



FAQ new coronavirus

Date: 19.6.2020

Recommended behaviours and precautionary measures

With the easing of measures to protect the public, more people are circulating again in public spaces. Even though current case numbers have evened off at a gratifying low level, experience abroad shows that in Switzerland too, it is possible that infections will flare up again on an isolated basis in the near future.

The Federal Council will continue to rely on people acting responsibly going forward. The social distancing and hygiene rules, with the precautionary measures, remain crucial. They are there to prevent new infections and a resulting renewed increase in the number of cases.

With effect 22 June 2020, the rules are being simplified and harmonised for the different areas of life. There need to be precautionary measures in place for all establishments and operations accessible to the public, as well as for events. Now the same rules apply to all sets of precautionary measures; there will no longer be any sample sets of precautionary measures.

In light of the low number of cases, the minimum distance between two people will be reduced from 2 metres to 1.5 metres. There is a significant risk of infection if individuals spend longer than 15 minutes at a distance of under 1.5 metres. As before, closer proximity will be allowed if masks are worn or partitions are in place. If the social distancing measures cannot be observed, contact records must be kept to enable contact tracing in the event of a positive case.

Establishments, operations and events open to the public

1. The social distancing rule used to be 2 metres. Why is it now 1.5 metres?

The social distancing rule is still one of the most effective ways for everyone to protect themselves and others. However, given the low case numbers the prescribed distance is to be reduced from 2 to 1.5 metres. In restaurants the distance of 2 metres between tables or groups of guests currently prescribed is leading to a major loss of revenue.

According to the current data¹, a distance of more than 1 metre, both in healthcare settings and in everyday life, reduces the risk of Covid-19 infection by more than 80%. The smaller the distance, the greater the risk of infection. However, the risk also increases in situations where particularly high levels of droplets are given off, for example when people are singing or talking loudly because of the ambient noise.

Further information:

Federal Office of Public Health, Communications, media@bag.admin.ch or 95 05 95 05
This publication is also available in German, French and Italian.

2. What precautionary measures must be observed, for example in cinemas and fitness studios, from 22 June?

The hygiene and social distancing rules remain crucial at all events and establishments. Hand hygiene is a fundamental measure when it comes to preventing the spread of germs. It should be possible for everyone to be able to regularly wash or disinfect their hands. For this reason, hand sanitiser or washbasins with soap will now have to be made available everywhere. Added to this, whenever possible people must keep sufficient distance from one another.

If the 1.5 metre social distancing requirement cannot be observed because of the type of activity, the spatial setting, or for operational reasons, operators and organisers of events may instead provide for precautionary measures such as masks or partitions. If it is not possible to take either social distancing or precautionary measures, the contact details of those present must be recorded to enable contact tracing in the event of a positive case. The operators of a cinema or fitness studio can thus decide on the basis of the situation what options they include in their precautionary measures and implement at their establishment.

3. What are the rules for restaurants? Can those running a restaurant decide themselves whether they can protect their guests or, for operational or economic reasons, work with contact records?

Operators must either seat groups of guests at individual tables in such a way that the relevant distance can be kept between tables (a distance of 1.5 metres between the edges of tables) or install partitions. If, for operational or economic reasons this distance cannot be maintained, the person running the restaurant must record contact details for one person in each group of guests. Gathering contact data is only permitted under the data protection rules if those affected are informed and the measure is proportionate – in other words if measures such as social distancing, partitions or, as the case may be, wearing masks, are not possible.

4. What contact data must be recorded?

The mandatory contact details are the first and last name, phone number and postcode, but also, if applicable, the seat number (e.g. in a theatre) or time present (e.g. in a disco).

Maintaining less than the stipulated distance without precautionary measures, and thus recording contact details, is possible up to a maximum of 300 contacts per person per event. For families or other groups of participants or guests who demonstrably know each other, it is sufficient to record contact details for just one person.

Guests must be informed that the organiser has dispensed with social distancing and precautionary measures and that a basic risk of infection therefore exists. This also means that if a positive case occurs, all close contacts must go into quarantine. The organiser must also inform guests that contact details are being recorded.

Contact details must be kept for 14 days (the incubation time). After that they will be deleted. Implementing contact tracing is the responsibility of the cantonal medical offices.

Further information:

Federal Office of Public Health, Communication and Campaigns Division, Communication and Media Section, media@bag.admin.ch
www.bag.admin.ch

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5. Do I have to provide my contact details?

Yes. This is a requirement set down in the ordinance on the special situation. [Im deutschen Text fehlt hier der Punkt] Contact records are an important measure if it is not possible to observe precautionary measures such as distancing or barriers at an event or institution. If it subsequently turns out that people were in close, unprotected contact with a person with the disease, these people will be notified and will go into quarantine. Admission to certain events and establishments will only be granted to those who provide their contact details at the venue.

6. Does the curfew (closing time) for restaurants and night clubs still apply?

No. From 22 June 2020 the midnight to 6.00am curfew for restaurants, discos, nightclubs and dance venues will no longer apply.

7. During rush hour I can't observe the social distancing rules on the bus or train. What happens then?

Particularly during busy periods it is often not possible to keep 1.5 metres from other people. In this case passengers are strongly advised to wear a mask. All passengers should have a face mask with them at all times. This also applies to transport such as cable cars at tourist destinations. The necessity of a mask-wearing requirement will be reviewed if the number of cases increases. For organisational reasons and because of the large numbers of people coming and going, it is neither possible nor useful to keep records of people on the train or bus.

8. What rules apply in shops?

Here too the hygiene and social distancing rules apply. If the distance of 1.5 metres cannot be observed, precautionary measures such as partitions must be put in place. Customers may also be required to wear a mask. For organisational reasons and because of the large numbers of people coming and going, it is neither possible nor useful to keep contact records of people in shops.

Schools

9. What rules now apply to educational establishments (compulsory and post-compulsory)? Do people still have to observe the social distancing rules at institutions of post-compulsory education, for example vocational colleges and high schools?

The rules for schools are basically the same as those for other establishments. Those responsible must formulate precautionary measures for their school, as far as possible encompassing the basic measures. In addition to classrooms this also applies to canteens, break rooms and entrance areas.

If the composition of classes remains the same, educational establishments may resort to the contact information available for attendees if distancing measures and barriers are not possible. However, as soon as different groups can mix, for example in corridors and break areas, the distancing and barrier requirements must be given priority.

At educational establishments as well it is preferable, in situations where many people come together, to limit the number of contacts per person so that contact tracing is possible.

Basically the school administration is responsible for deciding on and evaluating the measures to be taken on the basis of the ordinance.

The workplace safety standards apply to the employees.

Further information:

Federal Office of Public Health, Communication and Campaigns Division, Communication and Media Section, media@bag.admin.ch
www.bag.admin.ch

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Private events

10. I am planning a private party with a lot of guests. What do I have to pay attention to?

At private events such as family gatherings or birthday parties the principle of personal responsibility applies; no precautionary measures have to be drawn up and implemented. The important thing is that hosts know their guests or how to contact them if a positive case occurs. Club activities among members or involving people who are known by name, for example in the clubhouse, count as private events. However, in the case of club activities open to the public and club events at establishments such as museums, the usual rules must be observed. Here too there is an upper limit of 300 contacts per person to enable contact tracing.

Measures at the workplace

11. What rules apply at the workplace?

The recommendations concerning working from home will be lifted. At the workplace, employers have a statutory duty of care to their employees; in other words they must assure the protection of the people who work for them. The social distancing, hand hygiene and cleaning measures take priority. If social distancing cannot be observed, measures must be taken in line with the STOP principle (for example physical separation, split teams or masks). In cases where for work reasons 1.5 metre social distancing or precautionary measures such as barriers or the wearing of masks are not possible, other precautionary measures must be taken, for example limiting closer contact to steady teams.

In establishments that are not accessible to the public, precautionary measures do not have to be presented, although here too the hygiene and social distancing rules must be observed. On-site inspections to check that companies have implemented the rules are the responsibility of SUVA (primarily in construction and manufacturing) or the cantonal health and safety executives (for all other companies).

12. Can I return to work if I belong to a vulnerable group?

At the moment the number of new infections is low. For this reason, special protection at the workplace for people aged 65 and over or with certain underlying conditions, over and above the basic precautionary measures, is no longer necessary. The employer's duty of care applies.

Large events

13. Are events with more than 300 people permitted again?

From 22 June 2020 the maximum number of people at events will be raised from 300 to 1,000. If it is possible to clearly separate groups of people (for example athletes or performers and spectators or the audience), this upper limit applies to each group; for example 1,000 athletes and 1,000 spectators, but not 800 athletes and 1,200 spectators. Organisers must be able to limit the number of people who have to be contacted in the event of contact tracing to a maximum of 300. This can be achieved by delimiting sectors, reserved seats, and directing flows of people. Outside these sectors, if there is a chance that groups of people will mix (in the entrance area and the toilets or at the drinks counter), either the minimum distance must be observed, or masks must be worn. Events where it is not possible to limit the number of contacts to a maximum of 300 are still not permitted.

This means that it will also be possible to hold 1 August events provided the requisite organisational measures are taken. The cantons can make exceptions by easing or tightening the requirements.

Further information:

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14. When will events with more than 1,000 people be permitted again?

Provided the epidemiological situation does not deteriorate, large events with more than 1,000 people will be allowed from the beginning of September 2020. The same principles will apply to such large events as to events with up to 1,000 people.

15. What rules apply to demonstrations?

The ban on gatherings of people in public spaces will be lifted with effect 22 June 2020. For reasons of practicability, the 1,000-person limit does not apply to political demonstrations, permitted again without limit from 20 June; however, participants must wear a mask.

In private settings

16. Shaking hands, exchanging kisses or hugging a friend: when will all this be possible again?

It is hard to predict when. But you should continue to refrain from physical contact with people who don't live in your household. In other words, we will have to put up with these restrictions for some time to come. This is the only way of protecting ourselves and others.

This also applies to the precautionary measures. It will probably not be possible to completely do away with the social distancing rules, the protective measures, contact records and the corresponding precautionary measures for some time. It will be appropriate to do so once the epidemiological situation remains at a consistently stable, low level or a therapy or vaccination for Covid-19 is available to the Swiss population.

17. Are barbecues in the garden or the woods allowed? What rules do I have to observe?

The hygiene and social distancing rules are still important, also in private. If you can't wash your hands, a hand sanitiser helps. Sneeze or cough into a paper tissue or the crook of your arm. It's also important to know who is present and where you can reach them afterwards in an emergency. If symptoms appear, consult a doctor and get a test.

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