Switzerland COVID-19

Update 1st October 2020

The average case count per 100,000 is almost at 60 and has been so for the past 2 weeks. The Canton of Vaud has made the wearing of face masks compulsory in all closed public areas.

Real estate

Operating in a normal pre-COVID way, but the number of parties in the property at any given time might be limited and face masks required in-line with Federal guidelines.

Entrance and exit inspections are taking place again in accordance with the social distancing rules.

Transportation and shops

Train/buses

These are running now on a normal timetable. The advice is to travel during off-peak if possible and try and keep a distance between each other. Wearing of face masks is mandatory at all times on all types of public transport (trains, buses, trams, cable cars etc.) for those aged 12 or older.

Taxis

Taxi continue to run normally (regulated per law) although special measures for disinfection/safety have been introduced.

Shopping

All shops are now open and operating again, however limited numbers are being allowed in at any given time. The floors are marked for social distancing and in hairdressers’ masks are always required. Face mask wearing has also become mandatory in some Cantons (for all shops), so our advice is to always have one available.

Online shopping for groceries is also available with Coop and Migros offering platforms mainly in English with home delivery.

Education

Local schools are now open as are International ones.

Events

All public and private events can take place for up to 1,000 people (assuming rules are followed, and contact tracing is in place). Gatherings of more than 1,000 will need a permit and this can only be applied for after 1st of October.
International travel

Entering by car or air from Schengen/EFTA and UK is now possible as of the 15th of June. From the 6th July third country national workers (non-EU/EFTA) have been able to enter with the appropriate documentation for assignments (but not those attending short term training, non-essential business meetings or for holidays).

Travelers arriving from certain countries will face quarantine periods. The list has been published but is subject to change by the FOPD (Federal Office of Public Health), the link can be found below. Those entering will be advised at either the point of entry or whilst in transit.


Airports are open with a restricted and variable timetable, intercontinental flights are more challenging to source than intra-European.

Work and permits

Offices are generally open, and the government recommendation for employees to work from home has been lifted leaving it to the employers to set the rules and necessary levels of protection required. Employees in the high-risk category (people with serious chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and lung disease, or aged over 60) must be allowed to work from home.

Administration offices for permits are open (sometime with limited opening hours); application processing of permits has restarted for previously submitted ones, also for new ones from EU/EFTA citizens. For those who had already registered at the townhall then the physical copy issued is taking longer than normal.

For 3rd country nationals (non-EU/EFTA), permits will be issued again and entry to the country permitted from the 6th of July under the quota systems as was in place prior to the COVID lockdown. This lifting relates to workers, so those coming on holiday, short-term training, non-essential business meetings are still blocked.

Deregistration during the lockdown has been possible remotely, but now with offices open often an in-person notification is required (as was the case prior to situation).

Timetable for lifting restrictions

Masks should be worn when social distancing is not possible, and always on public transport.

Contact tracing app is now available called SwissCovid

Federal announcements are no longer scheduled but will take place on an “as needed basis”. This mainly impacts the list of countries requiring quarantine.


3rd of August, from this date, lifelong partners and those who can prove they are in a long-term relationship with a Swiss resident may enter the country. Proof will be required, so this needs to be checked prior to departure.
Helpline number

0041 58 463 0000 (for residents)
0041 58 464 4488 (for travelers 6am-11pm)
Germany COVID-19

Update 1st October 2020

Real estate

As of 29 September, the federal government of Germany and the federal states have agreed upon not loosening the measures to counter the infection rates. Most noticeably, a minimum fine of Euro 50 for not wearing a protective mask in designated areas, as well as providing for wrong contact information at Restaurants is introduced. The general hygiene, distancing, and contact restrictions remain in place. In addition, Germany has introduced a Corona Warning App. Usage is not mandatory, but strongly recommended.

Citizens are asked to keep the number of people with whom they have contact to a minimum and to keep the number of people they have contact with as constant as possible. Closer and longer contacts should be kept to a minimum. Where possible, meetings should preferably be held outdoors.

Special attention will continue to be directed to identify local hotspots including increased restrictions following rising infection numbers, and quarantine measures for people returning from identified risk areas.

Home finding viewings are possible. Housing prices remain solid.

Public authorities are open for in-person services, albeit on an appointment only basis. Distancing and Hygiene measures are in place.

Transportation and shops

Train/buses

Public transportation is available and running on regular schedules. All states will require wearing a mask when using public transport, as well as in stations.

Taxis

Taxi continue to run normal (regulated per law) although special measures for disinfection are introduced.

Cars

Fuel stations, as well as repair shops are open.

Shopping

All shops are allowed to be open. Hygiene and distancing regulations are required, and all states are requiring wearing a mask for shopping to date. Restaurants and Bars are allowed to be open observing the hygiene and distancing measurements. Night clubs are still closed in most German states.

As of 1st July, the VAT has been lowered from 19% to 16% (from 7% to 5% for selected goods) to strengthen the economy. This measure will effective until the end of the year.
Education

All children are to be accepted to nurseries and kindergartens; hygiene rules apply. Schools (nursery/primary/secondary) have started to resume operation minding the distancing and hygiene measures. Compulsory schooling applies. Individual regulations vary from state to state.

Events

Large public events with a limited possibility for contact tracing remain forbidden until 31st December. Museums, theaters, etc. are starting operations again and depending on the respective restrictions of the individual states.

International travel

Travel within Germany is possible, distancing measures remain in place. Restrictions may be imposed to travelers from areas with an increased number of infections, also within Germany. A negative SARS-Cov-2 test result will be required if travelling from an identified risk area.

As of 15 June, all boarders will be open for travel within the EU/Schengen/GB. Inbound travelers will not face Quarantine measures, unless they are entering from an area deemed to be high risk due to the number of Covid-19 infections.

As of 1 October, all German travelers returning from areas deemed risk areas have to move into a 14 day quarantine period immediately after returning. A test within 10 days is required, but the quarantine can only be ended with a negative result after 5 days at the earliest. The test will be free of charge. While test facilities are installed at all major airports, the requirement to test travelers is applicable for train, car, and ship arrivals as well.

As of 2 July, citizens from selected third countries can enter Germany without restrictions, while entries from most countries are still restricted to “important reasons”. Germany initially allowed for unrestricted entries from the following countries: Australia, Georgia, Canada, Montenegro, New Zealand, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay. For three further states (China, Japan and South Korea), the entry restrictions will be lifted on condition that these states in turn expand the entry possibilities for German citizens. None withstanding, all travelers entering the country from countries identified as “infection risk areas” per regular assessment, are required to undergo a quarantine period after arrival. The list will be published and updated under:

https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete_neu.html

(English version available)

Currently, that list also includes selected areas in Austria, Belgium (entire country), Hungary, France (entire country except Grand Est Region), Ireland, Croatia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Spain (entire country including the Spanish islands), UK (the nations of Northern Ireland and Wales are now considered risk areas).

Passengers entering the country via plane or ship are obliged to disclose their identity, itinerary and contact details for risk assessment reasons.

Flight schedules have been reduced significantly but are picking up again.
Work

No federal regulation is in place for prohibiting employees to go to work. However, hygiene regulations should be observed in companies - with protective measures for employees and visitors. Companies are advised to allow for home office solutions where possible.

Timetable for lifting restrictions

This is provisional and subject to the trend of reduced infections continuing.

The federal government has imposed general guidelines for easing the restrictions as of 6th May, including safety measures, in case infections start to increase. If more than 50 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants occur within seven days in an administrative district or an independent city, immediate regional restrictions must be imposed.

Currently, several cities are facing additional restrictions, such as having to wear a mask in public spaces, due to the number of infections getting closer to 50 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants.

The German states will govern individually how many people will be allowed to be meeting again, as well as other measures. We will monitor the situation and will be able to advise individually, depending on the respective situation and request.

Large public events remain forbidden until 31st December (was 31st October).

Helpline number

+49(0)30 346465100  Mo – Thu 8:00am - 6:00pm, Fr 8:00am - 12:00pm
Belgium COVID-19

Update 01st October 2020

As of 23 September, the National Security Council, expanded to include the Minister-Presidents, has introduced a longer-term approach to health risk management. The six golden rules are key to this approach: compliance with hygiene measures; preferably organize activities in open air; protect vulnerable people; keep your distance (1m50); limit your close contacts; follow the rules on gatherings.

Regarding social contacts, people are allowed to have contact with as many people as they want to, provided they keep their distance at all times and, if this is not possible, wear a mask. In any case, people are not allowed meet more than 10 individuals in the same place at the same time (not including children).

Real estate

Real Estate agencies are open again.

Town halls typically offer email applications and may deliver certain documents by email.

Transportation and shops

Train/buses

Public transportation is running on regular schedule, but passengers need to respect the social distancing rules. People are being asked to only take public transport if necessary. Wearing a mask is required in public transport.

Taxis

Taxis continue to service customers, provided that a minimum distance of 1.5 m is maintained between passengers. The number of people that can be transported therefore varies according to the type of vehicle. People living under the same roof may share a taxi. In this case the rule of minimum distance is not applicable.

Cars

Fuel stations are open. Car/glass/tire repairs can be done in garages.

Shopping

All shops are open. There is no longer a limit on the number of people (provided social distancing is respected) and the time allowed for shopping. Discotheques or night clubs are not yet allowed to reopen. Facemasks are mandatory at all times.

Education

Nurseries, Nursery schools, as well as primary and secondary schools are open. Under the “Code Yellow” scheme, regular school schedules will apply. If an area is identified as “Code Orange”, limitations will be introduced.
Events

Regarding events that are not organised by professionals, gatherings of more than 10 people at the same time and in the same place are not allowed (not including children). Events organised by professionals, on the other hand, if they comply with the rules and protocols that apply to the hospitality industry cover, will have no limit as to the number of attendees, however with a maximum of ten people per table. Dancing is still not be allowed at this stag.

International travel

Travel inside of Belgium is unrestricted.

As of 15 June, Belgium has opened its borders for travel to and from the European Union, including the United Kingdom and the four other Schengen countries (Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway), as well as selected non-EU countries.

As of 1 August, all persons entering Belgium after a stay abroad of more than 48 hours have to fill in the Passenger Locator Form, allowing for the traveler to be traced.

Travel to areas declared as “Red zones” is not possible unless deemed necessary, including all countries outside the EU and Schengen. There are also “Orange Zones” where it is recommended you don’t travel to. All information on these zones can be found on the website of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs.

Travellers returning from red zones will have to self-quarantine from the 1st day of their return and will need to be tested on the 5th day. This obligation does not apply if people complete a self-assessment document which, after analysis, authorises them to do so. These instructions do not apply to people who spend less than 48 hours in a red zone, such as cross-border workers.

As of 2 July, The EU has issued a recommendation to allow for citizens from selected third countries to enter the EU again. Initially, this applies to the following countries: Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, China (subject to confirmation of reciprocity). In addition, entry will be possible for travelers from third countries if there is an "important reason for travel". Travelers entering the country from Non-EU/ non-Schengen countries deemed "risk areas" are required to undergo a quarantine period after arrival. These countries will be re-evaluated for risk assessment regularly.

Currently, a mandatory quarantine (*) and test will be required on return from:

All countries outside the EU and Schengen, Andorra Austria (selected areas), Croatia (selected areas), Czech Republic, Denmark (selected areas), France (selected areas), Georgia, Hungary (selected areas), Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands (selected areas), Portugal (Lisbon metropolitan area), Romania, Slovakia (region of Bratislava), Spain (except the autonomous community of Valencia, and the islands of Tenerife, El Hierro, La Gomera and La Palma), Switzerland (selected areas), Tunisia, United Kingdom (selected areas).

Work

Working from home is now strongly recommended for all employees for whom it is possible, it is mandatory in Antwerp (provided possible). When working from home is not possible, companies must guarantee social distancing.
Timetable for lifting restrictions

This is provisional and subject to the trend of reduced infections continuing.

On the basis of these six rules, Celeval’s experts continue to work on an epidemic barometer at the national, regional and provincial level, which will be implemented gradually. This barometer still needs to be developed further. It will operate according to a staggered system: if the situation deteriorates, more restrictive measures must be taken. It will be based mainly, but not only, on the evolution of the number of hospital admissions. The objective is to reach a consensus in the Consultation Committee in two weeks.

Helpline number

0032 0800 14 689 weekdays 8am – 8pm / weekends 10am – 8pm

About us

Packimpex with the support of all employees will be offering a flexible working solution. We will ensure we constantly have the staffing required to deliver the authorized services to your employees.

Please contact us if you have any specific concerns with regards to the current situation, our services or our ability to work with you and your colleagues in the weeks and months ahead.