: European Passenger Federation, ERFA: European Rail Freight Association, ETF: European Transport Workers Federation, ETOA: European tourism association, IATA: International Air Transport Association, OTIF: Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail, UITP: international organisation for public transport authorities and operators, UNECE: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

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As this continues to be a global crisis, it needs a global response, and UIC is uniquely placed to create a space where rail stakeholders the world over can come together and cooperate. At our taskforce meetings we bring together railway stakeholders from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Oceania and the Americas, and all are benefiting from each other's knowledge and experience (Figure 1).

Response to this crisis for the rail sector requires them to navigate a changing environment, with a day-to-day, agile approach, in the now and also continuing on to the short and medium terms.

On 1st March, UIC Guidance for Railway Stakeholders was published and made available online at: <https://uic.org/news/article/Covid-19>. Since then, information has continued to be shared among members. All the information shared by the members is available upon joining the task force and registering to UIC extranet at the Covid-19 Task Force Workspace at <https://extranet.uic.org/index.php>.

The collected information has also been compiled into an Excel Data Base. As part of the data base, summary sheets have also been produced for certain topics such as Passenger Service Levels, Management of (Passenger) Border Closure, Shops in Stations, Sanitation Gel in Stations, Cleaning Protocols, Suspected Case Protocols...

Relevant multimedia information is available on the UIC Media Center at <https://mediacenter.uic.org/fr>. The UIC Covid-19 task force has also created a Linked-In group where relevant newspaper articles and upcoming webinars are shared. Join us: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13846065/>.

The task force continues its important work of information sharing to this day, turning now to the resumption phase. **This document, however, focuses on the efforts shared with the task force during the lockdown phase of the Covid-19 crisis.** The ways in which the rail sector responded to this crisis are laid out hereafter and demonstrate the resilience of railway undertakings.

## 1.1. BUILDING RAILSILIENCE TOGETHER

Whilst the outbreak of this corona virus (Covid-19) has created an unprecedented situation that is continuing to impact people across the globe, the rail sector immediately mobilized and went straight to work, together, sharing and exchanging on best practices to adopt. In doing so, the railways have revealed their ability to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of this pandemic in a timely, coordinated and efficient manner, for the preservation and restoration of essential rail public transport and freight services. This held especially true during the wide-spread government-imposed lockdowns, as this document demonstrates.

The rail sector has already demonstrated its resilience, and will continue to do so in the future! Thus, we talk herein about RAILSilience!

## 1.2. METHOD

The task force developed and distributed to task force members two questionnaires, both of which can be seen in the Annex. The first questionnaire aimed at identifying best operational and communication measures adopted by members to prevent Covid-19 from spreading. This first questionnaire was answered by 61 task force members. While most of the task force members responded directly to the questionnaire, some also sent relevant documents that their organisations had already developed, and these were used to respond to the questionnaire questions. A second questionnaire was created to address business continuity conditions, cleaning protocols and security issues. This questionnaire received 37 responses. Not all respondents answered every questionnaire question. The questionnaires were distributed during the Covid-19 affiliated government lockdowns and therefore the responses reflect this time period.

The answers to the questionnaires were used as a data corpus and also to create the Covid-19 Task Force Response Data Base, as referenced above. This data was analysed using a thematic analysis lens. Thematic analysis is a social science and humanities method used to identify, analyse and report patterns (aka themes) within a set of data. There are several steps:

1. Familiarise oneself with the data corpus (in this case reading the answers to our two task force questionnaires);
2. Search for themes (taking into account the relationship between the data, seeing what is similar, what is different, etc);
3. Producing the report (to tell the complicated story of the data).

Here below is that report.



# 2. COVID-19 & THE RAIL SECTOR

## 2.1. COVID-19 AFFILIATED GOVERNMENT LOCKDOWNS AND THEIR EFFECT ON PASSENGER RAIL

Since the first guidance document published by the UIC Covid-19 Task Force, many governments the world over took the decision to enforce lockdowns in their countries and even those who did not do so were encouraging the population to stay at home. Most of the lockdowns have required people to shelter in place, the closing of schools and non-essential shops, and restricting movement of peoples except in specific cases (e.g. medical visits), with the exception of essential workers. During the lock downs, governments made it clear that rail is an essential service and that as such, at least a minimum service level has been maintained by most UIC members, with some members providing up to 90% of their normal services. Some notable exceptions include the decisions of Bulgaria, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Romania, India and the Republic of Slovenia to completely shut down their passenger rail service.

These lockdowns have gone hand in hand with the closing of borders to passenger traffic, while maintaining open borders for freight (Figure 2).

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Figure 2: Responses from 51 Task Force Members on the level of passenger service in their organisation due to Covid-19. Some rail international rail companies have been able to cross closed borders (e.g. Eurostar still runs from London to Paris and Brussels).

In Europe, many authorities started by asking railways to stop passenger traffic to and from Italy. When the European Commission decided to close the external borders, many EU Member States also closed their internal borders to passenger traffic. In North America, Amtrak and VIA Rail also stopped their international trains. Regional trains in cross border regions have continued to function, as some essential workers live in one country but work in another, and this type of travel has mostly remained allowed by authorities. Further, while passenger borders are closed, citizens of a given country often are allowed to return to their home country via rail. For those countries which have not closed their borders, such as The Netherlands, rail traffic has still had to stop at certain borders as their neighboring countries have closed their borders, e.g. Belgium. The border closures were enforced by either closing passenger traffic or by border authorities and was not seen as a responsibility of the railway sector. It is important to note that certain international railway companies such as Eurostar and Thalys continued to provide passenger service in a limited capacity and in accordance with the authorities in order to repatriate individuals.

While the government lockdowns resulted in the closure of many shops in railway stations, the decision to completely shut down railway stations varied significantly from country to country, and even within the same country. For example, in India, all railway stations were (and continue to be) completely shut to the public, whereas in The Netherlands, stations remained completely open. In certain circumstances where there were many cases of Covid-19 contamination, governments ordered specific railway stations to close, for example in Wuhan, China or in Lombardy, Italy. While the stations were closed to the public, trains continued to pass through these regions uninhibited.

## 2.2. RAIL FREIGHT AS A KEY PROVIDER OF ESSENTIAL GOODS DURING THE CRISIS

Rail freight continued to be seen by governments as a key player in providing essential commodities such as food, coal, and health-related materials (e.g. medicine, personal protective equipment (PPE)) to communities during the lockdowns. Despite this, overall freight traffic was reduced during this period. In all the countries surveyed, there were no restrictions imposed on freight by the government. As such, questionnaire respondents continued to ensure freight operation.

Regarding international traffic, cross-border operations were maintained in most of the countries. Many of the surveyed companies underlined the smooth cooperation between the collaborating railways. In Poland, there is an obligation to report lists of employees carrying out work in border traffic. In many European countries, train drivers must carry official documents allowing them to cross the borders. Moreover, the European Commission, as per its [Communication of 23 March 2020](#), provided Green Lanes at border-crossings to ensure continuous flow of goods across the EU and make sure that both goods and transport workers are and were able to travel without delay.

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The companies have adapted the transport plan to meet the market demand and provide, when needed, additional capacities to transport necessary goods. When in Europe there was a short supply of pasta as many people were stocking up, DB (Germany) worked together with ALDI and Cucina pasta to transport over 400 000 packages of pasta for more than 650 branches of the discount chain in southern Germany (Figure 3). Network Rail (UK) also informed us, thanks to the fact that rail freight workers have been recognized as essential workers, they have continued to ensure regular service levels and that the amount of food being moved on the railway by freight across Wales and between west London and Cornwall increased by 20% in one week. Another example demonstrating the importance of rail freight is the increase in the use of especially long cargo trains on the route China-Russia-Latvia-Kaliningrad region. However, for most of the companies, there is a decrease in the transported volumes, due to the lockdown of many production plants.



*Figure 3: Over 200 tons of pasta transported by DB*

Most of the companies have implemented protocols for wagon disinfection and some even have disinfection protocols for the goods. In Switzerland, the shunting yards have been equipped with disinfectants and the rules issued by the Federal Office of Public Health (e.g. distance) are observed at all locations.

An important aspect for all companies is looking after staff and making sure that they work safely. Employees are equipped with disinfectant liquids and room disinfectants. In Italy, train conductors are equipped with personal protection devices (FFP2-FFP3 face masks, hand-sanitizing gel, disposable gloves).

### **2.3. RAIL SUPPORTS THE MEDICAL SECTOR**

The rail sector was also an important actor in creating community “RAILsilience” during the lockdowns, by working hand in hand with health authorities to meet their needs.

Converting high speed rail trains to medical trains is an initiative that started and got tested in France back in May 2019. SNCF has been able to use their double decker high-speed rail trains to transport Covid-19 positive patients who were in a medically induced coma from the East of the country, where hospitals were over capacity, to the West of the country, where hospitals still had room, thus easing the burden on medical facilities and ensuring better care for the ill (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Photo taken inside the SNCF medical train

In general, the lower deck is used for the transport of the patients, who remained on stretchers that sat atop of the already existing high-speed rail seats, and the upper deck is used by the medical and security personnel. Each train can carry 28 ill patients, plus 50 caregivers and 10 tons of medical material such as O2 bottles. Demonstrating the importance of the UIC task force in sharing good practices, SNCF shared their operating procedure with the task force.

Another use for rolling stock was found by Indian Railways, who have converted their coaches to “isolation wards on wheels,” housing Covid-19 patients who will be moved to locations where there will be a scarcity of hospital beds, thus creating 320,000 additional bed capacity (Figure 5). Some of their railway buildings are also being used as quarantine centers.



Figure 5: Photo of the Indian Railways isolation wards on wheels

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Freight transport has also played a role in the development of much needed extra hospital space. KTZ Express (Kazakhstan) organized the transportation of 226 mobile homes to be used as part of the prefabricated infectious diseases hospital, which will provide an additional 280 beds.

In China, medical staff from across the country reached Wuhan by train to provide medical aid. In complement to measures put in place providing gratuity to local public transportation, SNCF extended such to Intercity and High-Speed journey of all medical staff and caregivers, strengthening the hospital teams. SNCF actions in this regard were complemented by making available some of its in-house caregivers to hospital and nursing homes.

Many rail companies had their own stocks of masks as part of their epidemic crisis plans and, given the lack of availability of such masks for the medical sector, readily contributed their stocks in coordination with authorities.

## 2.4. RAIL UNDERTAKES SOCIAL MEASURES

The rail sector was also an important actor in creating community “RAILsilience” during the lockdowns, by contributing with numerous social measures.

In India, Indian Railways, through its arms IRCTC (Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation) and RPF, provided and continue to provide food to the poor and stranded people daily as part of its social responsibility.

In France, SNCF reinforced its partnership with humanitarian emergency services donating several thousand food packs and several thousand comforters, also using some of their buildings to house people who may not be able to shelter in place, such as seniors, medical personnel and people suffering from domestic abuse.

Last but not least, railway staff have also been active in their communities to ensure that, as is the case in Poland at PKP Group, elderly people or those who are in quarantine at home get adequate supplies delivered to their doors.



## 3. RESPONSE MEASURES

### 3.1. TASK FORCE

Most railway undertakings have set up a task force dedicated to tackle the challenges brought by the Covid-19 crisis, both a strategic level and on a day-to-day operations level. The task force, usually, consists of the board of directors and representatives of the company's subsidiaries/ divisions (passengers, freight, infrastructure etc.) in charge of the coordination of their respective governments' directives and monitoring the daily activity within the company (operation, staff, communication, prevention and mitigation measures) with the support of separate working groups commissioned to tackle specific challenges in their respective areas of expertise, rolling out specific measures for railway passenger transport service, employee protection, material transport and emergency response (HR, communication, operations, maintenance etc.). Some companies, however, opted for additional task forces for the Covid-19 crisis.

India, Poland and Morocco have opted for a multi-level task force structure: a central unit (executive level) tasked with overseeing the implementation of the government guidance, the monitoring of the crisis, the staff and the overall operations, and a regional unit ensuring the day-to-day operations and business continuity.

NS, the Dutch operator, have four units working on the Covid-19 crisis, already existing strategic and tactical units acting as the point of contact with authorities and overseeing logistic and operational issues (schedule) and additional BCM (business continuity management) and "Recovery" units with a focus on mid to long-term crisis management (financial aspects, certifications, future projects).

In some case, like Hungary, the company has become under the direct command of a national task force created by the government.

### 3.2. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

#### 3.2.1. Cooperation with Authorities

##### Overall Cooperation

The transport offer was, for the most part, drastically reduced given the lower demand but also because of the critical importance set by the State in terms of health safety.

Given the circumstances, internal railway safety and security teams got support from national police, as necessary, providing supplemental assistance to proceed with derogation check at station entrances or before boarding.

Most of railway undertakers have set a dedicated taskforce (see above) and they also interact with several ministries, with some having appointed a single point of contact.

## Certificates

A key issue in being able to continue to provide their essential services was working together with authorities when it came to expiring certificates. Certificates may include medical examinations, random alcohol / drug tests, recurrent training, hours of service, driver knowledge and various inspection rules for track, rolling stock and signals. In many countries, the required regulatory bodies were also on lockdown due to Covid-19 and thus unable to perform the required audits/ testing for providing railways with certificates. Most members have been able to work with authorities to get certificate renewals extended and/or pushed back to the time when the lockdowns would be lifted (Figure 6). Many who said that they haven't been granted regulatory exemptions said as much because their certificates are not currently near expiring and thus this hasn't been an issue for them.

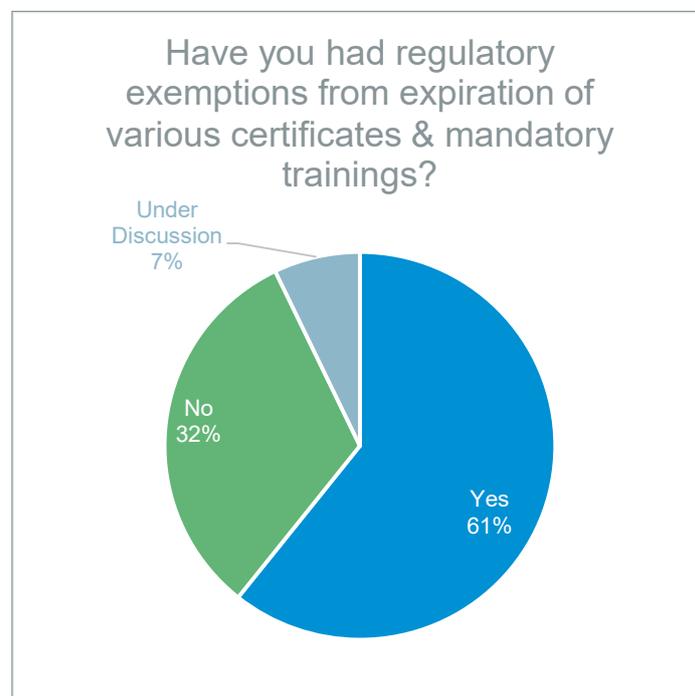


Figure 6: Responses to the question "How have you dealt with expiration of various certificates & mandatory trainings (e.g. medical, risk, safety audits)?"

### 3.2.2. Staff Availability

A key issue regarding business continuity is to ensure that there is adequate staff available to ensure continued service. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, there have been many potential reasons for a decreased availability of staff, including quarantine measures, absenteeism associated with fear of catching the virus, and service reduction generally. Interestingly, whether or not railways have had a reduction in staff is split about evenly, with half having less staff and the other half keeping staff as is (Figure 7).

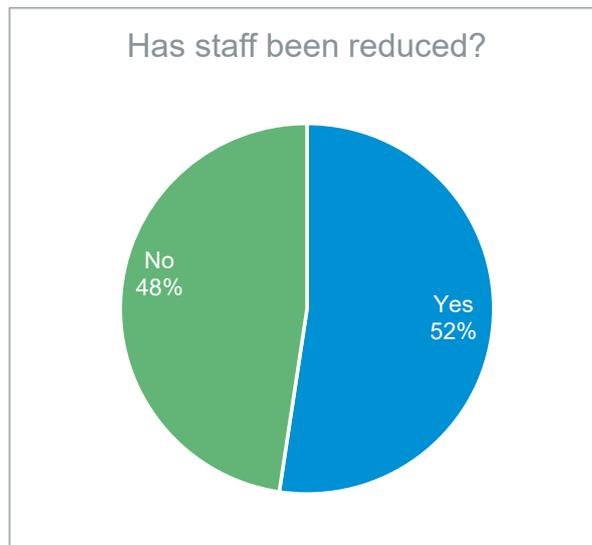


Figure 7: Responses to the question “How have you dealt with the reduction of staff?”

Those who have been able to keep staff at a normal level were able to do so by implementing on a large-scale home office. Other good practice put in place by many railway stakeholders in order to ensure the continuity of the essential service of rail transport included working in split teams that never cross paths or work together in order to avoid cross contamination and also implementing a rotating work plan. Those that have experienced staff reduction were still able to provide the minimum amount of service required by the authorities, as often this was less than their normal service level.

### 3.2.3. Staff Protection

Without protecting the staff, there will be no staff! All organisations who responded to the questionnaires were and continue to actively protecting staff via a multitude of measures. They all were and continue to promote social distancing and other behavioural measures that reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19, such as coughing/sneezing into the elbow.

- Access: Single building entry, with signage in place if several entries exist and for car drivers;
- A corridor is in place to ensure every single person coming in proceeds to the welcome desk for a temperature check

Offices:

- Number of employees: staff is divided into two teams minimum, ie half occupancy
- Set different starting time (20% of the employees of an organizational structure will start the activity at 7:00 AM, 50% at 8:00 AM and 30% at 9:00 AM...)
- Elevators and corridors with one traffic current

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In house food/restaurant:

- Canteens table seating are rearranged to enable social distance (one person per table). Alternatively some enterprises recommend a lunch box to be prepared by the canteen, to be eaten at the desk. External guests are not accommodated
- Meetings via webconferences, including for internal meetings or limited (maximum 10 participants)
- No social gathering (coffee break, department morning meeting)
- Cleaning and disinfection: wipes and gels are made available; some require the mobile phone and pads to be cleaned before entering the office. Gloves, water may be distributed
- Toilets: limitation of the number of persons inside the space (according to the space size)
- Ventilation of building to adjusted to renew air, and clean/replace filters more frequently
- Training of personnel of all new procedures in place

Specific measures in place for staff more sensitive to the virus: maintain quarantine.

### **3.2.4. Staff trainings**

In most cases, professional staff trainings have been suspended and postponed due to lockdowns and public authorities' guidance. However, some companies, like in Poland, Russia or Kazakhstan, have resorted to e-learning platforms to carry on with trainings. Furthermore, a rising number of companies are considering relying more on e-learning platforms for regular staff training after the Covid-19 crisis.

When it comes to Covid-specific information (suspected cases protocols, cleaning and disinfecting, communication etc.), companies, informally, trained staff via internal communications (briefings on protocols, instructional videos, posters etc.). In some countries, like Morocco and Iran, specific trainings have been organised, for example on sanitary measures, and were tailored with the collaboration of health authorities. Some companies also mentioned providing staff with trainings on how to communicate about this issue to passengers (see section 5.2).

### **3.2.5. Security issues**

While globally there has been an increase in cyber security issues, when asked if they have experienced an increase in security problems, including cyber, task force members were very few to say that they have experienced an increase (Figure 8). For those that have, unsurprisingly the issue of cyber security was mentioned, due to an increased use of work from home. Another issue has been vandalism due to decreased personnel.

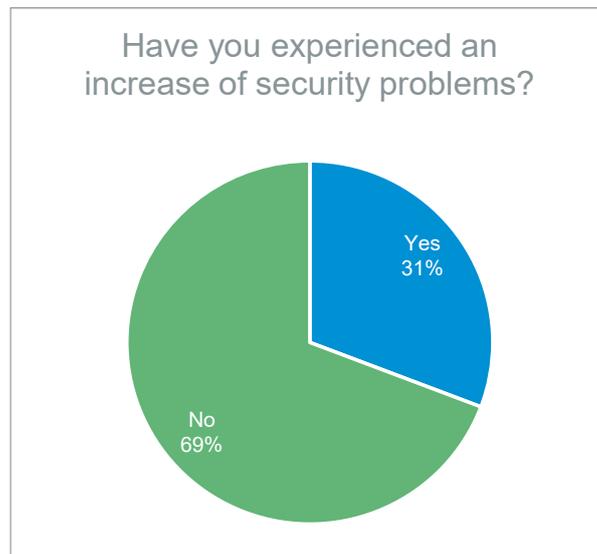


Figure 8: Responses to the question “Have you experienced an increase of security problems?”

### 3.3. SUSPECTED CASES PROTOCOLS

The suspected cases protocols established by the task force members tend to be the same regardless of place, whether it be on a train, in a station or on railway premises, for the public or for staff (e.g. office buildings, control rooms). Most companies established their protocol in close collaboration with relevant authorities. Overall, the protocols tend to be made up of the following steps:

- Isolate the suspected case (e.g. in a special room in the station, in a special empty compartment on a train, or send staff home),
- Have the suspected case breathe through a mask or other (e.g. tissue),
- Have any staff dealing with a suspected case wear the appropriate PPE (e.g. masks, gloves),
- If on a train, have the suspected case disembark at next relevant station, decided together with the authorities, for medical attention,
- Once a suspected case has been identified, contact appropriate actors (emergency response, local health services, etc.), and
- Disinfect all areas where the suspected case has been.

Some railway companies have also included in their protocols to obtain the contact information of near-by persons to a suspected case. When staff at VIARAIL in Canada test positive for Covid-19, they trace the contacts of that staff member to either 5 days before the first symptoms or the test, whichever comes first, and then reach out to customers who may have been exposed in the interval, through phone or email. In Greece, TrainOSE uses the European Passenger Location Form (PLF) taking into account the European General Data Protection Regulation and does not require it of passengers. In Asia, both KORAIL and JR East also trace suspected cases.

## 4. MITIGATION MEASURES PUT IN PLACE TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS

### 4.1. CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Currently employed practices demonstrate the importance in preventing the spread of the disease through increased cleaning and disinfecting of public spaces, especially those places that are frequently touched (e.g. door handles). Railway stakeholders have increased the frequency of cleanings as well as added new products (e.g. virucides, stronger cleaning agents) to their cleaning regimes. Many have drafted new protocols to address the specificities of the virus and have worked in close coordination with the authorities and their subcontractors. While the procedures themselves work well, many have been faced with shortages of disinfectants, as suppliers are prioritizing health care facilities.

### 4.2. SANITATION GEL

Most respondents have made sanitation gel or other disinfectants available for their staff (Figure 9), with a common issue of availability of the product as these types of materials have been given priority to the health sector. About half have also made sanitation gel available to the general public in their stations (ibid).

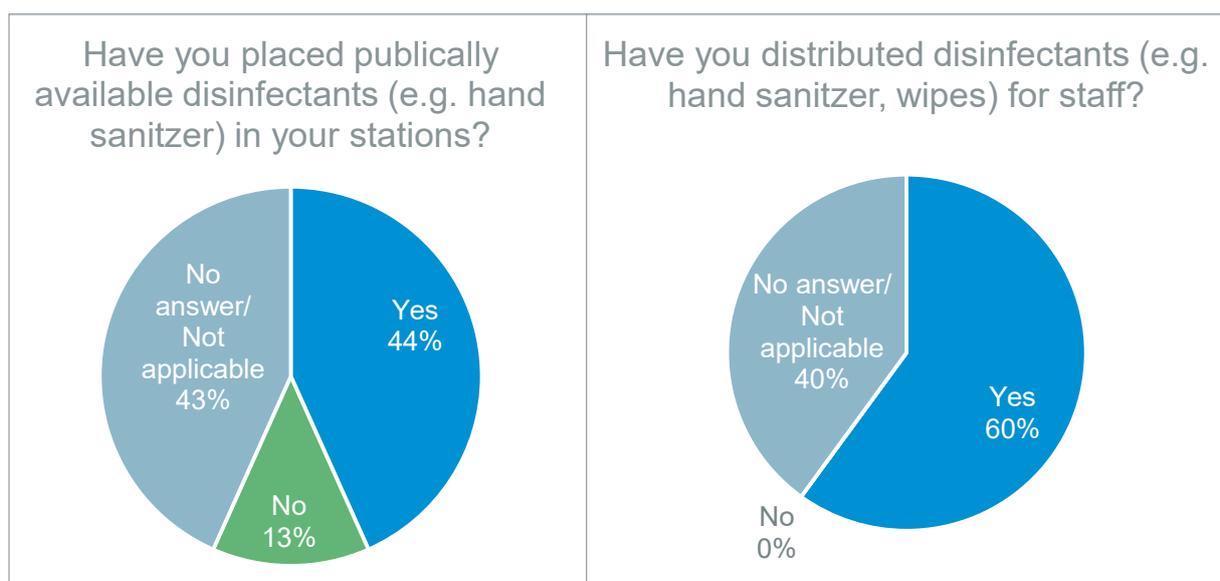


Figure 9: Information on the use of sanitation gel provided by task force members

### 4.3. TEMPERATURE SCREENING

One measure that has been implemented by ten of our task force members is temperature screening for staff. The temperature used to determine if a person should be considered a suspected case ranges from 37.3°C to 37.8°C. The main technologies listed by task force members for temperature screening are thermal, infrared, and laser thermometers. Of those ten, some have also implemented screenings for passengers either entering stations or boarding trains.

### 4.4. MASKS

When it comes to the use of masks as a mitigation measure, cultural issues need to be taken into account. In many Asian cultures, people have been using masks to fight the spread of disease, and especially the flu, since before Covid-19 and thus are well equipped (aka educated as well as having availability of) to use masks in this fight. Thus, asking passengers and staff to wear masks is very understandable. However, in other cultures, like for example Europe, wearing masks has not historically been part of the fight against the spread of disease and so obliging people to wear them is less appropriate. That said, there is agreement among rail stakeholders that in the event of a suspected case, the potentially infected person, whether they be staff, a passenger or simply a citizen in a train station, should be isolated and given a mask or some other tissue/fabric to breathe through while waiting for the appropriate authorities (e.g. emergency services, public health authorities) to take the person into their care.

Most railways have made personal protective equipment, including masks, available to front line staff. Some, like KORAIL, require staff to wear masks even in their headquarters and other buildings.

Having personal protective equipment for staff in order to keep them safe during this pandemic is a priority for railways. So much so, that certain companies have begun to manufacture their own masks. This is also to not reduce the stock of available masks to the medical sector. An example of this is from Network Rail, who has designed a mask for maintenance staff that fits with their current safety helmets and are doing so from recycled plastic bottles.

Nevertheless, the difficulty to assist hearing impaired passengers with common masks should be highlighted, as they cover the mouth which is used as the first mean to communicate with people who do not know sign language. In those cases, the use of transparent visors or masks with a transparent part in the mouth could be a solution.

For passengers, very few authorities required the public to wear masks in public<sup>2</sup>, including on railways, during lockdowns. When it has become mandatory, home-made, DIY masks, or other facial coverings, have been included, as there is a lack of manufactured masks in most countries.

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2. Although this is changing as countries move from lockdown to post-lockdown. A future UIC document will touch on this.

## 4.5. PASSENGER RESERVATION SYSTEM CHANGE

In Europe, some railways propose reservation as a voluntary offer due to their open system policy. Other railways have mandatory reservations, mainly concerning high-speed trains.

Some railways have modified their passenger reservation system, and have capped train capacity at a lower level. For example, high-speed trains in China, France, Italy (Figure 10) and other trains in Greece (Figure 11) and Romania have reservation systems that allow them to guarantee a safe minimum distance. Low demand has made it relatively easy to put such a measure in place. These solutions however depend heavily on the individual rolling material they are operating.

Most railways though rely on the common sense of their customers to respect social distancing during the ride (if any), all the more as it is expected that the currently low demand will last even after the limitations for private long-distance travels are eased. It was stressed by some respondents that social distancing needs to be complimented with, or, on the other hand, is eliminated by, other measures such as wearing masks (including but not limited to self-made, non-medical) or sometimes, increased ventilation.



Figure 10: An example from Trenitalia on making only one out of two seats available for passengers (green seats are available, grey seats are kept empty intentionally), ensuring social distancing



Figure 11: An example from TrainOSE on their smart reservation system that caps at 50% capacity

## 4.6. MEASURES FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF PASSENGERS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

### 4.6.1. Status and Characteristics of the Assistance Service

In most European countries the Assistance to People with Reduced Mobility and Disabled People has remained active during the Covid-19 health crisis, but with practically no demand due to the lockdowns. Indeed, around 80-90 % of PRM travelers in Europe have cancelled

their travels by train. However, in some countries at a certain point the assistance service was interrupted temporarily due to a lack of staff and/or for safety reasons in accordance with the national instructions sent by health authorities.

In the countries where assistance was possible it was under specific conditions:

- Only available for national trips;
- Reminder that for the moment it was better to stay at home to make and only urgent travels and to use public transportation with respect the rules (distance, mask, gloves, etc.);
- In some countries reservations before departure has suffered no change but in others it has been asked to request with more anticipation (within 12 or 24 h) due to the need to organize the service with personnel that was not always at the station as usual.

#### 4.6.2. Social Distance to be respected during the assistance

The social distance asked by authorities varies between 1 and 2 meters depending on the country. During the assistance it is not always easy to fulfill the distance duty, but higher hygienic rules are raised like using of masks or gloves and the use of hydroalcoholic gel. Staff have received internal instructions on how to organize the assistance with a minimum risk. For some companies, physical contact was not allowed at all, so they have developed other ways to provide assistance without touching the client, like guiding using the voice, using wheelchairs and platforms lifts to avoid contact. Most European companies have not changed their luggage policy due to Covid-19 situation, with some exceptions where the possibility of carrying a single luggage was under discussion in order to avoid any contact by the personnel in charge of the assistance.

#### 4.6.3. Exchanges with Associations and other stakeholders

Companies have maintained contact with the interest groups and the national authorities in determining the measures. Some of them have structured exchange of information and suggestions with the Associations. In general, association have demonstrated understanding (and even appreciation) for the care taken and for the interest created within the organizations for travelers with a disability.



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# 5. COMMUNICATION MEASURES

## 5.1. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Often cited communication channels for Covid-19 related information to staff included the internet (company websites and their internal sites, e.g. intranet), e-mail, posters, brochures/leaflets, and social media (Figure 12). Other communication channels which were mentioned include: screen savers, hotlines, notice boards, SMS, telephone and video clips.

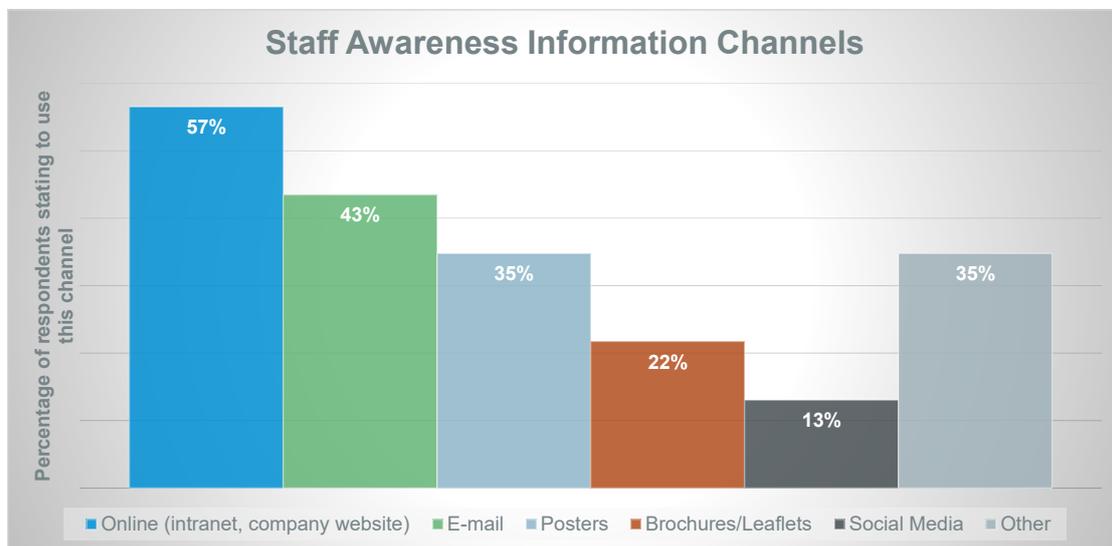


Figure 12: Staff Awareness Information Channels cited by respondents (out of 23 respondents). Using any single information channel does not exclude the use of the others. The “other” category is made up of information channels that were mentioned by only two respondents or fewer.

When asked what types of information railway undertakings are giving to their staff, they mainly stated that they are sharing behavioural advice, and several specifically mentioned handwashing etiquette in tandem with other behavioural advice (Figure 13 & Figure 14).

Unsurprisingly, many also stated to have communicated explicitly about new procedures related to Covid-19. Other kinds of information shared included the appropriate authorities’ contacts, changes in service level, current Covid-19 situation in their country, to frequently clean one’s smartphone and the steps taken to break the chain of infection.

When asked how railway undertakings update their staff in real time on the topic, the four main communication channels cited were the company Intranet, e-mail, SMS and Management Structure (Figure 15). Two companies stated that they use the beginning of the work shift as an opportunity to update staff. Social media, smartphones & tablets as well as smartphone applications were also mentioned by several respondents.



Figure 13: Advice given to staff by respondents (out of 20 respondents). The “other” category is made up of all advice stated by only 1 respondent.

#### 403 SBB CFF FFS

**Wichtige Hinweise:**

- Gebrauchte Handschuhe nicht reinigen oder lagern, sondern entsorgen.
- Beim Tragen der Handschuhe darauf achten, dass lediglich die für den Handschuhgebrauch definierte Tätigkeit ausgeführt wird!

**A Anziehen der Handschuhe**

Vor dem Anziehen der Handschuhe die Hände gut waschen und trocknen.  
Nur eine begrenzte Fläche des Handschuhs berühren (siehe Abbildung A).  
Sicherstellen, dass die Handschuhe keine Löcher aufweisen.

**B** Den ersten Handschuh anziehen (siehe Abbildung B).

**C** Den zweiten Handschuh mit der Hand ohne Handschuh nehmen und nur eine begrenzte Fläche des Handschuhs berühren.  
Drehen die Außenfläche des anzuziehenden Handschuhs an den gefalteten Fingern der Hand mit Handschuh, so dass die zweite Hand mit dem Handschuh angezogen werden kann (siehe Abbildung C).

**D Anziehen der Handschuhe**

Mit einer Hand an die Innenfläche der anderen Hand greifen und den Handschuh anheben (siehe Abbildung D).  
Den Handschuh ganz abziehen und weitertun festhalten.

**E** Mit der Hand ohne Handschuh unter die Stupe des zweiten Handschuhs greifen und den Handschuh ebenfalls abziehen (siehe Abbildung E). Am Ende ist der zweite Handschuh über den ersten Handschuh umgekippt und umfasst diesen.  
Beide Handschuhe können nun ohne Kontaminationsgefahr dem Abfall zugeführt werden. Im Anschluss Hände gut waschen oder hygienische Händedesinfektion durchführen.

Handschuhe: Anleitung

Quelle: [WorkHealth Organisation](#)

#### 404 SBB CFF FFS

**Wichtige Hinweise:**

- Die Maske darf für maximal eine Arbeitszeit (8 Stunden) verwendet werden.
- Die/der Anwender/in entfernt das Ende der Gebrauchslauer an erhöhten Atemdesinfektoren.
- Die Gesichtsbearbeitung vor dem Tragen der Maske rasieren.
- Vor dem Aufsetzen und nach dem Ablegen der Maske die Hände umgehend mit Seife waschen.
- Gebrauchte Masken nicht reinigen oder lagern (außer einmalig bei einer Pause, sondern entsorgen).

**A** Vor dem Aufsetzen der Maske die Hände gründlich mit Wasser und Seife waschen und anschließend mit einem sauberen Papiertuch trocknen.  
Die Maske in die Hand nehmen, die Schlaufen hängen dabei unter der Hand (siehe Abbildung A).  
Sicherstellen, dass die Maske keine Löcher aufweist.

**B** Die Maske unter das Kinn und über die Nase halten. Die untere Schlaufe dehnen und über den Kopf in den Nacken ziehen. Obere Schlaufe hoch auf dem Hinterkopf anlegen (siehe Abbildung B).

**C** Den Nasenclip mit beiden Händen an die Nasenkontur anpassen (siehe Abbildung C). Eine Anpassung mit einer Hand könnte den Dichtzitz beeinträchtigen.

**D** Um den Dichtzitz zu prüfen, die Maske mit beiden Händen umfassen und kräftig ausatmen (siehe Abbildung D). Sollte Luft entweichen, die Maske zurechtrücken.

Die Maske abnehmen, indem zuerst die untere, danach die obere Schlaufe über den Kopf gezogen wird, ohne die Vorderseite der Maske zu berühren. Die Maske in einen verschlossenen Behälter entsorgen oder einmalig bei einer längeren Pause an einen dafür vorgesehenen Ort (z.B. eine Schale) mit der Vorderseite nach unten deponieren (auf jegliche persönliche Weiterverwendung achten). Die Maske selbst nicht berühren, da sie kontaminiert sein könnte. Nach dem Ablegen der Maske die Hände waschen. Beim Wiederanziehen nach einer Pause, wieder bei Schritt A beginnen und die Maske innen nicht anfassen.

Schutzmaske «FFP2/FFP3»: Anleitung\*

\*Diese Anleitung gilt nicht für Hygienemasken.

Figure 14: Flyers for SBB (Switzerland) staff on how to use masks and gloves

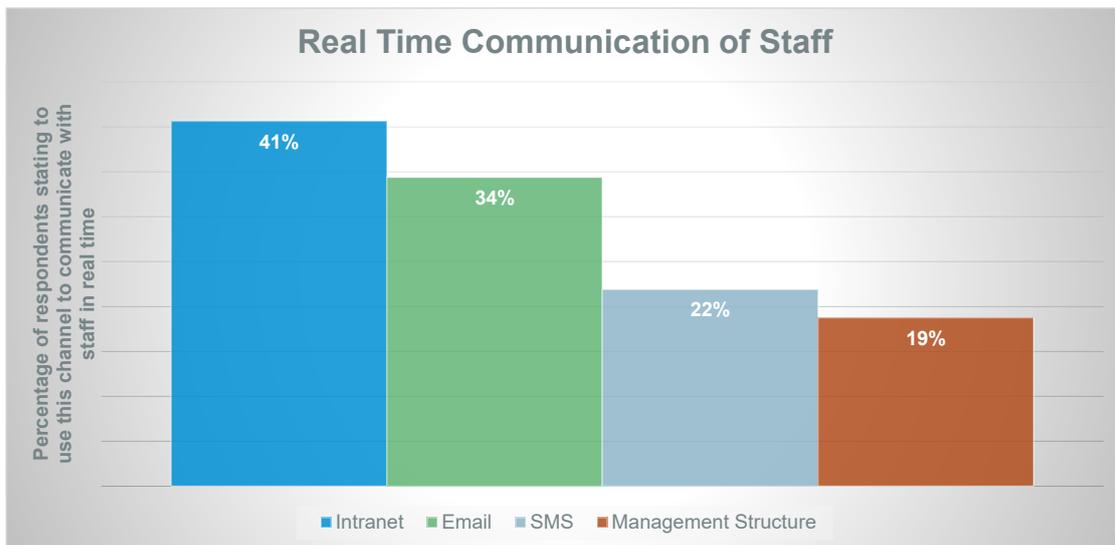


Figure 15: The four main communication used for real-time communication with staff channels cited by respondents (out of 32 respondents)

## 5.2. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Often cited communication channels for Covid-19 related information to passengers included social media, on board and in station announcements and displays, posters, company websites, traditional media and brochures (Figure 16).

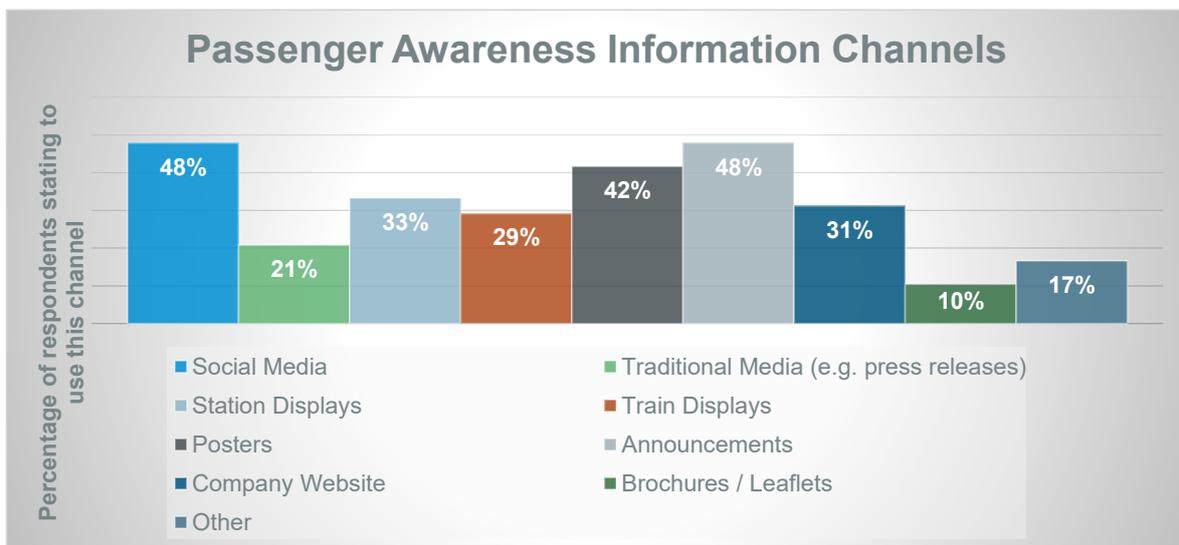


Figure 16: Passenger Awareness Information Channels cited by Respondents (out of 46 respondents). Using any single information channel does not exclude the use of the others. The "other" category is made up of information channels that were mentioned by only three respondents or fewer.

Other communication channels which were mentioned include: e-mail, SMS, telephone and smartphone applications. All respondents were using multiple communication channels to reach passengers. Three companies explicitly mentioned using staff as a means to communicate with passengers, having briefed them on how to best support passengers during the crisis.

When asked what types of information railway undertakings are sharing with the public (Figure 17), they overwhelmingly stated that they are using government advice either directly or slightly adapting it to the rail sector.

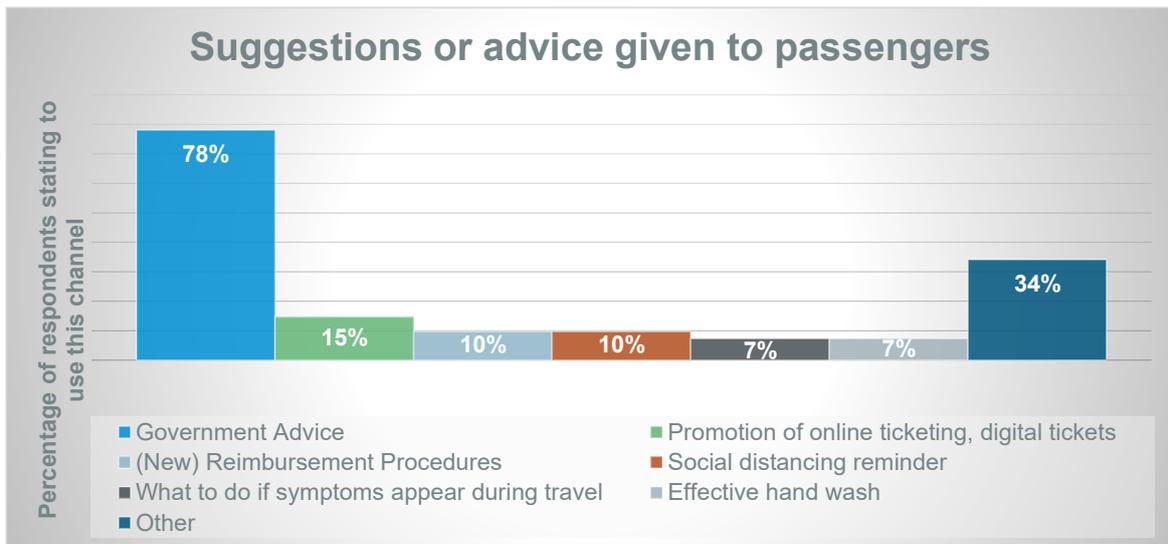


Figure 17: Suggestions or advice given to passengers cited by respondents (out of 41 respondents). The “other” category is any advice that only 2 or fewer companies shared.

Those who did not state that they were sharing government advice specifically, did mention reinforcing social distancing and/or effective handwashing. A few who responded to this question informed UIC that they are not currently giving advice to passengers as their passenger traffic is completely stopped.

Figure 18: DSB shares information published by the Transport Ministry with passengers, and also general behavioural advice



## KORONAVÍRUS (COVID-19) TÁJÉKOZTATÓ

**TÜNETEK**

**Jellemző tünetek:** LÁZ, SZÁRÁZ KÖHÖGÉS, LÉGZŐMŰ, IZOM-FAJDALOM, ORR-DUGULÁS, ORR-FOLYÁS, TOROK-FÁJÁS, HAS-MENES, FÁRADTSÁG

**Előfordulhat:** (Icons for various symptoms)

**Fontos tudni:**

- A fertőzöttek 80%-a speciális kezelések nélkül is meggyógyul
- 6 fertőzöttből 1-nél alakul ki súlyosabb tünet

**MIT TEGYEK?**

HA Fertőzött területre utazott vagy kapcsolatba lépett fertőzött személlyel

ÉS Tüneteket észlel

Telefonáljon háziorvosának, **NE menjen be rendelőbe, kórházba! Hívja a zöld számokat!**

06 80 277 455  
06 80 277 456

NEM észlel tüneteket

14 napos megfigyelés javasolt, és hívja a zöld számokat!

**ÓVINTÉZKEDÉSEK**

**KEZMOSÁS:** Rendszeresen és alaposan mosson kezet vízzel és szappannal, vagy tisztítsa meg alkoholos kézfertőtlenítővel!

**MASZK:** Csak akkor használjon maszkot, ha légzőszervi tünetei vannak (köhögés, tüsszentés), ezzel védi a környezetében levőket!

**ZSEBKENDŐ:** Köhögéskor, tüsszentéskor takarja el száját és orrát a behajlított könyökével vagy egy zsebkendővel, majd azonnal dobja ki a zsebkendőt!

**HIGIÉNA:** Szemhez, szájhoz, archoz csak kézmosás után nyúljon! Kerülje a nagy tömeget, zárt légtérű helyiségeket!

Figure 19: Advice published by GYSEV

## NOVO | NEW | 新型冠状病毒

## CORONAVÍRUS 2019-nCoV

### RECOMENDAÇÕES | RECOMMENDATIONS | 建议

**Quando espirar ou tossir, tape o nariz e a boca com lenço de papel ou com o antebraço**

**Lave frequentemente as mãos com água e sabão ou use solução à base de álcool**

**Evite contacto próximo com pessoas com infeção respiratória**

**When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper or with your forearm**

**Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based solution**

**Avoid close contact with people suffering from respiratory infections**

**咳嗽或打噴嚏時，用紙巾或手臂遮掩住嘴巴和鼻子**

**經常用肥皂水或含酒精的消毒液洗手**

**避免與有呼吸道感染的患者密切接觸**

EM CASO DE DÚVIDA LIGUE

IF IN DOUBT, CALL

若有任何疑问，请直接电话询问

SNS 24

808 24 24 24



Figure 21: Advice from IP (Portugal)

УЛАНБААТАР ТӨВӨР ЗАМБЫН  
ЗОРЧИГЧИЙН ВАГОН ДЕПО

ЗРХЭМ ХАРИЛЦАГЧ, ҮЙЛЧЛҮҮЛЭГЧИЙН АНХААРАЛД  
**ТА МАСКАА  
ЗҮҮЖ ҮЙЛЧЛҮҮЛНЭ ҮҮ!**

**АМНЫ ХААЛТ  
ЗӨВ ЗҮҮЦГЭЭЭ**

АМНЫ ХААЛТ НЬ 3 ДАВХАР

1. ЦАХИР - ҮС НӨВӨРҮҮЭГДЭГ
2. БУТЧ БИХИР ШИЛЭР
3. ЦАХИР - ҮС ШИРЭГДЭГ

АМНЫ ХААЛТЫГ 3-4 ЦАГ ХОРГОТОН.

ХОРГОТОН АМНЫ ХААЛТЫГ БОХИРГОДСОН ХӨСӨДӨС БАРИХ БОЛОГТУУ, БУУД КОРӨН САНАНД ХАИНА.

АМНЫ ХААЛТАА ЭҮХ БОЛОН СОЛБИ БИРТ ГАРНА, САНАНДУК УГААГААР.

Figure 20: Advice published by Ulaanbaatar Railways (Mongolia)

**CORONAVIRUS'TEN NASIL KORUNULUR?**

**KORUNMA YONTEMLERİ**

**ELLERİNİZİ SIK SIK YIKAYIN**

**SABUN VE SU YOKSA, ALKOL BAZLI EL DEZENFEKTANI KULLANIN**

**GÖZLERİNİZE, BURUNUZA VE AĞZINIZA YIKANMAMIŞ ELLERLE DOKUNMAYIN**

**HASTA OLAN İNSANLARLA YAKIN TEMASTAN KAÇININ**

**KENDİNİZİ HASTA HİSSEDIYORSANIZ**

**BELİRTİLER ORTAYA ÇIKARSA TIBBİ YARDIM ALIN**

**CERRAHI MASKE KULLANIN**

**ÖKSÜRÜRKEN VE HAPŞIRIRKEN AĞZINIZI MENDİLLE KAPATIN**

**KULLANILMIŞ MENDİLİ MUTLAKA ÇÖPE ATIN**

**MENDİLİNİZ YOKSA, HAPŞIRIRKEN YA DA ÖKSÜRÜRKEN KOLUNUZUN İÇ TARAFINI KULLANIN**

**SIK SIK KULLANDIĞINIZ CİHAZLARI DEZENFEKTE EDİN**

**TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ DEVLET DEMİRYOLLARI**

**TCDD**

Figure 22: Advice from TCDD (Turkey)

For those who continue to provide passenger service, many stated that they are sharing advice to use online ticketing. One company even stated that they recommending go cashless. These suggestions were intended to reduce the likelihood of object-to-person contamination by no longer having the physical object, and person-to-person contamination by eliminating the person-to-person interaction of buying a ticket in person. Another frequently mentioned communication message was about reimbursement policies put into place following government lockdowns. Few stated that they were actively communicating to passengers about how to act if symptoms appear during travel.



Figure 23: ONCF communication campaigns in two languages (French and Arabic) concerning government advice, and also their communication campaign for refunds (in French)

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Other advice offered to passengers included ways to cope with social isolation due to Covid-19 lockdowns, the measures the company has taken to reduce the risk of infection, promoting work from home and a stay at home campaign, to avoid travelling during rush hour, to comply with government regulations, and to not travel if feeling unwell. Two companies stated they were communicating about their service updates.



Figure 24: FGC (Spain) information campaigns regarding (left) on measures taken by FGC to fight the spread of the virus and (right) warn about service modifications

Some companies have also created information in easy-to-read formats and published informative videos in sign language (Figure 25).



Figure 25: Renfe (Spain) information in sign language



## 6. ETHICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Covid-19 raised many legal issues, e.g. on how to interpret the Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations, but also on how to deal with questions connected to re-routing, information to the passenger, reimbursement, assistance and other related after sales matters.

The EU Commission published [interpretative guidelines on the Passenger Rights Regulation \(EC\) No 1371/2007 in the context of the developing situation with Covid-19](#). The EU Commission states in this document the non-application of extraordinary circumstances as clause of exclusion for the right to compensation in cases of delays (including those entailed by cancellations) and assistance. It also pointed out that the notion of re-routing at the *“earliest opportunity may under the circumstances of the Covid-19 outbreak imply considerable delay, and the same apply to the availability of concrete information on such “opportunity” given the high level of uncertainty affecting rail traffic”*.

All those questions were collected and answered by the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), which published Mid-March 2020 guidance about the legal implications of Covid-19 on the relation with passengers (this document can be requested from the Secretariat of the CIT, [info@cit-rail.org](mailto:info@cit-rail.org)). The CIT is indeed an association of 200 railway and maritime companies. Its aim is the implementation of international law (in relation to passenger and freight transport, multimodality and data protection) at sector level.

From a data protection point of view, Covid-19 also raised different issues, since many countries processed personal data (health data, location data, etc.) to fight against Covid-19. The European Data Protection Board (EDPB, an independent European body whose purpose is to ensure consistent application of the General Data Protection Regulation and to promote cooperation among the EU's data protection authorities) released therefore a [Statement on the processing of personal data in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak](#). The EDPB discusses in this document the lawfulness of processing data (in particular health data and location data) from customers and employees.

Ethical issues that may appear while railway operators are acting in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic should be taken into account by national authorities within the geographical scope of European Union, according to subsidiarity.

On a global scale, ethical problems encountered by railway operators mainly concern passenger questionnaires and temperature check.

Questionnaires must be carefully written and checked prior to publishing, in order to make sure that they are consistent with the principle of non-discrimination laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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Concerning temperature check for passengers, it should be made systematically when imposed by national authorities. If they are not made systematically but performed only for suspicious cases, it is strongly recommended to set up and apply a checklist of objective health symptoms (criteria) that shall justify temperature checking for a particular passenger. This should help to avoid that some passengers are discriminated against (age, sex, race, etc...).



## 7. ANNEX

### 7.1. FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Which Public Authorities in your country are involved in the management of the Covid-19 outbreak?
2. Which obligations have been issued by your National Public Authorities on railway transportation?
3. Which measures have you adopted to prevent Covid-19 spreading:
  - a. on board? (e.g. hand sanitising dispensers, waterproof rubbish bags, further sanitising intervention from cleaning companies)
  - b. in stations? (e.g. hand sanitising dispensers, waterproof rubbish bags)
  - c. in Railway Traffic Circulation Control Rooms and other technical sites? (e.g. sanitation protocols, working space segregation)
  - d. in HQs? (e.g. specific access regulations, teleworking, meeting organisation rules)
  - e. for front-line staff? (e.g. operational guidelines, provision of specific personal protective equipment)
4. Which procedures have you adopted for dealing with Covid-19 suspected cases
  - a. on board? (e.g. communication with Public Health Authorities and Law Enforcement)?
  - b. in station? (e.g. communication with Public Health Authorities and Law Enforcement, temporary isolation, sanitation protocols)?
  - c. in railway premises? (e.g. sanification protocols, coworkers of the suspected case support)
  - d. amongst Railway Traffic Circulation Control Rooms' staff? (Please give a brief description of the business continuity plan)
5. Passengers awareness
  - a. Which suggestions or advice have you given to railway passengers (e.g. general health advices from Public Health Authorities, use of online ticket selling channels)?
  - b. Please send us examples of communication material used to raise awareness among railway passengers (e.g. posters, leaflets of recommendations)
  - c. Which information channels do you use? (e.g. station display, voice communication in station, social networks)?

---

**6. Staff awareness**

- a. Please send us examples of communication material used to raise awareness among staff (e.g. poster, leaflets of recommendations)
- b. How do you update your staff in real time on the topic (for example train staff)?

**7. Open suggestion**

Please indicate any information/best practice regarding railway transportation not mentioned in the previous questions

## 7.2. SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

### Business Continuity

- 8. How have you dealt with the reduction of staff (including freight (e.g. drivers), passenger (e.g. drivers, controllers), station (e.g. ticket venders, security personnel), maintenance staff, management (e.g. directors), etc. )?
- 9. How have you dealt with expiration of various certificates & mandatory trainings (e.g. medical, risk, safety audits)?
- 10. Please provide details on your Task Force (e.g. who is involved, when do they meet, which decisions are they responsible for).

### For passenger service

- 11. Please describe the current situation for passenger services for local, regional long distance and international trains in your country (e.g. reduction in service rate, border closures)?
- 12. How was the decision to reduce passenger service taken (e.g. due to reduced demand, due to government/other authority obligation)?
- 13. Has there been an obligation from the government to continue with a minimum level of rail service? If yes, what is this level? Do you run trains without passengers?
- 14. How are you handling border closures for passenger trains? (e.g. do the border police intervene? Do you have to enforce quarantine?)

### For stations

- 15. Please describe the current situation for train stations in your country (e.g. station closures, shop closures, rent issues)
- 16. How was the decision to close stations taken (e.g. due to reduced demand, due to government obligation)? Is there a threshold of confirmed cases before closing a station in a given area? For multimodal stations, how was the decision organized?

### **For freight**

17. Are there any special measures authorities are putting on freight traffic? (e.g. requirements to transport certain goods)
18. Has there been an obligation from the government to continue with a minimum level of freight rail service? If yes, what is this level? Have you noticed an increase, decrease or specific change of the traffic?
19. While (most) borders remain open for freight, how does this work in practice?
20. Have you, your clients or providers implemented specific anti-Covid-19 disinfection measures or protocols regarding goods (e.g. stricter cleaning protocols for wagons)?

### **Cleaning and disinfecting**

21. Please provide as many details as you can on your cleaning and disinfecting protocols for stations, offices, maintenance places, control centers or rolling stocks (e.g. Ozone cleaning? Increased cleaning? Adding of virucides to cleaning regime?)
22. Do you have any feedback on your protocols? What is working well? Have there been any difficulties?

### **Dealing with suspected cases**

23. Please provide as many details as you can on the current protocols in place for dealing with suspected cases i) among passengers ii) among the public in stations & iii) among staff.
24. Do you have any feedback on your protocols? What is working well? Have there been any difficulties?
25. Which authorities are you collaborating with in the case of a suspected case? How did this cooperation come to be?

### **Security Issues**

26. Have you experienced an increase of security problems? Which kind of incidents (cyber-attacks, fake calls, graffiti on parked trains, sabotage on the track, ...)? Why do you think you've had an increase (e.g. staff reduction)? How do you react?

**Contact: Covid-19@UIC.ORG**  
**#RAILsilence**



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