

The Blue Train's hygiene protocols in preparation for post-lockdown travel

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As the world is learning to exist and businesses are negotiating to operate in a Covid-19 world, The Blue Train is on track to find its 'new normal'.



Much progress has been made in finalising hygiene protocols in preparation for travel post-lockdown. These protocols ensure that there is adherence to the highest level of hygiene to inspire the confidence of our valuable guests and clients and to ensure that The Blue Train experience continues to meet its award-winning service levels.

“A key part of The Blue Train experience is the social interaction between guests and, unfortunately, we are forced to a new set of rules for the new normal. For as long as we are dealing with Covid-19, some elements of The Blue Train experience will have to evolve for the health and safety of our guests and crew. Our protocol ensures that over a number of days before travel, we will be in touch with guests and pre-screen them numerous times prior to their departure date. We want for our guests to step on board The Blue Train with the peace of mind that every precaution, as best we can, has been taken to ensure their safety,” said Vincent Monyake, executive manager at The Blue Train.

The Blue Train’s new hygiene measures were put in place with both the guests and crew members in mind, and will follow every single element of the experience, as follows:

The booking process

When confirming bookings, guests will submit their dietary requirements and complete a pre-screening questionnaire, which includes a declaration of Covid-19 symptoms. Should guests meet all requirements, confirmation will proceed. Should guests not meet the pre-screening requirements, the booking will be deferred to a later date.

Departure day

From the guests’ departure points, a second pre-screening process will be initiated by way of a follow-up questionnaire. The questionnaire will be emailed to all guests and, in the questionnaire, if three or more questions are affirmative, The Blue Train’s health and safety department will make contact for further clarity.

Arrival at pre-departure lounge

On arrival at the pre-departure lounge, guests will be welcomed by The Blue Train butlers wearing masks, latex gloves and maintaining a safe social distance of 2m. All the guests are required to wear a cloth mask and they will be requested to sanitise their hands on the sanitiser stations that will be made available. Butlers will assist with luggage, while keeping a safe distance and, after registering the luggage, guests will be accompanied to the pre-departure lounge, still observing safe social distancing.

The check-in process

Checking in at the pre-departure lounge, guests will observe social distancing protocol, standing in demarcated areas. Guests will be requested to sanitise their hands at the entrance of the lounge and each guest will undergo temperature scanning. If the temperature is above 37.5°C, guests will be taken to a cooling room. An on-board medical practitioner will attend to the guest and when cleared, the guest will then proceed to reception for check-in. If not cleared, the guest’s booking will be deferred to a later date. After registration, a safety kit with three cloth masks, 50ml sanitiser, wet wipes and three pairs of latex gloves will be issued to each guest.

Pre-departure lounge experience

After checking in, while guests are enjoying canapes, sparkling wine and live music, they will be grouped accordingly to prevent the formation of large groups. Largely, this will be based on travelling companions to not only ensure reduced risk of transmission, but to also make contact traceability manageable in the event of a positive case.

On board The Blue Train

The Blue Train crew will render services with a face mask and latex gloves and each staff member will be issued with their own hand sanitiser. All suites will be stocked with additional soap as part of the amenities.

The air conditioning system is cleaned and disinfected at every departure, to ensure good ventilation at all times.

The dining car

In the dining car, tables that accommodate four guests will have an extended partition glass, offering complete closure and

turning these into cubicles. Guests will only eat with their travelling companions.

The public areas

The observation, lounge and club cars will only admit a maximum of 20 guests at a time. There will be constant cleaning of surfaces when guests leave the area.

Additional support

There will be a medical practitioner on board The Blue Train and an isolation car with two suites made available for quarantine purposes.

Constant cleaning with steaming of all upholstery and surface disinfecting of all furniture, doors, handles, toilets, trash bins and toothbrush beakers will be done. All cleaning detergents will be in line with the World Health Organisation and South African Tourism guidelines.

En-route screening for guests

All the guests will be required to be tested in the morning prior to going for breakfast. If a guest records high temperature, the guest will be quarantined and, in the event that a guest starts showing symptoms of Covid-19 or any other medical condition whilst on board, the medical practitioner will attend to the guest until an ambulance arrives to take the guest to the nearest hospital.

En-route screening for crew

All crew will be screened by the medical practitioner three times a day. If a crew member experiences high temperature, that member will be quarantined, and their functions will be taken over by another team member. In the event that a crew member shows symptoms of Covid-19 or any other medical condition on board the train, a medical practitioner will attend to the crew member until an ambulance arrives to take the crew member to the nearest hospital.

Should any guest test positive while en-route, a risk assessment will be conducted to identify all the areas and people that the positive case might have come in contact with. Our medical practitioner onboard will have all the approved PPE and medical supplies required to assist the patients until the patient can be taken to a hospital, and the patient will be isolated during that time.

Guests who require more information on these changes and how they potentially affect their travel plans can contact The Blue Train's reservation team at the Pretoria office on +27(0)12-334-8459 or the Cape Town office on +27(0)21-449-2672 or on email info@bluetrain.co.za

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