



New coronavirus: FAQs

Date: 2.7.2020

Quarantine for travellers arriving in Switzerland

From 6 July 2020, any person arriving in Switzerland from a country or territory with a high risk of COVID-19 infection is required to quarantine for ten days.

1. Which travellers are affected by the quarantine?

Anyone arriving in Switzerland from a high-risk country or territory is required to quarantine on arrival in Switzerland. The list of high-risk countries and territories can be found in the COVID-19 Ordinance on International Passenger Transport Measures. This list is updated regularly.

2. What will happen on arrival in Switzerland?

Arriving from a high-risk country or territory will not be significantly different from arriving from any other country. On the plane or coach, travellers will be informed that they are required to quarantine. In addition, their contact details will be collected to ensure traceability in case any passengers on board were infected and coronavirus transmission cannot be ruled out. The contact information may also be used to check compliance with the quarantine. Additional measures and procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with all partners.

3. What are the criteria on which the list of high-risk countries and territories is based?

A country or territory is considered to have a high risk of COVID-19 infection if it meets at least one of the following conditions:

- a. The number of new infections per 100,000 people in the relevant country or territory has been over 60 in the last 14 days.
- b. The available information from the relevant country or territory does not allow the risk situation to be reliably estimated, and there are indications of an increased risk of infection in the country or territory.
- c. On several occasions over the past four weeks, it has been established that infected persons have entered Switzerland after staying in the country or territory in question.

4. Is the quarantine compulsory for people arriving in Switzerland? Who checks that it is being complied with?

The quarantine is compulsory for travellers arriving in Switzerland from a high-risk country or territory. It is not merely a recommendation.

Weitere Informationen:

Bundesamt für Gesundheit, Kommunikation, media@bag.admin.ch www.bag.admin.ch
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At the beginning of the quarantine, every person who is required to quarantine must report their arrival to the competent cantonal authority within two days and follow the instructions issued by this authority. The cantonal authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance with the quarantine measures. Federal support for the cantons in this regard is being reviewed.

5. Why do I need to contact the cantonal authorities at the beginning of the quarantine?

The cantonal authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance with the quarantine measures and providing people in quarantine with the information and support they need.

6. Are there sanctions for non-compliance with the quarantine?

Failing to quarantine is a contravention of Article 83 of the Epidemics Act and is punishable with a fine of up to CHF 10,000 (para. 1 let. h), or in the event of negligence, with a fine of up to CHF 5,000. The cantonal authorities are responsible for prosecutions.

7. Do children also have to quarantine?

Yes, Children who arrive in Switzerland from a high-risk country or territory are also required to quarantine. Ideally, one parent should look after the child concerned, for example if the child returns from a trip alone. Parents looking after their quarantined children are also in quarantine.

8. Is anyone exempt from the quarantine requirement?

Some people may be exempt from the quarantine. Exceptions are set out in Article 4 of the COVID-19 Ordinance on International Passenger Transport Measures. These include, for example, people doing essential work in the area of health or security.

9. Are quarantined persons entitled to compensation for loss of earnings?

In the case of quarantine as set out under Article 2 of the COVID-19 Ordinance of 2 July 2020 on International Passenger Transport Measures, there is no entitlement to compensation.

It is possible, however, that in certain cases, an employer that sends an employee to a high-risk zone must pay them their salary. Continued salary payment may be based on Art. 324 or 324a CO. From a legal perspective, quarantine tends to be deemed prevention from work and as such, the employee must not be considered at fault as regards any potential compensation. This is decided on a case by case basis.

An employee who travels to a high-risk zone may be considered at fault if they are then quarantined. Compelling personal reasons may justify the trip (e.g. visiting a dying relative). If the work can be carried out from home and the employer provides all necessary infrastructure to work remotely, the employee is not prevented from working.

Employees who travel to regions that were not high risk when they left are in principle not at fault. As the pandemic affects the whole world including Switzerland, other regions of the world are theoretically no more risky than various parts of Switzerland. Such cases should be dealt with by the courts where necessary. An employee who knowingly travels to a notoriously high-risk zone may be considered at fault.

10. During the quarantine, are people allowed to go out occasionally for a walk, to get fresh air, or to buy groceries?

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No. The aim of the quarantine is to break chains of transmission. All physical contact with others should be avoided. This does not mean, however, that social contact is forbidden. Contact by phone or Skype is permitted.

11. What should I do if I develop symptoms during the quarantine?

If you develop symptoms of the disease, it is important you notify the competent cantonal authorities immediately. They will decide on the approach to take, for example whether to carry out a test.

12. What should I do if I am required to quarantine and I have nowhere to go?

It can be assumed that anyone entering Switzerland to stay has accommodation arranged. In principle, a hotel or holiday apartment is also considered suitable accommodation in which to quarantine.

13. What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Isolation concerns people who are infected with the novel coronavirus and requires them to avoid all contact with others.

Quarantine concerns people who have been in close contact with a person infected with novel coronavirus and who as a result are believed to be sick or infected. After contacting the competent cantonal service, quarantined people should not have any contact with others. This avoids them unwittingly infecting other people, and breaks transmission chains.

14. What is the difference between the list of countries published by the State Secretariat for Migration and the one published in the Ordinance?

The State Secretariat for Migration SEM publishes a list of countries from which entry into Switzerland is generally prohibited (with some exceptions).

The FOPH list specifies countries from which people can travel to Switzerland. However, a quarantine is imposed on travellers from the countries listed due to the epidemiological development in the countries in question.

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