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TRANSIT + COVID-19:

a global perspective on operating safely with significant ridership

Major transit systems in cities that have **stopped the spread of COVID-19** are carrying **50-80% of typical ridership** as of summer 2020, with negligible viral transmission and **no clusters traced to trains or buses**. If passengers were observing 6-foot distancing standards, these systems would only be carrying 10-15% of typical ridership, at most.

At these volumes, the systems are **safely transporting people in standing-room-only vehicles**. Riders are neither packed in tightly together, nor observing spacing mandates like leaving half the seats unoccupied.

The fundamental protective measure is **universal mask-wearing**, not strict physical distancing. Ramped-up cleaning and disinfection are also widely deployed. Agencies should concentrate more frequent service where and when ridership is greatest to prevent crush loads, and convey information about crowding to riders via street-level displays, apps, and other communications. But in places that have successfully suppressed COVID-19, **6-foot distancing rules have not been necessary** to achieve safe operations for large transit systems.

Agencies carrying millions of daily trips with minimal or no transmission:

- > **Seoul Metro** never fell below 3 million daily trips and approached 4 million — about 70% of typical ridership — by the first half of April.
- > **Beijing Metro** carried between 3 and 4 million daily trips by the end of April, after falling below one million during the peak of the outbreak.
- > The bus system in **Shenzhen, China**, carried about 90% of typical ridership during peak periods as of late May, according to local transit officials.
- > **Taipei Metro** averaged 1.7 million daily trips in May, nearly 80% of ridership the previous May, with no new local cases that month.

Epidemiological research:

- > In **Japan**, researchers did not trace any clusters to trains, according to Science Magazine.
- > In **France**, public health authorities analyzed 150 COVID clusters between May 9 and June 3, and did not trace any of them to transit or other transportation services.