

Seoul Metro rebuilds passenger confidence through hygiene measures and strong staffing protocols

Seoul, Republic of Korea



When COVID-19 testing was rolled out to contain the virus' spread in the Republic of Korea, Seoul's public transport services fell in line fast. Facing a huge drop in ridership, new measures needed to be taken to keep the Seoul Metro running safely – not least through frontline transport staff working hard to maintain passengers' trust in the safety of the metro system, and through procedures to keep those frontline staff themselves safe.

Collaborating on staff safety and infrastructure hygiene – to keep city transport running

In collaboration with city authorities, guidelines for preventing the spread of the virus were printed and displayed in four main languages (Chinese, English, Japanese and Korean) at metro stations. The metro stations themselves – including platforms – were thoroughly disinfected on a daily basis, and frontline staff as well as passengers were protected through the provision of hand sanitizer stations set up at key locations (including ticket gates), as well as protective gloves and masks to wear while working. They also measured the temperature of employees before and after each shift.

One important element of Seoul Metro's pandemic crisis management was developing a Staff Evacuation Plan. If a staff member showed any symptoms of COVID-19, they were immediately isolated in a dedicated room staffed by an in-house nurse. If the staff member was confirmed as having COVID-19, all staff in the team were evacuated and their place taken by a back-up team to keep operations running smoothly and safely.

As Seoul Metro workers persisted tirelessly to clean vehicles, back-up their fellow employees in times of need, and keep essential services running, they experienced a steady growth in ridership levels after March 2020.

Building future resilience: prioritizing transport network safety to secure passenger trust

The experience of Seoul Metro shows how the design of public transport systems should place more emphasis on protecting passengers from any infectious diseases to enable them to remain operational so that cities can be more resilient in the future.

Link: <https://www UITP.org/news/guardians-mobility-front-lines-seoul-south-korea>

"It is through strong collaboration and team work among our front-line staff that we were able to provide essential transport services in this trying time," says Hang-jae Chung, General Manager of Dobong Rolling

Stock Office for Seoul Metro. “Public transport systems should be more scientifically designed and relevant investment is required, at least from now on, in the way of protecting passengers from infectious diseases.”

Photo credit: Seoul Metro



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