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GTA

TTC riders question the lack of enforcement after maskless subway protest

By [Margaryta Ignatenko](#) Staff Reporter

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TTC riders are questioning the agency's priorities after protesters deliberately broke TTC mask rules without repercussion.

Protesters rode the system on Tuesday without face coverings, flouting the TTC's "mandatory" mask rule, which the agency has admitted it doesn't intend to enforce. It argues that its officers can't tell, simply by looking, who is unable to wear a mask for medical reasons.

Upset riders took to Twitter on Tuesday to question the agency's priorities given the heavy enforcement of fare evasion policy that included [highly visible campaigns and hefty fines](#).

"Which bus would you rather sit on, one filled with fare evaders wearing masks, or a bus filled with people who paid their fare, but refuse to wear a mask? I know which bus I'd wait for," Crystal-Rose Madore said in an email.

Madore and her family frequently used the TTC before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I feel frustrated with the TTC. This morning it was made clear that the TTC prioritizes fare enforcement over the safety of the people who depend on public transit in our city. Both are bylaws, but only one is being enforced with its own squad, and it isn't the one in regards to public safety.

"Brushing off concerns from the public over a group that is exploiting this unequal level of enforcement for their own ends makes me question how seriously this pandemic is taken by the TTC, I am concerned for the health and safety of riders and employees."

Masks or face coverings have been mandatory when travelling on the TTC since July 2, with exemptions for riders under two years old and those with accessibility or health issues that prevent them from wearing a mask.

The TTC says it is reviewing the subway anti-mask protest at Dundas and University on Tuesday morning, but cannot enforce mask-wearing for riders who claim to have a medical condition.

"A customer only needs to state that they have a medical condition, we don't require documentation. There is an exemption already in the policy for masks for those who have medical conditions," the TTC wrote on Twitter in response to a rider.

Among the protesters was a woman who was recently filmed getting [ejected from a hospital](#) for not wearing a mask. She told reporters that mandatory mask-wearing was the start down a slippery slope of losing freedoms.

The City of Toronto made masks mandatory in indoor public spaces on Tuesday, including shops, malls, and public transit to slow the spread of [COVID-19](#).

Scientific consensus is that [masks help the fight against COVID-19](#), especially by protecting others.

In March, the TTC [suspended fare enforcement](#), announcing its inspectors would continue patrol but focus on “education and customer service” rather than giving out fines.

In June, the agency began deploying inspectors at key surface transfer points to “remind customers to pay their fare” according to a message on the site. Full enforcement activities, including fines for evasion, will resume in mid-July or August.



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