



FAQs – Lifting of measures

Date:

16 February 2022

COVID CERTIFICATE

1. In which settings is a COVID certificate still required?

The Federal Council has decided to lift the COVID certificate requirement in Switzerland. However, some cantons have indicated that they will keep the certificate requirement in place in some settings. We can also assume that a certificate confirming vaccination, recovery, or a negative test result will continue to be required for international travel (particularly in the Schengen area) and to enter public places such as restaurants in certain countries.

2. Do the COVID certificates remain in the COVID Certificate app after it has been deleted?

No. If the COVID Certificate app is deleted, the COVID certificates are lost. The same applies if the smartphone is changed or lost. It is therefore advisable to export a PDF copy of your certificates and to store them as a backup outside of the COVID Certificate app.

3. Which certificates will continue to be issued and which ones will no longer be?

Specific COVID certificates that are only valid in Switzerland – i.e. tourist certificates, antibody certificates of recovery, certificates of recovery on the basis of a positive rapid antigen test, and exemption certificates – will no longer be issued when the certificate requirement is lifted. Already issued certificates of this type will remain valid until they expire. The COVID certificates required for travel will continue to be issued.

4. Will the certificate system be maintained and if so, for what reasons?

The COVID Certificate app will continue to exist at least for international travel. The removal and potential re-development of instruments to tackle the pandemic is complex and time-consuming. Applications such as the COVID Certificate app and the relevant systems should therefore be maintained so that they can be rapidly deployed again depending on the epidemiological situation.

5. On what legal basis will certificates continue to be issued?

The legal basis for the COVID certificate remains Article 6a of the COVID-19 Act.

6. How do I get a test result e.g. to travel? Which tests are required for this?

A COVID test certificate is issued on the basis of a negative rapid antigen test or negative PCR test. However, travellers are advised to continue to check the destination country's entry requirements and regulations regarding presenting evidence of a negative test in good time before they travel.

Weitere Informationen:

Bundesamt für Gesundheit, Kommunikation, www.bag.admin.ch

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7. What should I do if the validity of my certificate of recovery or vaccination expires?

Because the certificate is now only used for travel, travellers should find out about the period of validity in the destination country. Depending on the regulations in place, evidence of a negative test may still be required to enter the country or to access certain places.

8. How long are certificates valid in the Schengen area?

The EU Commission has set the validity periods for vaccination certificates at 270 days, for recovery certificates at 180 days, and for test certificates at 72 hours for PCR tests and 48 hours for rapid antigen tests. For certificates issued on the basis of a booster vaccination, the EU Commission has not stipulated a period of validity so individual countries are free to define their own.

9. Can an individual canton introduce a certificate requirement?

Although the certificate requirement is being lifted by the federal government, the cantons can keep the certificate requirement in place.

10. Can a private institution, such as a restaurant or a care home, require a certificate for entry? And can a public hospital do the same?

Private operators of facilities and businesses and organisers of events can continue to restrict access to people with a COVID certificate provided the measure serves to protect the health of the people in attendance (participants, guests etc.), particularly people at especially high risk. Operators and organisers must comply with the private law limits to contractual freedom as well as legal requirements, particularly on data protection. In particular, they must notify the people in attendance of the reasons for restricting access. They must also comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act and the special safety provisions of the Employment Act. To introduce a COVID certificate requirement in public administration settings or cantonal hospitals, a corresponding legal basis is needed in cantonal law which governs use, including data protection requirements.

MASK-WEARING REQUIREMENT

11. Where do I have to wear a mask?

Masks must continue to be worn on public transport and in healthcare facilities, such as hospitals, care homes, rehabilitation clinics and long-term care facilities.

The cantons can exempt certain establishments from the mask-wearing requirement. However, they may order more stringent safety measures if necessary such as requiring masks to be worn in public administration settings if this is advisable to protect the health of those present.

Individual operators of facilities and business can also require guests, patients or customers to wear a mask, for example in medical practices, hairdressing salons and shops.

PROTECTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Employment law exclusively applies again in workplaces. Employers are responsible for the protection of employees.

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TESTS

12. Will the previous testing regime be maintained or changed?

Going forward, the federal government is going to recommend and fund repeat testing only in healthcare institutions and in companies designated by the cantons as important for the maintenance of critical infrastructure. Repeat testing in schools is going to be funded by the federal government until the end of March.

13. Who will have to be tested in future?

People with symptoms should continue to get tested. People at especially high risk and those in their immediate circle should also get tested if they have had contact with a confirmed case.

People at especially high risk are advised to get a PCR test. For people with symptoms who are not at especially high risk, a rapid antigen test with nose and throat swab is sufficient.

In general, anyone can get a test if requested and/or advisable.

14. Who covers the costs of tests?

The federal government will continue to cover the costs of individual PCR tests in the following cases:

- You are getting tested because you have symptoms.
- You received an alert from the SwissCovid app.
- You have been in close contact with a confirmed case.
- You have been instructed by a cantonal authority or a doctor to get tested.
- Individual participation in pooled PCR tests or rapid antigen tests administered professionally:

The federal government does not cover any costs for self-tests.

15. Will test capacity be reduced?

The cantons are responsible for implementing testing and providing testing capacity. With 60,000 tests being carried out a day throughout Switzerland (7-day average), testing is still at a very high level.

16. Where will people be able to get tested in future?

People can continue to get tested in places such as test centres, medical practices, pharmacies and laboratories. The cantons are responsible for implementing testing and providing testing capacity.

17. When do the new test regulations come into effect?

The changes to the recommendation and funding of repeat testing will come into effect on 17 February 2022 for businesses and on 1 April 2022 for schools.

ENTERING SWITZERLAND

18. What rules apply with regard to entering Switzerland?

There are no longer any public health measures at the border for people entering Switzerland from countries or regions without a variant of concern. These people no longer have to present evidence of vaccination, recovery or a negative test and no longer have to complete a SwissPLF. There are currently no countries on the list of countries with a variant of concern.

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