

Transportation and Highway Safety Ministers take action to protect Canadian transportation workers and travellers

June 2, 2020, Ottawa – Today, Canada’s Minister of Transport, the Honourable Marc Garneau, and the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure for Saskatchewan, the Honourable Greg Ottenbreit, co-chaired a special teleconference of the Council of Ministers responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety to discuss guiding principles ensuring the safe use of our transportation system while governments work to responsibly re-open the economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented global crisis that is having a significant impact on all aspects of the Canadian transportation industry, travellers, and the economy.

Ministers acknowledged the lead role of public health agencies across each jurisdiction as well as regional differences. They agreed that a collaborative federal/provincial/territorial approach that follows the principles established by First Ministers and public health guidance will make it easier for those who operate and rely on transportation services.

Ministers agreed that the safety and security of Canadians are their highest priorities. In that regard, they announced [guiding principles](#) for the use of masks and gloves, and safety protocols for transportation employees and passengers. These guiding principles establish a collaborative way forward to support the safe operation of the transportation system, and help mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Ministers noted the important efforts of the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) in advancing the [Practices for the Use of Masks, Face Coverings and Gloves for Transportation Workers and Passengers in the Road Transportation System](#). Going forward, Ministers agreed to share experiences and best practices to make sure Canadians can be safe in their day-to-day commute and their travel.

Ministers discussed challenges in connecting communities to services across Canada, including intercity mobility, urban transit, ferries, and air service to remote communities. They recognize that the pandemic has had a significant operational impact on intercity mobility and urban transit providers which has resulted in decreased services. Ministers agreed on the importance of maintaining strong transportation services across Canada so, as the economy re-opens, Canadians can go back to school, work, and see their family and friends again. Ministers also discussed the importance of investment in transportation infrastructure projects as part of Canada’s economic recovery, and agreed to continue working together to address challenges in the transportation sector.

Over the past weeks, a number of federal, provincial and territorial COVID-19 related measures were announced to better protect Canadians, ensure the unimpeded flow of the food and supplies that Canadians need to remain healthy, as well as support the timely movements of first responders and other essential workers. These included: developing a consistent understanding of essential transportation workers and services required to support the continued movement of goods and people; implementing measures to support the continuity of the trucking sector (such as relaxing license, registrations and permit expiry conditions, and expanding access to roadside amenities for truckers); and working with industry and the CCMTA to develop federal safety guidance for commercial drivers.

Ministers are strongly committed to working with health experts, operators, labour associations, transportation partners, and industry associations to protect the health of all Canadians during this pandemic.

“Frontline workers across the transportation sector deserve our unwavering support. In the face of unprecedented challenges, they continue to keep people and goods moving in this country. Pilots, air crews, air traffic controllers, port workers, mariners, train crews, truck drivers, and so many others are so very critical for getting supplies to people who need them, and sustaining the Canadian economy,” said the Minister of Transport, the Honourable Marc Garneau. “We

are committed to keeping Canada’s transportation workers, and those who rely on our multi-modal transportation system, safe and healthy.”

“Canadians pull together when faced with extraordinary challenges,” said the Honourable Greg Ottenbreit, Saskatchewan Minister of Highways and Infrastructure. “I am inspired by the outstanding cooperation and commitment to safety from the Council of Ministers.”

Ministers agreed to continue suggesting best practices to support a successful re-opening of the economy. Passengers and users of the transportation system need to be informed of the new safety and security requirements when travelling. Workers must also be properly protected in the course of doing their jobs. There must be confidence that proper precautions are taken to minimize health risks when using or working within the transportation system. Ministers’ collaboration will support mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on all those involved in the transportation system, and identifying gaps that may need to be addressed in the months ahead.

For more guidance on how to safely travel, please consult Canada.ca/coronavirus and your province’s or territory’s website.

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