

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document is applicable from 27 March 2021

Local authorities may take certain additional measures depending on the epidemiological situation.

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## GENERAL

The Consultative Committee of 24 March 2021 has established a new, strong increase both in terms of the number of infections and the number of hospital admissions. The epidemiological situation has again deteriorated and an uncontrolled and exponential growth of the epidemic must be avoided. On the basis of these findings, the Consultative Committee has decided to implement a 'pause' with stricter measures to ensure that the upward trend in the number of infections and hospital admissions is reversed.

Respecting the six golden rules remains vital. As a reminder, the six golden rules are as follows:

1. the hygiene measures (e.g. washing hands, coughing and sneezing hygiene) remain essential;
2. outdoor activities should be prioritised wherever possible. Where necessary, indoor areas must be adequately ventilated;
3. additional precautions must be taken for people belonging to a high-risk group.
4. social distancing of 1.5 meters is the norm, except for people living under the same roof or between people who have close contact on a regular basis, for children mixing up to the age of 12 and between counsellors and their clients (people in need of counselling). People who are unable to respect social distancing must wear a face mask;
5. it is necessary for everyone to limit their close contacts as much as possible. "Close contact" implies contact which lasts longer than 15 minutes, without respecting social distancing and without wearing a face mask. During this phase of the epidemic, it is recommended that each person limits themselves to close contact with 1 person (outside the household);
6. gatherings are limited to a maximum of **four** people (not including children up to the age of 12). Not including exceptions stipulated in the Ministerial Order.

These six golden rules are instructions and not recommendations. They must therefore be adhered to by everyone.

### **1. What does the declaration of a federal phase mean for the local authorities?**

A federal phase means that the governors and mayors must apply the general measures.

Nevertheless, the Ministerial Order allows the local authorities to take additional measures imposed by the health situation, subject to the following conditions:

1. If the competent local authorities decide to take preventive measures, they will do so in consultation with the competent authorities of the federated entities. The mayor will consult with the governor on this matter.
2. If the mayor or the governor is informed by the health authority of the federated entity concerned of a local resurgence of the epidemic within their territory, or if they identify this themselves:
  - The mayor or governor must take the additional measures required by the situation;
  - The mayor must immediately inform the governor and the competent authorities of the federated entities of the additional measures taken at municipal level;
  - If the planned measures have an impact on federal resources or on neighbouring municipalities or at national level, consultation is required in accordance with the structures provided for in the Royal Decree of 22 May 2019 on local emergency planning.

The mayor is responsible for oral and visual communication of the specific measures taken on the territory of their municipality. The local government shall ensure correct communication for both residents and visitors. It is therefore recommended that citizens consult the communication channels of the municipality in which they live (or intend to visit) in order to find out about any specific measures that may apply.

The Minister of the Interior shall provide instructions regarding coordination.

**2. What are the consequences of non-compliance with the measures?**

Compliance with the announced measures is essential in order to avoid the further spread of the pandemic and additional reinforcement of the measures. We are counting on everyone's sense of civic duty and responsibility.

In the event of non-compliance with the measures (provided by the Ministerial Order), sanctions are possible under Article 187 of the law on Civil Security of 15 May 2007, among others.

Local authorities remain competent for public order in accordance with article 135 §2 of the new municipal law, without prejudice to the measures or the spirit of the measures taken at a higher level.

The police forces will carry out permanent checks to ensure strict compliance with the measures.

**3. Can protocols or guides deviate from the maximum number of persons admitted for an activity?**

No, provisions of a protocol or guide which are less strict than the rules laid down in the Ministerial Order are not applicable.

## ECONOMY

In order to minimise physical contact between people, large crowds should be avoided in public spaces and on public transport. It has therefore been decided that teleworking must remain mandatory and that only essential shops can remain open to the public. Non-essential shops can still offer home deliveries and operate a click-and-collect or appointment-only system.

### WORK

The general principles are as follows:

- Teleworking is mandatory in all companies, associations and services for all staff unless this is not possible due to the nature of their role or because it would disrupt the continuity of business operations, activities and services.
- Where teleworking cannot be applied, companies must take the appropriate measures:
  - ensuring maximum compliance with social distancing rules, and in particular that a distance of 1.5 m is maintained between each person;
  - if the social distancing rules cannot be guaranteed, ensuring at least an equivalent level of protection.
  - the employer provides staff members who are unable to work from home with a certificate or any other evidence confirming the need for their presence at the workplace. This applies to all sectors and businesses. This certificate or other form of evidence may be an existing document or card (e.g. a badge) belonging to the staff member concerned.
- Face-to-face team building sessions are prohibited;
- **Each month, employers must register the total number of employees in the company per operating unit as well as the number of employees who are unable to telework due to their role. They must do this via the electronic registration system made available by the National Social Security Office on the social security portal. This declaration relates to the number of employees on the first working day of the month and must be submitted by the sixth calendar day of the month at the latest.**

The application of these principles must be guaranteed at company level and developed by taking preventative measures as defined in the "Generic guide for combatting the spread of COVID-19 at work" (available at: <https://employment.belgium.be/sites/default/files/content/documents/Coronavirus/Genericguide.pdf>); possibly supplemented by:

- guidelines at sectoral level;
- and/or guidelines at company level;

and/or other appropriate measures offering at least an equivalent level of protection. Collective measures always take precedence over individual measures.

### Exceptions to the general principles:

For private and public companies and services necessary for the protection of the vital interests of the Nation and the needs of the public (see Annex to the Ministerial Order).

- Teleworking is mandatory in all companies for all staff unless this is not possible due to the nature of their role or because it would disrupt the continuity of business operations, activities and services.
- In addition, these companies and services are obliged to apply, to the extent possible, the social distancing rules.

This exception also applies to producers, suppliers, contractors and subcontractors of goods, works and services which are essential to the activity of those companies and to the provision of those services.

Obligations with regards to temporary working of employees and self-employed people not residing in Belgium:

**The employee or self-employed person who does not reside in Belgium must:**

- Fill in the Passenger Locator Form (with the exception of employees or self-employed persons who form part of the exceptions specified in the "International" section of this FAQ);
- Submit proof of a negative test carried out less than 72 hours before commencing work or activities in Belgium, if they are staying for longer than 48 hours. This test can be conducted abroad before arriving in Belgium. The negative test result may be verified by the prevention advisor/occupational physicians and by all services and institutions in charge of monitoring compliance with the obligations imposed as part of the urgent measures to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Adhere to the testing and quarantine measures received by text message after completing the PLF. Employees arriving in Belgium after a stay of at least 48 hours in a red zone must quarantine. Quarantine can only end after a negative PCR test on day 7 of quarantine (subject to possible exceptions).

**Before the works commence, all employers or users** who temporarily employ employees or self-employed persons who do not live in Belgium, **must check** whether the Passenger Locator Form has been completed if the employee or self-employed person is required to do so.

If the Passenger Locator Form has not been completed, the employer or user shall ensure that the employee or self-employed person does so as soon as they start working in Belgium at the latest.

It is important to note that the natural person for whom the work is carried out for strictly personal purposes is not obliged to check this or to keep a register. For instance, a private individual who renovates his private home and calls upon the services of a self-employed person or a company whose employees do not reside in Belgium.

With the exception of the above-mentioned situation, the employer or user must **keep a register** containing the following information:

1. the identification details of the employee or self-employed person living or residing abroad:
  - name and first names;
  - date of birth;
  - the identification number referred to in Article 8(1) of the Law of 15 January 1990 establishing and organising a Crossroads Bank for Social Security;
2. the place of residence of the employee or self-employed person during his activities in Belgium;
3. the telephone number on which the employee or self-employed person can be contacted;
4. where applicable, an indication of the people with whom the employee or self-employed person works during their activities in Belgium;
5. a negative COVID-19 test result presented by the employee or self-employed person.

It is important to note that these data may only be used for the purpose of combating the spread of coronavirus, including the detection and investigation of clusters and group settings at the same address. The data shall be destroyed after 14 calendar days from the date on which the work in question ends.

**The following should not be entered in such a register:**

- frontier workers within the meaning of the Ministerial Order, i.e. any worker who pursues an activity as an employed person in a Member State but resides in another Member State to which they return daily or at least once a week;
- an employee or self-employed person who lives or stays abroad and whose stay in Belgium does not exceed 48 hours.

Everyone in the workplace shall comply with obligations to limit the spread of COVID-19 as established by the competent authorities.

In the workplace, the prevention advisers/occupational physicians as well as all services and institutions in charge of monitoring compliance with the obligations imposed as part of the urgent measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 may ask anyone concerned to prove that they comply with the obligations established by the competent authorities. The aforementioned services and institutions may, among other things, request the workplaces provide proof that the travel was purely for professional reasons (as explained in point 1.1 of the categories of essential travel detailed in the "International" section of this FAQ).

**1. Can company canteens stay open?**

Yes, company canteens are allowed to remain open and are included in the mass catering operations and canteens for business communities. They must comply with the hygiene and social distancing measures that apply to the authorised catering activities and that are described below under the Catering section.

**BUSINESSES AND ASSOCIATIONS OFFERING GOODS OR SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS (B2C)**

Companies and associations offering goods or services to customers and which may remain open to the public shall carry out their activities in accordance with the applicable sectoral protocol.

A guide for the reopening of businesses applies to all businesses under this chapter and is published on the website of the Federal Public Service Economy

(<https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/coronavirus/toegelaten-economische/coronavirus-tips-voor-winkels>). To the extent possible, links to the available sectoral protocols will be published on the website <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/nl/protocollen/>.

In any event, the fourteen general minimum rules provided for in the Ministerial Order must be respected:

1. The company or association must visibly inform its customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide its staff with appropriate training;
2. A distance of 1.5 m between each person must be guaranteed except for the professions explicitly mentioned in the Ministerial Order;
3. customers are admitted for a maximum of 30 minutes, but the visit may take longer if the company or association works by appointment only;
4. One customer is allowed per 10 m<sup>2</sup> of accessible floor space to the public.
5. Two customers are allowed simultaneously if the accessible floor space is less than 20 m<sup>2</sup> and provided that a distance of 1.5 m between each person is guaranteed;
6. If the accessible floor space to the public exceeds 400 m<sup>2</sup>, adequate access control must be provided. For more information, please refer to the question relating to access controls;

7. In companies or associations, it is mandatory to cover mouth and nose with a face mask in those areas that are accessible to the public. If the rules of social distancing cannot be complied with due to the nature of the activity performed, it is advised to use alternative personal protective equipment;
8. The activity must be organised in accordance with the directives issued by the competent authority and in such a way as to avoid gatherings and that the social distancing rules can be respected, in particular with regard to people waiting outside the establishment;
9. The company or association must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
10. The company or association must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
11. The company or association must ensure good ventilation;
12. A contact person must be designated and announced so that customers and staff can report a possible coronavirus infection, in order to facilitate contact tracing;
13. Terraces and public spaces must be organised in accordance with the rules laid down by the local authorities and in compliance with the same rules as those that apply indoors;
14. Shopping must be done individually, with the exception of minors living under the same roof or people in need of an escort, who can be accompanied by one adult. **A customer may, however, be accompanied by one person from the same household or by someone with whom they have a close and permanent contact provided that the business or association operates on an appointment-only basis.**

Companies can follow the instructions set out in the 'Generic guide for combatting the spread of COVID-19 at work'. Employers must inform workers in good time regarding the prevention measures in force and provide appropriate training.

### **Offering goods to customers**

**Companies and associations that offer goods to customers can only continue their activities through a click-and-collect system, via home deliveries or by means of an appointment-only system.**

**Nevertheless, the following establishments, which primarily fall under one of the following categories, may remain open to the public:**

- **food shops and night shops (including butchers, cheesemongers, chocolatiers, wine merchants and grocery stores);**
- **shops selling products for hygiene & personal care (e.g. chemists);**
- **specialised shops with baby products (e.g. shops providing baby wish lists);**
- **pet food shops;**
- **pharmacies;**
- **newsagents and bookshops;**
- **petrol stations, charging points and fuel suppliers;**
- **telecom stores, excluding stores that only sell accessories;**
- **stores selling medical aids (e.g. bandagists, opticians and hearing specialists);**
- **do-it-yourself stores, both with a general and a specialised range;**
- **garden centres and tree nurseries;**
- **flower and plant shops;**
- **wholesalers intended for professionals, but only for the benefit of the latter;**

- specialised retail businesses selling clothing fabrics;
- specialised retail businesses selling knitting yarns, handicrafts and haberdashery;
- stationery shops.

Moreover, the above-mentioned businesses can offer all their goods for sale, including those that are not part of their main offer.

Businesses that remain open must follow the rules of the sector protocol and the applicable guide published on the website of the competent government department. They must, in all cases, follow the fourteen general rules of the Ministerial Order listed above.

Companies and associations that are not included in the above-mentioned list can only offer their goods to customers via a click-and-collect or an appointment-only system.

When using the click-and-collect system, the following minimum rules must be observed:

1. the goods must be ordered in advance;
2. the goods must be collected outside the shop;
3. queues must be managed to avoid gatherings and in order to guarantee that the social distancing rules are respected, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5m between each person.

When using the appointment-only system, the following rules must be observed:

1. the fourteen minimum rules described above must be respected. A customer may, however, be accompanied by one person from the same household or by someone with whom they have a close and permanent contact;
2. customers may only enter the business or association if they have confirmation of the time slot reserved and only during the time slot reserved;
3. no more than 50 customers are allowed simultaneously inside buildings or establishments;
4. only activities that are connected with the immediate sales process may take place inside buildings or establishments;

Additional information on the click-and-collect and appointment-only systems is available in the guide of the FPS Economy: <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/coronavirus/toegelaten-economische/coronavirus-tips-voor-winkels>

Offering goods at and in a home is prohibited (e.g. demonstrations of household products). However, goods ordered in advance can be delivered to and installed in a home.

A number of specific conditions apply to receiving visitors in shopping centres:

- the fourteen minimum rules described above;
- one visitor will be permitted per 10 m<sup>2</sup>;
- means to ensure necessary hand hygiene must be made available at the entrance and exit;
- markers to indicate 1.5 metres distance must be applied to the floor and/or with signs;
- visitors must travel alone, with the exception of adults who may accompany minors living under the same roof or a person in need of an escort.
- adequate access control must be provided. See the additional question on access controls.

**2. What does adequate access control mean for shops with a floor area of more than 400 m<sup>2</sup> accessible to the public and shopping centres?**

Adequate access control implies compliance with the specific measures imposed on shops and shopping centres is monitored in an organised manner. This includes monitoring whether the number of permitted customers is not exceeded, face masks are worn, there are no gatherings and the measures regarding individual shopping and social distancing are respected.

In principle, refusing access is a surveillance activity covered by the Law of 2 October 2017 regulating private and special security. This means that it must be carried out by a licensed private security company whose staff is trained for this activity and has the appropriate profile. Others, such as own staff, can inform customers, disinfect shopping carts and hand them over, verify reservations, etc.

Digital devices or signs can be an aid to control access.

**Wearing a face mask**

Everyone from the age of 13 (customers, staff, etc.) is obliged to wear a face mask or any other fabric alternative in shopping streets, shops and shopping centres, and any private or public place with significant footfall. If this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield can be worn.

The mayors are responsible for determining the shopping streets and the frequently visited private and public spaces in their municipality. These spaces will be clearly defined by a notice specifying the times during which the obligation applies.

**Local authorities**

Local authorities will organise access to shopping centres, shopping streets and car parks in accordance with the ministerial letter of the Minister for Home Affairs of 29 November 2020 on the management of public space when reopening shops and shopping centres, so that social distancing measures can be respected.

Where the competent local authority considers that the requirements set out above cannot be met, it shall defer or suspend the reopening or opening of non-essential companies and associations in all or part of its territory.

**3. Are there any specific restrictions on the sale of alcoholic beverages?**

Yes, from 8 pm to 5 am the sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in all establishments (including vending machines). Outside this period, catering establishments can only sell and/or supply alcoholic beverages in combination with a takeaway meal.

**4. Are there any specific restrictions for night shops?**

Night shops are defined as: any establishment whose net sales area does not exceed 150 m<sup>2</sup>, which does not carry out any activities other than the sale of general food and household goods and which has an obvious and permanent "Night shop" sign.

Night shops may be open between their usual opening hours and 10 pm.

Petrol stations with in-house shops are not considered as night shops and therefore do not have to close at 10 pm.

The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in all establishments (including vending machines) from 8 pm to 5 am.

## 5. Can showrooms remain open?

Shops that are not included in the above-mentioned list, can only operate a click-and-collect system or by appointment.

### **Provision of services to customers**

The applicable rules differ depending on whether the service is offered by businesses, private and public companies and services considered necessary for the protection of the vital interests of the Nation and the needs of the population ('essential services' as listed in Annex 1 to the Ministerial Order).

1. businesses, private and public companies and services considered **necessary** for the protection of the vital interests of the Nation and the needs of the population

These businesses, private and public companies and services may:

- remain open to the public;
- offer their services even if a distance of 1.5 metres between the service provider and the customer cannot be guaranteed;
- offer mobile services.

2. businesses, private and public companies and services **not considered necessary** for the protection of the vital interests of the Nation and the needs of the population

The rules that apply differ depending on whether or not it is possible to guarantee a distance of 1.5 metres between the service provider and the customer when offering the service.

- **If it is not possible to guarantee** a distance of 1.5 metres between the service provider and the customer:
  - businesses and associations may not offer their services, not even by appointment. This includes services provided by:
    - beauty salons;
    - non-medical pedicure salons;
    - nail salons;
    - massage parlours;
    - hairdressers and barbershops;
    - tattoo parlours and piercing salons.
  - the following services can still be provided but not in or at a customer's home:
    - driving lessons and driving tests, as well as aviation training with a view to the maintenance, completion and renewal of qualifications and licences, in accordance with the arrangements laid down in the applicable protocol;
    - photography services in compliance with the conditions laid down in the applicable protocol determined by the Minister for Employment and the Minister for the Self-Employed.
- **If it is possible to guarantee** a distance of 1.5 metres between the service provider and the customer, business and associations may:
  - offer their services through a click-and-collect system, via home deliveries or by means of an appointment-only system.

- not offer their services in or at a customer's home, except for
  - services provided by the real estate sector for property viewings in compliance with the conditions laid down in the applicable protocol.

When using the above-mentioned systems, the following minimum rules must be respected:

- Click-and-collect system:
  1. the goods must be ordered in advance;
  2. the goods must be collected outside the shop;
  3. queues must be managed to avoid gatherings and in order to guarantee that the social distancing rules are respected, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5m between each person.
  
- Appointment-only system:
  1. the fourteen minimum rules described above must be respected. A customer may, however, be accompanied by one person from the same household or by someone with whom they have a close and permanent contact;
  2. customers may only enter the business or association if they have confirmation of the time slot reserved and only during the time slot reserved;
  3. no more than 50 customers are allowed simultaneously inside buildings or establishments;
  4. only activities that are connected with the immediate sales process may take place inside buildings or establishments;
  5. if an authorised service were to be offered in public spaces, both the rules on gatherings and those on social distancing must be respected. The service provider can therefore only offer their services to a maximum of three other people (not including children up to the age of 12) at the same time.

## 6. Which close-contact professions may continue their activities?

Medical or paramedical close-contact professions and occupations regarded as 'necessary for the protection of the vital interests of the Nation' (included in Annex 1 to the Ministerial Order, JC 330) may be carried out, even at home, such as dentists, psychologists, physiotherapy, home nursing, maternity care, family care, palliative home care and essential hair care for people with a medical condition. Podiatrists may still provide foot care. In addition, foot care that is urgent due to medical reasons can be provided by professionals other than podiatrists.

Close-contact professions that are not allowed to offer their services may offer their goods (e.g. hair care and other personal care products) according to the terms described above, i.e. through a click-and-collect system, via home deliveries or by means of an appointment-only system.

## 7. Are driving test centres open and are driving lessons allowed?

Yes, driving test centres are open and driving lessons are authorised in accordance with the procedures laid down in the applicable protocol.

**8. Can skipper courses and exams still be organised?**

Skipper courses and exams may still be organised with a view to the maintenance, completion and renewal of qualifications and licences, in accordance with the terms laid down in the applicable protocol, including the rules on social distancing and wearing face masks.

**9. Are domestic cleaners still permitted? Can I continue to work as a domestic cleaner?**

Yes, this is permitted. Ironing services are also still allowed.

**10. Can sports coaches continue to offer their services?**

As it is a non-essential service, where the distance of 1.5m between service provider and customer can be maintained, these services may still be offered, provided they are organised on an appointment-only basis.

However, the rules for sports infrastructures must also be taken into account. For this reason, participants from the age of 13 should be coached outdoors. In addition, the rules on gatherings and social distancing must also be respected. Service providers may therefore only offer their services to a maximum of three other people at the same time, if they are aged 13 and over.

As regards sports activities for young people up to the age of 18 in an organised setting, please refer to the sports and youth section of this FAQ.

**11. May renovation and construction works continue in private homes?**

Yes, activities such as renovation, painting, electrical works, plumbing or the installation of domestic appliances are listed in Annex 1 to the Ministerial Order and can continue to take place in the customer's home, provided that social distancing measures are respected.

**12. Can estate agents continue their activities?**

Estate agents may receive private individuals in their office **on an appointment-only basis and according to the above-mentioned rules.**

The services of professional service providers in the real estate sector (alone or accompanied by people who want to rent or buy a home), which are directly related to the purchase, sale or rental of real estate (e.g. home visits, taking photographs or conducting a property valuation) are permitted on site, subject to compliance with the modalities provided for in the applicable protocol.

**13. Are notaries, lawyers and bailiffs allowed to continue their activities?**

These professions are listed in Annex 1 to the Ministerial Order. Face-to-face client meetings are possible when necessary (e.g. to sign deeds), including at the client's home, with respect for social distancing measures. As far as possible, all tasks should be performed remotely.

**14. May accredited mediators, curators and other judicial representatives continue their activities?**

Yes. These fall within the "judicial services and related professions" listed in Annex 1 to the Ministerial order and may therefore continue their activities, this includes activities inside the home.

#### 15. Can tanning salons reopen?

Manned sunbed centres and manned tanning salons **may receive customers on an appointment-only basis and according to the applicable protocols**. Unmanned sunbed centres and unmanned tanning salons must remain closed.

#### 16. Can saunas reopen?

Private saunas are open to the extent that they are used by people belonging to the same household or by people who have a close and permanent contact with each other. Jacuzzis, steam rooms and hammams are not accessible, not even for private use.

#### 17. How many clients can a photographer receive in his studio?

Photographers may receive more than 1 person per 10 m<sup>2</sup> at the same time on their premises but only in the following circumstances:

- people belonging to the same household;
- people who have close contact on a regular basis;
- children mixing up to the age of 12.

The provision of home services remains prohibited.

Photographers may offer their services in compliance with the conditions laid down in the applicable protocol determined by the Minister for Employment and the Minister for the Self-Employed.

#### 18. What about prostitution?

This activity may not be resumed. The Ministerial Order **only** allows for a limited number of services where the distance of 1.5 metres between the service provider and the customer cannot be guaranteed. This does not include prostitution.

### **BUSINESSES AND ASSOCIATIONS OFFERING GOODS OR SERVICES TO PROFESSIONALS (B2B)**

The provision of services between professionals remains possible, provided that the social distancing rules are respected and according to the preventative measures adopted by the company.

**Wholesalers may, however, only stay open for professionals.**

### **ITINERANT ACTIVITIES**

The competent municipal authority may allow for markets under certain terms.

Fun fairs, flea markets, bric-a-brac markets, year markets, Christmas markets and winter villages remain prohibited.

The necessary measures must be taken at all markets permitted by the local authorities to protect everyone from the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), including the application of the social distancing rules, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres between each person. Where the local authorities do permit a market, they will establish the conditions for this. Appropriate and timely preventative measures will be taken, as recommended in the "General guide for re-opening shops to combat the spread of COVID-19", which is available on the FPS Economy's website.

**The distinction between essential and non-essential products does not apply to market stalls. Itinerant traders are therefore allowed to be present at markets, regardless of their activities.**

Each market must satisfy the following conditions:

- The conditions determined by the local authorities;
- The social distancing rules are being respected;
- The maximum number of visitors permitted at a market is one per 1.5 running metres at the stall;
- Market vendors are required to cover their mouth and nose with a mask or any other fabric alternative (if this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield can be worn);
- Customers are required to wear a face mask when the local authorities impose it or in all situations where it is impossible to ensure compliance with the rules of social distancing;
- Means for guaranteeing the necessary hand hygiene must be made available at the entrance and exit of the market by the competent municipal authorities. The market vendors will also make hand gels available to their customers;
- The consumption of food and drinks on the spot is forbidden, takeaways are still permitted;
- An organisation or system will be introduced to check how many customers are present at the market;
- A one-way traffic plan will be drawn up for the market with separate entrances and exits, unless a justified deviation from this is permitted by the local authorities in exceptional circumstances that provides for an alternative solution;
- In addition, shopping is done individually and for a maximum period of 30 minutes. An adult can accompany minors living under the same roof or a person in need of an escort.

Door-to-door activities are prohibited, with the exception of itinerant food traders (such as the sale of ice cream and waffles) who may resume their activities. The exclusive sale of alcohol does not fall within this category and is therefore not permitted.

Goods ordered in advance can still be delivered to and installed in a home.

#### **19. Are food trucks still allowed to sell food and drinks?**

Yes, however, they may only sell them as takeaway meals until 10 pm at the latest and they may not be consumed on the spot. The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited from 8 pm to 5 am.

Takeaways are possible, while respecting the hygiene and social distancing measures, but hospitality establishments are expected to ensure *crowd control* and manage queues at all times. The meals must be offered in such a way that they can be taken away by the customer and consumed elsewhere, for example at home, in the hotel room or in the car in a public car park.

Meals may not be consumed on the premises. In addition, initiatives in which locations, such as chalets, caravans, mobile homes in a parking lot, a terrace or a separate location, are set up to receive and/or serve customers so that they can consume their meal there are prohibited.

#### **20. Are itinerant traders allowed to offer their services by means of door-to-door activities?**

Only itinerant food trading activities are allowed. The exclusive sale of alcohol does not fall within this category and is therefore not permitted. The sale of ice cream, waffles, etc. can resume.

All other similar activities are prohibited.

### **THE HOTEL, RESTAURANT, AND CATERING (HORECA) SECTOR**

Establishments belonging to the catering sector and other food and drinking establishments are closed, except for takeaways and food delivery as well as non-alcoholic beverages to take away until 10 pm at the latest. Takeaway meals can be sold together and/or delivered with alcoholic beverages until 8 pm.

Takeaways are possible, while respecting the hygiene and social distancing measures, but hospitality establishments are expected to ensure *crowd control* and manage queues at all times. The meals must be offered in such a way that they can be taken away by the customer and consumed elsewhere, for example at home, in the hotel room or in the car in a public car park.

Meals may not be consumed on the premises. In addition, initiatives in which locations, such as chalets, caravans, mobile homes in a parking lot, a terrace or a separate location, are set up to receive and/or serve customers so that they can consume their meal there are prohibited.

The ban on the consumption of food or drink on the premises applies also to those beach bars that offer food and drink as well as rent out beach chairs. Given that beach chairs are an extension of the beach bar, the consumption of food and drink sold by the beach bar is considered to be consumption "on the premises" and therefore remains prohibited.

The following establishments can remain open:

- All types of accommodation, including their common sanitary facilities but not including their restaurant, drinking establishments and other communal facilities;
- mass catering operations and canteens for school, migrant, residential and business communities. This includes, company, hospital, prison, school and care home restaurants.
- Shared facilities for the homeless;
- Food and drink outlets in airport transit zones;
- Sanitary facilities in the service areas along the motorways.

For those catering activities that remain authorised, the following modalities must be respected:

- the tables must be positioned in such a way that a distance of at least 1.5 meters between dinner parties is guaranteed, unless the tables are separated by a plexiglass wall or an equivalent alternative with a minimum height of 1.8 meters;
- a maximum of four people per table is allowed; An entire household can share a table, regardless of size;
- only seats at tables are allowed;
- each person must remain at their own table;
- every person, with the exception of children up to the age of 12, is obliged to cover their mouth and nose with a face mask or any alternative in fabric, except when sitting at their own table. When it is not possible to wear a face mask or any fabric alternative due to medical reasons, a face shield can be worn;
- wearing a face mask is mandatory for all staff (if this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield can be worn);
- no bar service is allowed;
- the contact details of one customer per table, which may be limited to a telephone number or an email address, must be recorded on arrival and kept for 14 calendar days, while respecting the protection of personal data, to facilitate any subsequent contact tracing. Customers who refuse to complete their details will be refused entry to the establishment. These contact details may only be used for the purposes of tackling COVID-19 and they must be destroyed after 14 calendar days.

In addition, the individual and collective use of hookahs is prohibited in places accessible to the public.

## 21. What activities are permitted for food and drinking outlets?

Only deliveries and selling takeaway meals (such as catered meals) are permitted, and this until 10 pm. Delivering or selling alcoholic beverages to take away is only permitted in combination with a meal, and only until 8 pm.

Takeaways are possible, while respecting the hygiene and social distancing measures, but hospitality establishments are expected to ensure *crowd control* and manage queues at all times. The meals must be offered in such a way that they can be taken away by the customer and consumed elsewhere, for example at home, in the hotel room or in the car in a public car park.

Meals may not be consumed on the premises. In addition, initiatives in which locations, such as chalets, caravans, mobile homes in a parking lot, a terrace or a separate location, are set up to receive and/or serve customers so that they can consume their meal there are prohibited.

### ANIMAL CARE

Companies or associations providing animal care services (veterinary and comfort care) and rescue services may resume their activities. Nevertheless, the logic as described above in the section "services to customers" continues to apply. For example, veterinary care is included in Annex 1 to the Ministerial Order. This means that vets can work in their practice as well as in the home of the animal's owner. Dog groomers (comfort care), however, who are not listed in Annex 1, may carry out their activities on site and **by appointment only** but not at the customer's home.

## 22. Can animal grooming salons offer their services?

Yes, animal grooming salons may **offer their services by appointment only** subject to compliance with the fourteen minimum rules and, in particular, with the social distancing rules of 1.5 metres between the service provider and the customer. Home services are not allowed.

## 23. Can dog training centres stay open?

Yes, they may offer their services but **by appointment only and** must ensure that there is no physical contact between the instructor and the owner of the dog and that the fourteen minimum rules are respected. If the training takes place in a public area, the rules regarding gatherings apply (a maximum of **four** people older than 12 years, instructor included). As dog training centres are not included in Annex 1 to the Ministerial Order, dog training at the client's home is not allowed.

It is possible to train with several groups outside, provided that each group consists of 1 instructor and a maximum of **three** participants. The necessary social distancing measures between the different groups must be observed so that the ban on gatherings can be respected. One instructor may therefore not teach more than one group at a time.

## 24. Are animal shelters allowed to stay open?

Animal shelters **remain** open to the public, provided that the fourteen minimum rules are respected.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Federal:**

- FPS Economy:
  - <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/coronavirus/coronavirus-versterkte>
  - <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/het-coronavirus-en-zijn>

Generic guides on the opening of shops to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus:

  - <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/coronavirus/versterkte-maatregelen/coronavirus-tips-voor-het>
  - <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/publicaties/gids-voor-eeen-veilige>
  - <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/coronavirus/toegelaten-economische/coronavirus-tips-voor-het>

Generic guide for the reopening of the catering industry:

  - <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/coronavirus/toegelaten-economische/coronavirus-raadgevingen-voor>
- FASFC:
  - <http://www.favv.be/professionelen/publicaties/mededelingen/coronavirus.asp>
- FPS Finance:
  - [https://financien.belgium.be/nl/douane\\_accijnzen/ondernemingen/corona-informatie-en-maatregelen/faq-covid-19](https://financien.belgium.be/nl/douane_accijnzen/ondernemingen/corona-informatie-en-maatregelen/faq-covid-19)
- FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue:
  - <https://werk.belgie.be/nl/faqs/vragen-en-antwoorden-coronavirus>
  - Generic guide for combatting the spread of COVID-19 at work: <https://werk.belgie.be/nl/themas/coronavirus/veilig-aan-het-werk-tijdens-de-coronacrisis-generieke-gids-versie-2-en>
- NEO:
  - [https://www.rva.be/sites/default/files/coronavirus/Faq\\_Corona\\_NL\\_20200423\\_0.pdf](https://www.rva.be/sites/default/files/coronavirus/Faq_Corona_NL_20200423_0.pdf)

### **Regional:**

- Flemish Region:  
<https://www.vlaio.be/nl/begeleiding-advies/moeilijkhedencoronavirus/specifieke-maatregelen-mbt-het-coronavirus-0>  
<https://www.vlaanderen.be/vlaamse-maatregelen-tijdens-de-coronacrisis/vlaamse-coronamaatregelen-rond-ondernemen-en-werk>
- Walloon Region:  
<https://www.1890.be/article/faq-coronavirus>
- Brussels Region:  
<https://1819.brussels/nl/blog/faq-coronavirus-en-ondernemingen-antwoord-op-uw-meest-gestelde-vragen>

## HEALTH

### **INFECTION AND PROTECTION**

The hygiene measures are adapted over time, according to the evolution of the pandemic, scientific knowledge and insight.

The most up-to-date information is available at the following address: <https://covid-19.sciensano.be/nl>

#### **1. What is meant by "a (face) mask or any other fabric alternative"?**

A mask without an exhaust valve, made out of fabric or disposable material, which fits closely to the face, covering the nose, mouth and chin, and is intended to prevent the spread of infection between people. Fabric accessories such as bandanas, scarves and buffs are therefore no longer accepted as an alternative to face masks.

#### **2. What are the recommendations for wearing face masks and gloves in public places?**

Everyone, with the exception of children up to the age of 12, is obliged to cover their mouth and nose with a face mask or any other fabric alternative in all situations where it is impossible to ensure compliance with the rules of social distancing. This last obligation does not apply to:

- people living under the same roof;
- children mixing up to the age of 12;
- people meeting each who have close contact on a regular basis;
- counsellors and their clients (people in need of counselling).

In addition, wearing a face mask is compulsory in a number of places, regardless of the number of people present there:

- on public transport from entering the airport, the station, on the platform or a bus, (pre-)metro, tram, train stop or any other means of transport organised by a public authority. Public transport drivers are not required to cover their nose and mouth, insofar as the driver is well-isolated in a cabin on the one hand, and a poster and/or sticker indicates to users the reason why the driver is not wearing a mask on the other;
- for supervisors of camps, training sessions and activities that are allowed;
- the establishments and places where catering activities are permitted, both for customers and staff, unless whilst eating, drinking or sitting at a table;
- in shops and shopping centres;
- In shopping streets, at markets and in any private or public area with significant footfall, which is determined by the competent local authority and demarcated by a notice specifying the times at which the obligation applies;
- in conference rooms, auditoriums and places of worship & reflection;
- in libraries, game and multimedia libraries;
- in museums;
- in places of worship and buildings intended for the public practice of non-denominational moral services;
- when moving around in public and non-public parts of courthouses and courtrooms and, in other cases, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Chairman;
- when occasionally and briefly entering someone's house with whom there is no close contact on a regular basis. The same rule applies to a tourist accommodation that is occupied by a person with whom there is no close contact on a regular basis.

When it is not possible to wear a face mask or any fabric alternative due to medical reasons, a face shield can be worn.

People who are unable to wear a face mask, a fabric alternative or a face shield due to a disability, substantiated by a medical certificate, do not have to comply with this obligation.

It should be noted, once again, that wearing a face mask is an additional protection that does not exempt people from applying the six golden rules for individual behaviour.

1. respect hygiene measures;
2. perform activities outside where possible ;
3. be considerate to vulnerable people ;
4. keep 1.5 metres distance ;
5. limit your close contacts ;
6. follow the rules concerning gatherings.

For more information about fabric face masks, please visit:

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/nl/mondmasker/>

However, wearing gloves is not recommended, as it gives a false sense of security, people still touch their nose, mouth and eyes if they are wearing gloves, whereby they can still get infected. It is much better to regularly wash hands with soap and water.

### **3. Are there special arrangements for wearing masks for people who are deaf or hard of hearing?**

Yes, in such cases, the interlocutor of a deaf or hard of hearing person can temporarily remove their mask so that the person can lip read. This is only possible for the time strictly necessary for the conversation, subject to social distancing.

### **4. Who is currently being tested?**

Detailed information regarding the procedures can be found on the Sciensano website: [https://epidemiologie.wiv-isp.be/ID/Pages/2019-nCoV\\_procedures.aspx](https://epidemiologie.wiv-isp.be/ID/Pages/2019-nCoV_procedures.aspx)

### **5. Which quarantine rules should be followed?**

It is necessary to set clear priorities for sample collection and laboratory analysis, which will serve public health and the containment of the epidemic in the best possible way. The priorities were identified at the Interministerial Conference on Public Health on 15 January 2021.

All high-risk contacts have been tested via PCR since 23 November 2020. All stays in a red zone are defined as high-risk events.

The following rules apply with regard to self-isolation and quarantine:

1. **Self-isolation period for people with a positive PCR test:**
  - As from 29 January 2021, self-isolation shall be lifted for patients with a positive PCR test with symptoms no earlier than 10 days after onset of symptoms AND up to at least 3 days without fever AND with improvement of respiratory symptoms.
  - As from 29 January 2021, the 10-day self-isolation period starts from the date the sample was collected for people with a positive PCR test who have no symptoms.
2. **The quarantine period for high-risk contacts** is a minimum of 10 days. This quarantine period starts from the moment the high-risk contact took place. This quarantine period may however be reduced to a minimum of 7 days on condition of a negative PCR test result, where the test was taken, at the earliest, seven days after the last exposure.
3. **The quarantine period for people returning from a red zone:** Please refer to the "International" section of this FAQ.

#### **USE OF TELECOMS DATA**

**6. Is the government using my personal telecoms data in the fight against the coronavirus?**

No, the government only has access to anonymous data, and carries out analyses that help in the fight against the coronavirus on the basis of this data. The government does not process any address, telephone number or name. It is ensured that the data cannot in any way be traced back to an individual. At the level of aggregation used, members of the public are completely anonymous and their identity is protected.

**7. Why are telecoms data used?**

The government uses the anonymised and aggregated telecoms data to help make decisions regarding the control of the pandemic. Using this data, the government can ascertain various useful elements, such as: has the mobility of Belgians decreased since the measures were adopted by the National Security Council? In which geographical areas is mobility higher than in others?

**8. Does this mean that all my movements are now being monitored?**

No, no new data is being collected in the context of these analyses. The data does not leave the premises of the telecoms operators. They are anonymised (i.e., it is not possible to know which individual is behind which data point) and aggregated (i.e., there is no analysis of a single individual's behaviour).

**9. Will my data be stored or reused?**

No, the data processed in the context of this project are only being used to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Irrelevant data is immediately and continuously deleted. Once the corona crisis is over, all data will be deleted so that they can never be stolen or used against members of the public.

**10. Why is it relevant to use telecoms data in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic?**

Using mobile phone data (aggregated and anonymised) to manage epidemiological crises has already been done and has proven its effectiveness. For example, technologies similar to those currently being used were implemented during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2013-2015.

The coronavirus is transmitted due to physical proximity between individuals. As such, the use of data regarding population movements can provide health authorities with essential information for managing the pandemic.

**11. Can this data be used against me?**

Absolutely not. The data processed are completely anonymous and cannot be traced back to individuals. Analyses are only carried out to inform policymakers and the public. Under no circumstances will the data be used for repressive or punitive ends against individual members of the public.

**12. Are there similar initiatives in other European countries?**

Yes, governments and mobile operators in other European countries, as well as the European Commission, are working on similar initiatives. The Belgian government is in contact with some of these countries to share expertise and, to the extent possible, also measure cross-border movements.

**13. Do these practices comply with national and European privacy regulations?**

Absolutely. In Belgium, special attention is given to scrupulously respecting privacy regulations, unlike in some other regions of the world. The government's approach is "privacy first". Not only is compliance with applicable legislation continually monitored, data privacy experts and an ethics committee are also involved in analysing the data. The approach and working methods have been approved by the Data Protection Authority.

**14. Who analyses and uses the data?**

The government decides which analyses will be applied to the anonymised and aggregated data, and for which purposes these analyses can be used. This is in close consultation with the Data Protection Authority. The telecoms operators only supply anonymised and aggregated data to Sciensano, which then sends the requested analyses to the government.

**15. Can I choose not to provide location data in the context of the 'data against Corona' project?**

No, your location data are not supplied individually. The government only receives an overview of anonymised and aggregated data. This is never individually traceable and completely anonymous. This supply of data has been coordinated with the Data Protection Authority.

**SUPPORT FOR OLDER PERSONS, DISABLED PERSONS AND VULNERABLE PERSONS**

**16. Are visits allowed in residential care centres or residential care institutions?**

Please consult the website of the competent authorities for the terms of the visit:

Flemish Region: <https://www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/corona-richtlijnen-voor-zorgprofessionals>

Wallon Region: <https://www.wallonie.be/fr/maisons-de-repos>

Brussels-Capital Region: [https://coronavirus.brussels/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FAQ\\_Re%CC%81sidentiel\\_DEF-1.pdf](https://coronavirus.brussels/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FAQ_Re%CC%81sidentiel_DEF-1.pdf)

**17. Can local care initiatives for people in an urgent, problematic housing situation continue their activities?**

People in an urgent, problematic housing situation due to unfavourable family circumstances (divorce/breakup, domestic or sexual abuse) or due to the uninhabitable nature of the current home, can get support from local shelter initiatives.

If necessary, a house visit can also take place provided that the general preventive measures are observed. A house visit cannot take place if the occupant refuses it. Given that the social rental market is considered as an essential service to implement the general social policy, house visits may take place subject to compliance with general preventive measures.

#### 18. Will call centres for people in need (suicide risk, domestic violence, etc.) remain available?

Yes, subject to social distancing measures by the call takers. Useful numbers and websites can be found below:

##### Dutch-speaking:

The most important websites are as follows:

1. <https://www.vlaanderen.be/hulp-zoeken-bij-psychische-problemen>
2. <https://www.geestelijkgezondvlaanderen.be>

For more specific information: [www.tele-onthaal.be](http://www.tele-onthaal.be); [www.awel.be](http://www.awel.be); [www.1712.be](http://www.1712.be); [www.caw.be](http://www.caw.be); [www.iac.be](http://www.iac.be); [www.zelfmoord1813.be](http://www.zelfmoord1813.be); [www.nupraatikerover.be](http://www.nupraatikerover.be); Education line 078/15 00 10

##### German-speaking:

1. In the event of intra-family and partner violence where there is a need for protection and counselling:
  - a. Prisma ASBL (Frauenzentrum, Refuge des femmes): +32 (0)87 554 077
  - b. Telefonhilfe (Helpline): 108 – 24/7 (Also for people with suicidal thoughts)
2. If people need to talk: telefonhilfe (helpline): 108
3. Suicidal thoughts, psychotherapeutic consultation, psychotherapeutic referral: BTZ (Beratungs- und Therapiezentrum, centre for counselling and therapy)

Eupen: +32 (0)87 140 180

St.Vith: +32 (0)80 650 065

##### French-speaking

Centre de prévention du suicide	0800 32 123	
Ecoute violences conjugales	0800 30 030	Ecouteviolencesconjugales.be
Comportements violents	Praxis	Asblpraxis.be
Télé-Accueil	107	
SOS Parents	0471 414 333	
Ecoute -Enfants	103	
SOS Viol	0800 98 100	
SOS Enfants FWB		<a href="https://www.one.be/public/1-3ans/maltraitance/equipe-sos-enfants/">https://www.one.be/public/1-3ans/maltraitance/equipe-sos-enfants/</a>

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Federal:**

<http://www.favv.be/professionelen/publicaties/mededelingen/coronavirus.asp>

### **Regional:**

- <https://www.vlaanderen.be/hulp-zoeken-bij-psychische-problemen>
- <https://www.geestelijkgezondvlaanderen.be/>
- [www.tele-onthaal.be](http://www.tele-onthaal.be)
- [www.awel.be](http://www.awel.be)
- [www.1712.be](http://www.1712.be)
- [www.caw.be](http://www.caw.be)
- [www.jac.be](http://www.jac.be)
- [www.zelfmoord1813.be](http://www.zelfmoord1813.be)
- [www.nupraatikerover.be](http://www.nupraatikerover.be)

## EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

### CHILDREN AND CHILDCARE

#### **1. Will crèches and child minders remain open?**

Childcare is included in Annex 1 to the Ministerial Order and may therefore remain open.

For more information on childcare:

##### **Flanders:**

<https://www.kindengezin.be/gezondheid-en-vaccineren/ziek/coronavirus/#Kinderopvang>

##### **Wallonia-Brussels Federation:**

<https://www.one.be/public/detailarticle/news/coronavirus-les-conditions-dacces-pour-mettre-votre-enfant-en-creche/>

##### **German-Speaking Community:**

[www.ostbelgienfamilie.be/coronavirus](http://www.ostbelgienfamilie.be/coronavirus)

### EDUCATION

Please consult the website of the competent authorities for the terms of the organisation of education.

- Flanders: <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/nl/coronavirus>
- Wallonia-Brussels Federation: <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=28291>
- German-Speaking Community: <http://ostbelgienbildung.be/coronavirus>

#### **2. What about children of (possibly) infected parents?**

For more information regarding the quarantine measures, please refer to the question “Which quarantine rules should be followed?” in the Health Section.

#### **3. Are schools or third parties allowed to take initiatives outside school hours to help those who are falling behind or to combat school dropout?**

Schools or third parties are allowed to take initiatives outside school hours to help those who are falling behind or to combat school dropout according to the protocols drawn up by the competent Ministers of Education.

#### **4. Can courses take place outside regular education?**

The necessary training of staff is permitted within the working community, if possible through distance learning and, in any case, in compliance with the sanitary rules applicable to the workplace. For example, public transport operators may continue to offer internal driver training.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Childcare:**

- Flemish Community:
  - o <https://www.kindengezin.be/gezondheid-en-vaccineren/ziek/coronavirus/#Kinderopvang>
  - o <https://www.kindengezin.be/img/draaiboek-kinderopvang-coronacrisis.pdf>
- Wallonia-Brussels Federation:
  - o <https://www.one.be/public/detailarticle/news/coronavirus-les-conditions-dacces-pour-mettre-votre-enfant-en-creche/>
- German-Speaking Community:
  - o <http://www.ostbelgienfamilie.be/coronavirus/>

### **Education:**

- Flemish Community:
  - o <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/nl/coronavirus>
  - o <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-voor-ouders>
  - o <https://examencommissiesecundaironderwijs.be/>
  - o <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-richtlijnen-voor-scholen-en-clbs>
  - o HIGHER EDUCATION:  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/draaiboek-2020-2021-universiteiten>  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/draaiboek-2020-2021-hogescholen>
  - o ADULT EDUCATION:  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-informatie-voor-volwassenenonderwijs>
  - o PART-TIME ARTS EDUCATION:  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-informatie-voor-deeltijds-kunstonderwijs>
- Wallonia-Brussels Federation:
  - o <http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=28291>
  - o HIGHER EDUCATION : [http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do\\_id=8060](http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do_id=8060)
  - o ADULT EDUCATION:  
[http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do\\_id=8061](http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do_id=8061)
- German-Speaking Community:
  - o <http://ostbelgienbildung.be/coronavirus>
  - o [http://www.ostbelgienbildung.be/PortalData/21/Resources/downloads/coronavirus/20200430\\_FAQ\\_Covid19\\_Bildung\\_und\\_Kinderbetreuung.pdf](http://www.ostbelgienbildung.be/PortalData/21/Resources/downloads/coronavirus/20200430_FAQ_Covid19_Bildung_und_Kinderbetreuung.pdf)

## PUBLIC LIFE

For the time being, the current epidemiological situation does not allow for certain activities to resume, in particular in establishments belonging to the cultural, festive, sports, recreational and events sectors.

The following establishments, or parts of them, are, among others, closed to the public:

- casinos, fruit machine halls and bookmakers;
- wellness centres, including saunas, unmanned sunbed centres and unmanned tanning salons, jacuzzis, steam rooms and hammams;
- night clubs and dance halls;
- party and reception venues;
- amusement parks;
- indoor playgrounds;
- bowling alleys;
- fun fairs, year markets, flea markets, bric-a-brac markets, Christmas markets and winter villages;
- trade fairs including exhibitions;
- cinemas;
- fitness centres;
- ski slopes, cross-country ski trails and ski centres.

The following establishments (or parts of them), however, may remain open:

- outdoor playgrounds;
- museums;
- outdoor areas of nature parks, zoos and animal parks, including entrances, exits, sanitary facilities and first aid and emergency buildings;
- swimming pools, excluding the recreational areas and subtropical swimming pools;
- libraries, game and multimedia libraries;
- places of worship and buildings intended for the public practice of non-denominational moral services
- outdoor areas of sports infrastructures;
- indoor horse arenas in equestrian centres and racecourses for the sole purpose of animal welfare;
- cultural sites (other than those described above), but only for:
  - groups of children up to the age of 12, as part of compulsory school or extracurricular activities;
  - courses and activities for children up to the age of 18;
- sports halls and facilities (other than those described above), but only for:
  - groups of children up to the age of 12, as part of compulsory school or extracurricular activities;
  - sports activities, courses and camps organised or authorised by the local authorities for children up to the age of 18;
  - training for professional athletes;
  - professional competitions;
  - activities other than sports activities, in so far as these are permitted under the Ministerial Order and the protocols in force;
- private saunas to the extent that they are used by people belonging to the same household or by people who have a close and permanent contact with each other.

For those establishments that remain open, the following 7 minimum rules must be respected:

1. the operator or organiser must visibly inform its customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide its staff with appropriate training;
2. a distance of 1.5 meters between each person must be ensured;
3. it is always strongly recommended to cover mouth and nose with a face mask and to wear other personal protective equipment inside the establishment and must be used if the rules of social distancing cannot be complied with, due to the nature of the activity performed. Nevertheless, it is mandatory to wear a face mask in those places where the Ministerial Order states that mouth and nose must be covered;
4. the activity must be organised in such a way so as to avoid gatherings;
5. the operator or organiser must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
6. the operator or organiser must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
7. the operator or organiser must ensure good ventilation.

In order to reduce parties, gatherings and alcohol consumption in public areas and thus reduce the number of infections and the transmission of the virus, it is prohibited to be on public roads and in public areas between midnight and 5 am, except for essential journeys which cannot be delayed, such as:

- for access to urgent medical care, social services and the police;
- to provide assistance and care for elderly people, minors, disabled people and vulnerable people;
- escaping from a situation of intrafamily violence;
- work-related travel, including commuting;
- movements in the context of wild boar hunting for population control and nuisance;
- taking someone to or picking someone up from the airport.

Except in the case of an urgent medical reason, the reason for presence or movement on public roads or in public areas must be justified at the first request of the police services.

#### **1. Will cultural and recreational facilities that are currently open be able to remain open?**

Facilities, such as museums, outdoor areas of zoos and animal parks, swimming pools, libraries, game and multimedia libraries, may remain open in accordance with the applicable protocols.

#### **SOCIAL CONTACT**

In order to prevent the spread of the virus, it is important to respect the six golden rules in all social contacts.

In addition, a number of restrictions apply:

- It is advisable not to have close contact with more than one person who does not belong to your own household. "Close contact" implies contact which lasts longer than 15 minutes, without respecting the six golden rules such as social distancing and wearing a face mask. It is not recommended that grandparents have close contact with their grandchildren.
- Each member of a household can meet one close contact on a regular basis every 6 weeks at home or in a tourist accommodation.
- A single person can meet one additional person, on top of the close contact he/she meets on a regular basis, at home or in a tourist accommodation and at a different moment in time. Social

distancing measures must be respected with this additional person. It is recommended not to change this additional person too often. The close contact is considered to be "permanent".

Apart from the exceptions mentioned in the Ministerial Order, gatherings are limited to a maximum of **four** people, excluding children younger than 12. However, members of the same household may travel together.

Social distancing of 1.5 meters and wearing a face mask continue to be mandatory, except:

- for people living under the same roof;
- for people meeting each other as part of the "close contact" rule;
- for children mixing up to the age of 12,
- between counsellors and their clients (people in need of counselling).

## **2. How many people can I invite to sit in my garden or on my terrace?**

You are allowed to meet with a maximum of **four** people outside (not including children up to the age of 12). This rule also applies in people's gardens and on their terraces (or in tourist accommodation). Social distancing must be respected (except for people belonging to the same household or people who have a close and permanent contact with each other). It is compulsory to wear a face mask in all situations where it is impossible to ensure compliance with social distancing rules.

To access the garden or the terrace, it is permitted to enter the host's house. However, only one person at a time is allowed to enter the house. In all situations, this person is required to cover their mouth and nose when entering the house. Guests may also make use of the toilet, subject to the same conditions.

## **3. Can I move house?**

This is permitted, but the rules for gatherings and private meetings at home apply. Removal companies that fall under the Joint Committee 140.05 are allowed to offer their services to private individuals.

## **4. Can border residents visit their 'cuddle contact' on the other side of the border?**

Such a trip may be regarded as an essential trip but the provisions under point 3 of the "International" section must be respected.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **5. Are there any specific measures for public transport?**

Public transport users, with the exception of children up to the age of 12, are obliged to cover their mouths and noses by wearing a face mask or any other fabric alternative. This applies from the moment they enter the airport, station, at stops or on the platform, train or other means of transport organised by a public authority. If it is not possible to wear a face mask for medical reasons, a face shield can be worn.

Public transport drivers are not required to cover their nose and mouth, insofar as the driver is well-isolated in a cabin on the one hand, and a poster and/or sticker indicates to users the reason why the driver is not wearing a mask on the other. This exception also applies, under the same conditions, to drivers of organised collective transport (e.g. school bus).

Please consult the relevant websites for the available services of transport companies.

**In addition, the National Railway Company of Belgium (NMBS/SNCB) will take the necessary measures to prevent gatherings and ensure maximum compliance with preventive measures in stations, on**

platforms or at stops, on trains or on any other means of transport it organises, in cooperation with the local authorities concerned as well as the police.

From 3 to 18 April 2021 and on 24 and 25 April 2021, capacity on trains with a tourist destination must be limited, as determined by the Minister for Mobility in consultation with NMBS/SNCB and the National Crisis Centre, so that preventive measures are respected. As a result, only window seats may be occupied, with the exception of children up to the age of 12, who may sit next to accompanying adults. NMBS/SNCB will ensure compliance with this restriction.

**6. Are private buses and coaches allowed to organise passenger transport?**

Yes, buses and coaches may arrange organised transport, subject to the application of the necessary hygiene and preventive measures by passengers and transport companies.

Passengers, with the exception of children up to the age of 12, must cover their mouth and nose by wearing a face mask or any other fabric alternative and, where possible, keep a distance of 1.5 metres. If it is not possible to wear a face mask for medical reasons, a face shield can be worn.

**7. What about taxis (and other on-demand transport services)?**

Taxis are allowed to transport customers. A minimum distance of 1.5 metres must be maintained between each person. The number of people that can be transported varies according to the type of vehicle.

A household or people who belong to "the close contacts" can travel in 1 car. In this case, the social distancing rule does not apply. It is recommended to regularly ventilate and clean the vehicle.

It is mandatory to cover mouth and nose with a face mask if the social distancing measures cannot be respected.

**8. What measures have been taken with regard to carpooling? How many people are allowed to travel in a private car?**

As is the case for taxis, a minimum distance of 1.5 metres between each person must be respected during transport. The number of people that can be transported varies according to the type of vehicle. This rule does not apply to people belonging to the same household or "the close contacts". It is recommended to ventilate and clean the car regularly.

It is mandatory to wear a face mask to cover your nose and mouth, if the social distancing measures cannot be respected.

**TOURISM**

Non-essential leisure travel to and from Belgium is prohibited. Only necessary trips to and from Belgium are allowed. For more details regarding this measure, please consult the "International" section of this FAQ.

All types of accommodation (including hotels, apart-hotels, gîtes, B&Bs), holiday parks and campsites, including their sanitary facilities, may reopen, with the exception of their restaurant, drinking establishments and other communal facilities (e.g. sports hall).

The accommodations that remain open may allow customers access to the pool (excluding the recreational and subtropical areas), provided that they respect the rules of the protocol applicable to pools.

As regards the number of visitors per accommodation unit, the same rules apply as to private meetings at home. This means that every household is allowed to rent a residential unit with each other or with a maximum of one close contact.

## **SPORTS**

### **Sports infrastructure and facilities**

Facilities (or parts of them) belonging to the sports sector are closed to the public. With the exception of fitness centres, indoor sports halls, swimming pools and sports infrastructures remain open to the public:

- groups of children up to the age of 12, as part of compulsory school or extracurricular activities;
- sports activities, courses and camps organised or authorised by the local authorities for children up to the age of 12, according to the rules described below;
- training for professional athletes;
- professional competitions;
- activities other than sports activities, in so far as these are permitted under the provisions of the Ministerial Order of 28 October and the protocols in force.

Swimming pools (with the exception of the recreational areas and subtropical swimming pools) and outdoor areas of sports infrastructures (e.g. football pitch) remain accessible to children and adults. Outdoor sports are not allowed in groups larger than **four** people (coach included), in compliance with the social distancing rules.

Indoor horse arenas in equestrian centres and racecourses also remain open, however, this is for the sole purpose of animal welfare;

Canteens and drinking establishments must be closed.

The following minimum rules apply in sports infrastructures and facilities that remain open:

1. the operator or organiser must visibly inform its customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide its staff with appropriate training;
2. a distance of 1.5 meters between each person must be ensured;
3. it is always strongly recommended to cover mouth and nose with a face mask and to wear other personal protective equipment inside the establishment and must be used if the rules of social distancing cannot be complied with, due to the nature of the activity performed. Nevertheless, it is mandatory to wear a face mask in those places where the Ministerial Order states that mouth and nose must be covered;
4. the activity must be organised in such a way so as to avoid gatherings;
5. the operator or organiser must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
6. the operator or organiser must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
7. the operator or organiser must ensure good ventilation.

### **Sports activities and training**

Professional athletes can continue to train, both indoors and outdoors. These training sessions must take place without an audience.

Children and young people who come together for activities in an organised context, in particular by a club or association, without an overnight stay, must remain in the same group and may not mix with people of another group.

Group stability must be ensured and changing contacts should be avoided. It is therefore also necessary to avoid that children and young people, as well as their supervisors, participate in several different groups and activities in an organised context each week. It is therefore strongly recommended to limit the number of after-school group activities to one per child or young person.

For organised activities, the following measures apply:

- Children up to the age of 12 can participate with a maximum of 10 people in activities (supervisor not included). Where possible, these activities should be organised outside;
- Young people aged 13 to 18 can participate with a maximum of 10 people in activities organised outside (supervisor not included); For this age group, these activities are not allowed indoors, except in a swimming pool;
- Where possible, supervisors and children aged 13 or over must comply with the social distancing rules, in particular keeping a distance of 1.5 m between each person.
- Supervisors must wear a face mask or a fabric alternative;
- Activities may only take place without an audience, except for non-professional sports training where each participant may be accompanied by a maximum of one member of the same household.

Training and activities for amateur athletes who are older than 19 can take place, but only outside or in a swimming pool. In this case, the general rules apply for the ban on gatherings (with **four** people, not including children up to the age of 12) and the social distancing measures (a minimum distance of 1.5 m between each participant, with the exception of members of the same household or 'cuddle' contacts). A trainer/coach forms part of this group of **four** people. Athletes can use the outside areas of sports infrastructures (e.g. a football field or basketball court).

### **Sports competitions**

Professional sports competitions can only take place without spectators. All non-professional sports competitions, regardless of the age category of the participants, are not allowed.

If a sporting competition is organised on public roads, the prior authorisation of the competent municipal authority is required. Before submitting the application, the organiser must complete the online COVID Event Risk Model (CERM) application ([www.covideventriskmodel.be](http://www.covideventriskmodel.be)) and attach the obtained certificate to the application file for the competent municipal authority.

Canteens must be closed.

### **9. Are skateparks open?**

Outdoor sports infrastructures such as skateparks can remain open. The ban on gatherings must be respected.

### **10. Can I go skiing?**

It is forbidden to open ski slopes, cross-country ski trails and ski centres.

## 11. What are the rules for swimming pools?

Swimming pools (excluding the recreational areas and subtropical swimming pools) are open. The protocols of the communities regulate the conditions in terms of access and organisation. The tourist accommodations that remain open may also allow customers access to their pool, excluding the recreational areas and subtropical swimming pools, provided that they respect the rules in the protocol applicable to pools.

The operation of the swimming pool and the activities that take place in the swimming pool must respect the following minimum rules:

1. the operator or organiser must visibly inform its customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide its staff with appropriate training;
2. a distance of 1.5 meters between each person must be ensured;
3. it is always strongly recommended to cover mouth and nose with a face mask and to wear other personal protective equipment;
4. the activity must be organised in such a way so as to avoid gatherings;
5. the operator or organiser must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
6. the operator or organiser must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
7. the operator or organiser must ensure good ventilation.

In addition, the other general rules apply such as the ban on gatherings and the rules relating to training sessions and matches.

### **CULTURE AND RECREATION**

Facilities (or parts of them) belonging to the cultural, festive and leisure sector are closed to the public. Casinos, amusement arcades, amusement parks, wellness centres, party and reception venues, indoor playgrounds, night clubs and dance halls, bowling alleys, fun fairs, cinemas, theatres and concert halls are closed.

There are a few exceptions to this principle. Can remain open:

- outdoor playgrounds;
- the outdoor areas of nature parks, zoos and animal parks, including entrances, exits, sanitary facilities and first aid and emergency buildings;
- museums;
- libraries, game and multimedia libraries;
- cultural sites (other than those described above), but only for:
  - groups of children up to the age of 12, as part of compulsory school or extracurricular activities;
  - courses and activities for children up to the age of 18, according to the rules described below.

For those establishments (or parts of the establishments) that remain open, the following 7 minimum rules must be respected:

1. the operator or organiser must visibly inform its customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide its staff with appropriate training;
2. a distance of 1.5 meters between each person must be ensured;
3. it is always strongly recommended to cover mouth and nose with a face mask and to wear other personal protective equipment inside the establishment and must be used if the rules of social distancing cannot be complied with, due to the nature of the activity performed. Nevertheless, it is mandatory to wear a face mask in those places where the Ministerial Order states that mouth and nose must be covered;
4. the activity must be organised in such a way so as to avoid gatherings;
5. the operator or organiser must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
6. the operator or organiser must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
7. the operator or organiser must ensure good ventilation.

## 12. Can I rehearse with my amateur theatre company, dance group, orchestra, choir, etc.?

School and extra-curricular activities of compulsory education follow the protocol in force for education;

Group activities organised by a club or association in the non-professional cultural and artistic sector are allowed:

- Children up to the age of 12 can participate with a maximum of 10 people in activities (supervisor not included). Where possible, these activities should be organised outside;
- Young people aged 13 to 18 can participate with a maximum of 10 people in activities organised outside (supervisor not included); For this age group, these activities are not allowed indoors;
- Where possible, supervisors and children aged 13 or over must comply with the social distancing rules, in particular keeping a distance of 1.5 m between each person.
- Supervisors must wear a face mask or a fabric alternative;
- People gathering in the context of these activities must remain in the same group. Groups are not allowed to mix.

Cultural activities should take place in accordance with the applicable protocols.

Group stability must be ensured and changing contacts should be avoided. It is therefore also necessary to avoid that children and young people, as well as their supervisors, participate in several different groups and activities in an organised context each week. It is therefore strongly recommended to limit the number of after-school group activities to one per child or young person.

Rehearsals indoors with participants aged 19 and over are not allowed in groups, regardless of the number of participants. Outdoors, the general rules must be strictly complied with:

- the rules relating to the ban on gatherings (in groups of a maximum of **four** people, not including children up to the age of 12). A potential supervisor forms part of the group of **four** people.
- the social distancing measures (specifically, a minimum distance of 1.5m between each person, with the exception of members of the same household or 'cuddle' contacts).

In addition, the above-mentioned 7 minimum rules must be respected.

**13. Can professional artists (such as musicians, actors and comedians) rehearse, record, etc.?**

Teleworking is mandatory for all artists, unless this is not feasible. For activities where teleworking is not possible, compliance with social distancing measures must be guaranteed and a certificate must be provided by the employer.

**14. Are cultural performances with an audience allowed?**

No, cultural performances with an audience are not permitted.

**15. Can general meetings or other meetings of clubs or associations, as well as co-owner meetings take place?**

These meetings cannot be held face-to-face. They must be postponed or carried out remotely (e.g. via video conference).

With regards co-owner meetings, an evolutionary interpretation of Section 577-6 of the Civil Code allows co-owners to participate remotely in the general meeting (e.g. via video conferencing).

**16. Can hunting continue?**

Hunting can continue, but according to the rules that apply to gatherings.

This activity is subject to the curfew rules and, as a result, hunting is not allowed between midnight and 5 am. An exception is made for wild boar to limit wild boar population growth.

**EVENTS**

With the exception of sports competitions that are still allowed (see Sports section), all events are suspended.

**17. Can a conference be organised?**

Conference rooms are currently not closed, however, as cultural events with an audience are currently suspended, conference rooms cannot be used for debates or gatherings with an audience, for example.

Conference rooms can be used as meeting rooms by companies, public services, etc. to organise professional meetings which cannot be organised remotely.

In addition, everyone is obliged to wear a face mask or any other fabric alternative in conference rooms.

**18. When should the COVID Event Risk Model be used?**

This application must be used for decisions relating to the organisation of activities authorised by Article 15 of the Ministerial Order of 28 October 2020 (e.g. a demonstration) concerning urgent measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

**DEMONSTRATIONS**

Demonstrations on public roads are allowed with a maximum of 50 participants. For demonstrations, permission must always be requested from the competent municipal authority. Before submitting the application, the organiser fills in the online COVID Event Risk Model (CERM) application ([www.covideventriskmodel.be](http://www.covideventriskmodel.be)) and attaches the complete obtained certificate to the application file for the competent municipal authority.

Demonstrations must always be static and take place in a place where the safety distances can be respected. It is compulsory to wear a face mask in all situations where it is impossible to ensure compliance with social distancing rules.

### **RECEPTIONS AND BANQUETS**

Receptions and banquets, including funeral receptions, are prohibited.

### **YOUTH**

Children and young people who come together for group activities in an organised context, in particular by a club or association, without an overnight stay, must remain in the same group and may not mix with people of another group.

Group stability must be ensured and changing contacts should be avoided. It is therefore also necessary to avoid that children and young people, as well as their supervisors, participate in several different groups and activities in an organised context each week. It is therefore strongly recommended to limit the number of after-school group activities to one per child or young person.

For organised activities, the following measures apply in terms of the number of participants:

- Children up to the age of 12 can participate with a maximum of 10 people in activities (supervisor not included). Where possible, these activities should be organised outside;
- Young people aged 13 to 18 can participate with a maximum of 10 people in activities organised outside (supervisor not included); For this age group, these activities are not allowed indoors, except in a swimming pool;
- Where possible, supervisors and children aged 13 or over must comply with the social distancing rules, in particular keeping a distance of 1.5 m between each person.
- Supervisors must wear a face mask or a fabric alternative;
- Activities may only take place without an audience, except for non-professional sports training where each participant may be accompanied by a maximum of one member of the same household.

The above-mentioned measures **and the ban on gatherings** do not apply to educational activities of compulsory education such as breakfast and after-school clubs, homework clubs, youth welfare services or other types of special activities for vulnerable children or children with learning difficulties. These activities should always be organised in compliance with the educational protocols and other preventive measures.

Specifically for the youth sector there are protocols that can be consulted via the following link:

- Flanders: <https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/nl/vragen-en-maatregelen-jeugd> (in application of the Youth Protocol, there are more specific guidelines which can be consulted via the link below <https://ambrassade.be/nl/jeugdwerk-regels> ).
- French Community: [http://www.servicejeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=sj\\_detail&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=375&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=9673&cHash=96299600b9c5e7c04daf30ae7c144509](http://www.servicejeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=sj_detail&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=375&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=9673&cHash=96299600b9c5e7c04daf30ae7c144509)
- German-Speaking Community: [http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-6902/11274\\_read-61950/](http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-6902/11274_read-61950/)

### **19. Can indoor play areas open?**

Indoor playgrounds are closed. Outdoor playgrounds remain open.

### **20. Can leisure facilities (such as laser tag, paintball and trampoline parks) reopen under certain conditions?**

No, these facilities must remain closed at this stage, regardless of the age of the participants. They can, therefore, not receive groups of children up to the age of 12 as part of organised activities. After all, they are considered to be indoor playgrounds, which are currently closed. The Ministerial Order does not provide for any derogation from this rule based on the age of the participants.

### **21. Are camps, internships and activity clubs permitted?**

For organised activities for children and young people, the rules described above apply.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES, WORSHIP SERVICES AND CEREMONIES**

Places of worship and buildings intended for the public practice of non-denominational moral services remain open.

A maximum of 15 people, excluding children up to the age of 12, the civil registrar and the minister of religion, may attend the following activities at the same time in the buildings provided for this purpose, independent of the number of rooms within the building:

- civil marriages;
- congregational worship and the collective practice of non-denominational moral services and of activities within a philosophical association.
- individual worship and the individual practice of non-denominational moral services and of activities within a philosophical association.
- individually or collectively visiting places of worship or buildings intended for non-denominational moral services.

A maximum of 50 people, excluding children up to the age of 12 and the minister of religion, may be present at the same time at funerals and cremations in separate rooms of buildings intended for this purpose and in a cemetery as part of a funeral ceremony. This rule also applies to waiting areas. Funerals and cremations take place without the possibility of the body being exposed.

The following minimum rules apply:

1. the operator or organiser must visibly inform those present and its employees in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide its staff with appropriate training;
2. a distance of 1.5 meters between each person must be ensured and one person per 10 m<sup>2</sup> is allowed;
3. it is mandatory to cover mouth and nose with a face mask and it is strongly recommended to wear other personal protective equipment;
4. the activity must be organised in such a way so as to avoid gatherings and to ensure that social distancing rules can be respected, in particular with regard to people waiting outside the establishment, in accordance with the directives issued by the competent authority;
5. the operator or organiser must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
6. the operator or organiser must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
7. the operator or organiser must ensure good ventilation;

8. physical contact between people is prohibited, except between members of the same household;
9. physical contact with objects by different people is prohibited.

## 22. What rules apply to funerals and cremations?

A maximum of 50 people, excluding children up to the age of 12 and the minister of religion, may be present at the same time at funerals and cremations in separate rooms of buildings intended for this purpose and in a cemetery as part of a funeral ceremony. This rule also applies to waiting areas. Funerals and cremations take place without the possibility of the body being exposed.

Several funerals and cremations can be organised simultaneously in the same building designated for this purpose, as long as they take place in separate areas.

The following minimum rules apply:

1. the operator or organiser must visibly inform those present and its employees in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide its staff with appropriate training;
2. a distance of 1.5 meters between each person must be ensured and one person per 10 m<sup>2</sup> is allowed;
3. it is mandatory to cover mouth and nose with a face mask and it is strongly recommended to wear other personal protective equipment;
4. the activity must be organised in such a way so as to avoid gatherings and to ensure that social distancing rules can be respected, in particular with regard to people waiting outside the establishment, in accordance with the directives issued by the competent authority;
5. the operator or organiser must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
6. the operator or organiser must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
7. the operator or organiser must ensure good ventilation;
8. physical contact between people is prohibited, except between members of the same household;
9. physical contact with objects by different people is prohibited.

Organising a light lunch or funeral reception after the ceremony is not permitted.

## 23. Is it allowed to organise a ceremony somewhere else (for example, outdoors)?

No. Ceremonies may only take place in buildings intended for this purpose, **with the exception of a cemetery as part of a funeral ceremony.**

## 24. Which rules apply to visiting a place of worship?

Places of worship may remain open for individual visitors but only a maximum of 15 people may be present in the building at any one time, excluding children under the age of 12 and the minister of religion. This maximum number applies regardless of the number of rooms in the building.

## 25. Are places of worship still allowed to be opened where they host a museum exhibition?

Places of worship are still allowed to be opened where they host the museum exhibition of a recognised museum or art gallery. The sector protocol rules for museums must always be followed.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **Federal:**

- FPS Mobility:
  - [https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/scheepvaart/covid\\_19\\_coronavirus](https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/scheepvaart/covid_19_coronavirus)
  - [https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/luchtvaart/drones/dronevluchten\\_covid19](https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/luchtvaart/drones/dronevluchten_covid19)

#### **Regional:**

- Flemish Region:
  - <https://www.natuurenbos.be/wildbeheer>
  - <https://ovam.be/corona-impact#inzameling>
- Flemish Community:
  - <https://www.vlaanderen.be/musea-in-vlaanderen-en-brussel>
- Walloon Region:
  - <http://mobilite.wallonie.be/news/mesures-de-lutte-contre-le-covid-19>
  - <https://www.wallonie.be/fr/peche-et-chasse>
  - <http://environnement.wallonie.be>
- Wallonia-Brussels Federation:
  - <http://www.culture.be>
- Brussels Region:
  - <https://mobilite-mobiliteit.brussels/fr>
  - <https://www.arp-gan.be/fr/Recypark.html>
- German-Speaking Community:
  - <https://www.ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-327/>
  - [http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/PortalData/2/Resources/downloads/gesundheit/corona\\_virus/2021-02-01-Protokoll\\_Sport\\_DG.pdf](http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/PortalData/2/Resources/downloads/gesundheit/corona_virus/2021-02-01-Protokoll_Sport_DG.pdf)

## INTERNATIONAL

### GENERAL

COVID-19 has seriously disrupted international travel. When travelling, you must therefore take the following into account:

- Is travelling permitted?
- What travel-related measures are in place (forms, quarantine, testing)?

### IS TRAVELLING PERMITTED?

Please note:

1. Residents of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, and the Holy See/Vatican City are to be considered EU residents for the purposes mentioned below.
2. For the purposes mentioned below, "carrier" means:
  - a public or private air carrier;
  - public or private maritime transport;
  - an inland waterway carrier;
  - a public or private train or bus operator for transport from a country outside the European Union and the Schengen area.

### Travelling to and from Belgium

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Non-essential travel to Belgium is currently forbidden for people whose primary residence is located in another country until **18 April 2021 included**. Non-essential travel abroad is **forbidden** for people whose primary residence is located in Belgium.

From 1 February 2021, the colour codes describing the epidemiological situation of the COVID-19 pandemic will be indicated on the [info-coronavirus.be](https://www.info-coronavirus.be) website. For countries within the European Union/European Economic Area, the colour codes are aligned with those of the *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control* (ECDC). Third countries are considered to be red zones, with the exception of the countries listed on the website: <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en> for which the travel restrictions have temporarily been lifted.

The Belgian approach for people arriving in Belgium depends on whether they are returning from a red, orange or green zone. Depending on the country or region you are travelling from, different measures apply after your arrive in Belgium.

- **Red zones** are regions or countries where individuals are at a high risk of infection.
- **Orange zones** are regions or countries for which a moderately elevated risk of infection has been identified.
- **Green zones are** regions or countries for which a low risk of infection has been identified.

Upon arrival in Belgium from orange or green zones, there are no quarantine conditions.

The zones and measures can be consulted on the map published [here](#). From a Belgian perspective, there are no specific measures associated with the colour for Belgium.

Entry into the country of destination depends on the conditions imposed by the destination country. Travel advice is subject to change. It is important, on the one hand, to consult the travel advice for each country on the FPS Foreign Affairs website **before departure** in order to know the situation and the measures to be taken in the country of destination and, on the other hand, to also consult it during the stay abroad in order to take note of any changes.

See: <https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en>

### **CATEGORIES OF ESSENTIAL TRAVEL**

**1. *I am a national of the EU or of a country that is part of the Schengen Area, or my primary residence is in the EU or in a country that is part of the Schengen Area, or my primary residence is in a third country included on this list. May I travel to or from Belgium?***

You may only travel to and from Belgium for the following trips which are considered to be essential and you must fill in and sign a sworn statement and carry it with you during the trip (see below):

1° travel for purely professional reasons, including travel by professional sportsmen and sportswomen with elite sport status, cultural sector professionals and journalists travelling for work;

2° travel undertaken by diplomats, ministers, Heads of State and Government; travel undertaken by staff of international organisations and institutions and by people invited by international organisations and institutions whose physical presence is required for the proper functioning of those organisations and institutions; travel undertaken by staff of diplomatic and consular posts and by people invited by these posts whose physical presence is required for the proper functioning of those posts; travel undertaken by members of the European Parliament when performing their duties.

3° travel for compelling family reasons, i.e.:

- travel justified by family reunification, as defined in the Law of 15 December 1980 on entry, stay, settlement and removal of foreign nationals;
- visits to a spouse or partner who does not live under the same roof, insofar as the stable and long-term character of the relationship can be proven; and to a 'cuddle' contact;
- travel in the context of co-parenting;
- travel in the context of funerals or cremations of first- and second-degree relatives or next of kin, insofar as plausible evidence can be provided of the stable and long-term character of the relationship with the next of kin;
- travel in the context of civil and religious marriages of first- and second-degree relatives or next of kin;

4° travel for humanitarian reasons, in particular:

- travel for medical reasons or to continue urgent medical treatment;
- travel to provide assistance or care to an elderly person, minor, disabled or vulnerable person;
- palliative care visits;

5° study-related travel, in particular travel by pupils, students and trainees who are undergoing training as part of their studies and researchers with a hosting agreement;

6° travel to neighbouring countries by residents of border municipalities and their adjacent neighbouring municipalities as part of their everyday activities that are also allowed and necessary in the country of their primary residence; travel to neighbouring countries by residents of border areas as part of their

everyday activities that are also allowed and necessary in the country of their primary residence, insofar as plausible evidence can be provided;

7° travel to take care of animals;

8° travel in the context of legal obligations, insofar as it is necessary and cannot be done online;

9° travel to have urgent repairs carried out in the context of vehicle safety;

10° travel in the context of moving house;

11° travel for transit purposes.

In the absence of this statement or in case of false, misleading or incomplete information, entry to the territory may be refused.

**2. I am not a national of the EU, nor of a country that is part of the Schengen Area, and my primary residence is in a third country not included here. May I travel to Belgium?**

You may only travel to or from Belgium for the following trips which are considered to be essential and you must carry an essential journey certificate or official document (see below):

1° health professionals, health researchers and professionals providing care for the elderly who are travelling for work;

2° frontier workers travelling for work;

3° seasonal agricultural and horticultural workers travelling for work;

4° transport personnel travelling for work;

5° diplomats, staff members of international organisations and people invited by international organisations and institutions whose physical presence is required for the proper functioning of those organisations and institutions, military personnel and personnel belonging to the forces of law and order, customs authorities, intelligence services and magistrates travelling for professional purposes, as well as humanitarian and civil protection staff, when performing their duties;

6° travel for transit purposes to destinations outside the Schengen Area and the European Union;

7° travel for compelling family reasons, i.e.:

- travel justified by family reunification, as defined in the Law of 15 December 1980 on entry, stay, settlement and removal of foreign nationals;
- visits to a spouse or partner who does not live under the same roof, insofar as the stable and long-term character of the relationship can be proven;
- travel in the context of co-parenting (including treatment related to medically assisted reproduction);
- travel in the context of funerals or cremations of first- and second-degree relatives;
- Travel in the context of civil and religious marriages of first- and second-degree relatives;

8° mariners travelling for work;

9° travel for humanitarian reasons (including travel for compelling medical reasons or to continue urgent medical treatment, but also in order to provide assistance or care to an elderly person, a minor, a disabled person or a vulnerable person);

10° study-related travel such as travel by pupils, students or trainees who are undergoing education or training as part of their studies, or study-related travel by researchers with a hosting agreement;

11° travel undertaken by qualified professionals for economically necessary reasons which cannot be postponed; including professional sportsmen and sportswomen with elite sport status, cultural sector professionals with a combined licence and journalists travelling for work. Travel by persons coming to Belgium to work in salaried employment, including young au pairs, irrespective of the duration of their activity, on condition that they have been authorised to do so by the competent Region (employment authorisation or evidence that the conditions for exemption have been fulfilled);

Travel by persons coming to Belgium to work as a self-employed person, irrespective of the duration of their activity, on condition that they have been authorised to do so by the competent Region (valid professional card or evidence that the conditions for exemption have been fulfilled).

In the absence of this essential journey certificate or in case the certificate contains false, misleading or incomplete information, and if the essential nature of the journey is not apparent from the official documents carried by the traveller, entry may be refused.

The **specific conditions**, described above in point 2, are in addition to the normal conditions of access to Belgium. It is, for instance, important to always take into account which **visa procedures** are in force for certain travellers. For passengers requiring a visa to come to Belgium, it should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic may have an impact on the visa application procedures in certain places and/or at certain times. Finally, passengers can only enter Belgium or the EU if they comply with **existing EU and national regulations**, which determine the conditions under which third-country nationals can enter the territory. This is independent of the specific restrictions or measures temporarily in place for public health reasons within the COVID-19 context.

For citizens **of countries not requiring a visa**, the following rules apply: the person must travel with an **essential journey certificate**. This certificate is issued by the competent Belgian embassy or consulate if it is proven that the journey is essential. An essential journey certificate is not mandatory if the essential nature of the journey is evidenced by the traveller's documents. For example: seamen (Seaman's Discharge Book), transit passengers (airline ticket) and diplomats (diplomatic passport), transport (consignment note). For more information about this procedure, please go to: <https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/NL/Gidsvandeprocedures/Pages/Internationale%20reizen.aspx>

Where a carrier is used, the carrier is obliged to check that passengers are carrying this certificate before boarding. In the absence of this certificate, the carrier is obliged to refuse boarding. Upon arrival on Belgian territory, the carrier must check again whether the traveller is carrying this certificate.

### 3. Can I travel to visit my partner?

Visiting a partner who does not live under the same roof is considered essential travel.

For travellers whose primary residence is in a third country not included on [this list](#) and who are not a national of the EU or of a country that is not part of the Schengen Area, the following conditions apply: the partner must have reached the age of majority (18 and older) and be single. The stable and long-term character of the relationship must be demonstrated when applying for a visa (nationalities requiring a visa) or for an essential journey certificate (nationalities not requiring a visa). The relationship must still exist at the time of travel.

The stable and long-term character of a relationship can be demonstrated as follows:

- the partners either provide evidence of having lived together for 6 months in Belgium or another country;
- or the partners provide evidence of having an intimate relationship of at least 1 year during which the partners have seen each other physically at least twice and for a minimum duration of 20 days. If a meeting had to be postponed due to COVID-19 measures, proof of the planned trip may be considered as a second visit;
- or the partners provide evidence of having a child together.

The partner abroad must apply for a visa or an essential journey certificate from the Belgian diplomatic or consular post (for nationalities not subject to a visa requirement). The post issues this visa or certificate if the essential nature of the journey is demonstrated and, in the case of a visa application, if all the conditions for entry into the Schengen Area are fulfilled. Travellers must be able to prove that these conditions are fulfilled when presenting themselves at the external borders of the Schengen Area.

## **WHAT MEASURES ARE IN PLACE FOR ESSENTIAL TRAVEL?**

### **1. *When do I need a sworn statement to travel?***

A sworn statement is mandatory for a person who is a national of the EU or of a country that is part of the Schengen Area, or whose primary residence is in the EU or in a country that is part of the Schengen Area or whose primary residence is in a third country included on [this list](#) (<https://reopen.europa.eu/en/>).

For these trips, travellers are obliged to fill in the digital or paper sworn statement, except in cases of force majeure. The form can be found on the [www.info-coronavirus.be](http://www.info-coronavirus.be) website and must be completed and signed prior to the trip. Travellers must carry this statement during their entire trip.

Where a carrier is used, the carrier is obliged to check that passengers have completed a sworn statement before boarding. In the absence of this statement, the carrier is obliged to refuse boarding. Upon arrival on Belgian territory, the carrier must check again whether the sworn statement has been completed.

In the absence of this sworn statement or in case of false, misleading or incomplete information, entry to the territory may be refused.

For transport sector staff or service providers of transport services (including drivers of freight vehicles used on the territory as well as drivers in transit), given that they are legally obliged to carry transport documents which already contain the information required by the sworn statement. They are therefore exempt from this sworn statement.

In addition to the legal documents required for an essential trip abroad (a Business Travel Abroad document), carriers travelling abroad with their family (spouse and/or children) as part of an essential trip (loading and unloading of goods), must also complete a sworn statement for all family members travelling with them (and who are not members of the crew).

### **What to do if the country of destination requests a negative COVID-19 test before entry into its territory?**

- You can ask for a coronavirus test. Laboratories or test centres have the possibility to refuse analysing the test in order to give priority to mandatory testing. These tests (on a voluntary basis) are not refundable.
- You can ask to be tested at Brussels Airport by registering in advance via <https://www.brusselsairport.be/en/passengers/the-impact-of-the-coronavirus/covid-19-test-centre-at-brussels-airport> and by clicking on "Register here for a test without activation code".

## **2. When should I have a negative test result to travel to Belgium?**

People who do not have their primary residence in Belgium must have a **negative test result from the age 6** upon arrival from a red zone. The test should be conducted at the earliest 72 hours before departure to Belgian territory.

- **Exceptions:**
  - People not travelling to Belgium via a carrier and who have been abroad for a maximum of 48 hours, or will remain in Belgium for a maximum of 48 hours, do not have to present a negative test result.
  - Travellers who only transit by air and who only enter the transit zone do not have to present a negative test result either. They must have a confirmed ticket for their connecting flight.  
Travellers must have a negative test result before arriving in Belgium if this is needed to travel on to the final destination. They cannot be tested in Belgium since the entry conditions have not been met.

In the event of an organised trip, the carrier is obliged to check that these passengers submit a negative test result before boarding the organised transport. In the absence of a negative test result, the carrier is obliged to refuse boarding.

In terms of the exception regarding transit and onward travel, airlines must verify that the person has confirmed airline tickets for immediate onward travel and that the person has a negative PCR test if required for the final destination.

Anyone not meeting these conditions remains under the responsibility of the airline who must then ensure the return of the passenger to the country of departure.

Presenting a negative test result does **not constitute an** exception to the mandatory completion of the PLF and any further consequences, i.e. quarantine and a mandatory test on day 7 after arrival in Belgium.

There is no exception for people who are unable to get tested in their country of origin if they are asymptomatic.

**Please note:**

The document confirming the negative test result must be immediately available for inspection on paper or in electronic form.

This document must be drawn up in Dutch, French, German, or English.

The document drawn up by the passenger for the carrier or for the attention of intermediaries must specify the following:

- A **negative** test result.
- The date the sample was collected must be clearly indicated: the document is valid for 72 hours from that date.
- Only **PCR tests for SARS CoV-2** with PCR approval are accepted.
- The analysis must have been carried out in an official laboratory in the traveller's country of origin and certified by a physician or pharmacist-biologist (equivalent to the NIHDI).

The test result must be checked before the carrier leaves the country of departure: if the document is not available, the passenger will not be admitted.

For people arriving in Belgium with their own vehicle, random checks may be carried out at the borders.

The following people do not need to present a negative test result when travelling to Belgium for business purposes:

- Transport workers or providers, including lorry drivers transporting goods for use within the territory and those merely in transit;
- Mariners, **tug crews, pilots and industrial staff working at the offshore wind farms**;
- “Border Force Officers” from the United Kingdom;
- Frontier workers (a frontier worker is defined as a worker employed in one Member State and residing in another Member State to which the worker returns daily or at least once a week);
- Border pupils who travel to Belgium in the context of compulsory education;
- People travelling to Belgium in the context of cross-border co-parenting.

### **3. When and how should I fill in a Passenger Locator Form (PLF)?**

**ALL travellers to Belgium**, regardless of the means of transport chosen, must complete the Passenger Locator Form no earlier than 48 hours before arriving in Belgium.

**Exceptions:**

- People not travelling to Belgium via a carrier and who have been abroad for a maximum of 48 hours, or will remain in Belgium for a maximum of 48 hours, do not have to fill in a PLF.
- The following categories of people not travelling via a carrier do not have to fill in a PLF:
  - Transport workers or providers, including lorry drivers transporting goods for use within the territory and those merely in transit;
  - Mariners, **tug crews, pilots and industrial staff working at the offshore wind farms**;
  - “Border Force Officers” from the United Kingdom;

- Frontier workers (a frontier worker is defined as a worker employed in one Member State and residing in another Member State to which the worker returns daily or at least once a week);
- Border pupils who travel to Belgium in the context of compulsory education;
- People travelling to Belgium in the context of cross-border co-parenting.

A separate form must be completed for each passenger aged 16 years and over. The details of children under the age of 16 must be filled in on the form of an accompanying adult, if this is the case. If children under the age of 16 are travelling alone, they must also fill in a form. It is mandatory to fill in the Passenger Locator Form completely and truthfully. Failure to complete this form may result in criminal prosecution, refusal of boarding by the carrier and refusal of entry into the territory.

The PLF should be completed **electronically** where possible. The form can be found at: <https://travel.info-coronavirus.be>

- After the passenger has submitted the form, he/she will receive a **receipt with a QR code** via e-mail. Where applicable, the passenger must show this to the carrier on departure and at the border check on arrival.
- The electronic form contains a mandatory Coronavirus Infection Risk Self-Assessment Questionnaire. Based on the result, a text message will be sent with the measures to be taken. For further information on the test procedure see below under "Test".

If it is not possible for the passenger to use the electronic *Passenger Locator Form (e-PLF)*, a **paper version** of the PLF can be used. The paper version of the PLF can be found at: [https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/FR/Documents/BELGIUM\\_PassengerLocatorForm.PDF](https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/FR/Documents/BELGIUM_PassengerLocatorForm.PDF) Travellers must download, complete and sign this document before arriving in Belgium. You must be able to hand over the original to the enforcement authorities each time an inspection is carried out.

- Passengers travelling from a country within the Schengen Area will have to show the PLF and hand it over to the carrier when boarding.
- Passengers travelling from a country outside the Schengen Area must hand in their PLF upon arrival at the border control.
- People not travelling by carrier should submit the PLF within 12 hours of their arrival in Belgium. This can be done via e-mail to [PLFBelgium@health.fgov.be](mailto:PLFBelgium@health.fgov.be) or by copying the data from the paper version into the electronic version of the *PLF*.

If the information entered on the form changes within 14 days of arrival, you must report this preferably by filling in a new e-PLF via <https://travel.info-coronavirus.be/> with the complete and updated details. If you are using the paper version, please e-mail the modified version to [PLFBelgium@health.fgov.be](mailto:PLFBelgium@health.fgov.be).

In the absence of this statement or in case of false, misleading or incomplete information, entry to the territory may be refused.

#### 4. What is the BTA form and who can use it?

The Consultative Committee of 30 December 2020, decided to make a distinction in the score of the self-assessment tool as from 4 January 2021 for foreign travel:

- For professional reasons to or from a red zone of at least 48 hours certified by the Belgian employer, Belgian client or by an international organisation or institution or by a diplomatic or consular mission on Belgian territory;
- For non-professional travel to or from a red zone of at least 48 hours.

The BTA form is available at: <https://bta.belgium.be/en>

For professional travel (of both residents and non-residents) an adjusted score applies on the basis of which it is decided whether or not quarantine is mandatory.

The professional travel system is based on three elements:

- The Business Travel Abroad (BTA) form which must be completed online by the Belgian employer, Belgian client or by an international organisation or institution or by a diplomatic or consular mission on Belgian territory prior to the departure of the employee concerned.
- The completed BTA form generates a certificate number which must be entered into the adapted Passenger Locator Form (PLF) to activate the professional travel section. Without this number, a trip cannot be considered professional.
- The Passenger Locator Form (PLF) is filled in by the traveller on his/her return to Belgium. The PLF includes a self-evaluation questionnaire allowing the government to make a risk analysis. On that basis, it will be decided whether or not to impose quarantine.

When it concerns travel to Belgium, the BTA form cannot be used by non-residents of Belgium for the purpose of temporary or permanent employment in our country (even if it were to concern essential sectors or critical functions). The BTA form can be used for limited business contacts related to a concrete project or file, with a maximum duration of 5 days.

For Belgian residents travelling abroad, it must concern business travel for files or projects requiring an intervention on site. No time limit is foreseen here.

For official travel: this includes the diplomatic and consular community, officials of international organisations and institutions in Belgium or official visitors (ministers, head of state, etc.).

The Business Travel Abroad (BTA) form must be completed by the Belgian employer, Belgian client or by an international organisation or institution or by a diplomatic or consular mission on Belgian territory where or by whose order the traveller is temporarily employed / on an official mission or visit. It may also be completed by officials belonging to an international organisation or institution, official visitors, travellers from the diplomatic and consular community. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the system is used correctly.

If a person travels for professional reasons, but does not have a valid certificate number according to the above-mentioned procedure, the professional travel section in the PLF cannot be activated. The trip therefore falls under the non-professional travel regulations, with mandatory quarantine.

This specific measure relating to business travel has no influence on the mandatory tests for residents and non-residents coming from a red zone in accordance with the current regulation.

## **5. Which travellers must quarantine?**

**Travellers (both residents and non-residents) returning from a red zone**, who have been abroad for more than 48 hours and who will stay in Belgium for more than 48 hours, are considered "high-risk contacts". This means that they **must quarantine**.

Strict exemptions are allowable in only a limited number of cases:

(1) For people with critical roles in essential sectors, working on site may be permitted, subject to a certificate from the employer or self-employed person (in accordance with the decision of the Interministerial Conference on Public Health of 2 December 2020);

(2) Students are allowed to interrupt quarantine in order to take an exam (only to take the exam);

The Passenger Locator Form takes professional travel into account certified by the employer when completing the self-assessment tool.

Children under the age of 6 should not be tested, but they must respect quarantine.

For people who are considered to be high-risk contacts, the quarantine period **starts** on the day they leave the red zone, provided that it is clearly and objectively specified on the PLF. If not, quarantine will commence as soon as the traveller arrives in Belgium, after a stay in a red zone, unless stipulated otherwise by the treating physician/decreet of the federated entities.

For members of the public who return from a red zone abroad, this implies a quarantine of at least 10 days, followed by 4 days of being extra vigilant.

Travellers returning from the United Kingdom, South Africa or South America for a stay of more than 48 hours must spend 10 days in quarantine.

- The specification of the applicable rules for each community/region can be found here:
  - Wallonia: [http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/decreet/2020/07/16/2020042369/staat\\_sblad](http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/decreet/2020/07/16/2020042369/staat_sblad)
  - Flanders: <http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi/api2.pl?lg=nl&pd=2020-07-13&numac=2020010414#top>
  - German-speaking Community: [http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi\\_loi/change\\_lg.pl?language=nl&la=N&cn=2020072014&table\\_name=wet](http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.pl?language=nl&la=N&cn=2020072014&table_name=wet)
  - Brussels-Capital: [http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi\\_loi/loi\\_a1.pl?language=nl&la=N&table\\_name=wet&cn=%202007071968&&caller=list&N&fromtab=wet&tri=dd+AS+RANK&rech=1&numero=1&sql=\(text+contains+\(%27%27\)\)#top](http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/loi_a1.pl?language=nl&la=N&table_name=wet&cn=%202007071968&&caller=list&N&fromtab=wet&tri=dd+AS+RANK&rech=1&numero=1&sql=(text+contains+(%27%27))#top)

The obligation to quarantine can be **temporarily lifted in order to fulfil an essential activity** if this activity cannot be postponed.

- For example: a foreign student must stay in quarantine for two weeks before starting his/her studies, a person travelling to a funeral can attend the funeral, however, he/she must stay in quarantine for the remainder of his/her stay.
- During these activities, social distancing and other protective measures must be respected at all times.
- For any other reasons not linked to the essential activity or essential travel, quarantine must be respected.

For short-stay travel (less than 48 hours) in Belgium or abroad, please tick the relevant box on the *Passenger Locator Form* and no text message will be sent. In this case, quarantine is not mandatory.

## 6. What does 'quarantine' mean?

**Quarantine** means staying indoors (including garden or terrace) in a single place, which must be specified in advance via the *Passenger Locator Form*. This can be a private address (with family or with friends), or another place to stay, such as a hotel. If the person falls ill, all members of the same household are close contacts.

During this period, **contact with other people, including people in the same house, must be completely avoided (always keep a distance of 1.5 m).**

- Towels, bed linen and eating or drinking utensils should not be shared with the other members of the same household and, if possible, the person should use a separate toilet and bathroom.
- Quarantine in an environment with people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 is not recommended (e.g. people older than 65, people with a serious underlying medical condition such as severe heart, lung or kidney disease, people with decreased immunity).
- No visits are allowed.
- Working and going to school is not allowed, with the exclusion of the exceptions mentioned below. Teleworking is permitted.
- For all journeys (from the time of arrival in Belgium) the use of public transport must be avoided.
- The health situation must be closely monitored. If symptoms of COVID-19 appear, the local GP must be contacted immediately. If symptoms of COVID-19 appear, you must self-isolate and contact your local GP immediately.
- It is mandatory to be reachable and cooperate with the health authorities throughout the quarantine period.
- **Going outside is only allowed** for the following essential activities, as long as particular attention is paid to social distancing and hygienic measures and a (fabric) face mask is worn:
  - Urgent medical attention;
  - Purchase of basic necessities, such as food and medicines, but only if no one else can provide them and by exception;
  - Settling urgent legal/financial issues;

### Quarantine versus isolation: the difference

If you are required to **self-isolate**, it is for a **minimum period of 10 days**. That's what happens when you're ill or have tested positive.

The obligation of self-isolation is waived when the following 3 conditions are met:

- not earlier than 10 days after the onset of symptoms and
- at least 3 days without a temperature and
- an improvement of respiratory symptoms.
- Additional measures to be taken in case of self-isolation:
  - Wear a face mask at home to protect your housemates
  - Stay as much as possible in a well-ventilated separate room to control the spread of the virus
  - Ask others for help with your shopping
  - You do not have to wait to be contacted by the call centre for contact tracing, instead you can contact them yourself.

People who display symptoms of coronavirus must self-isolate for 10 days.

## 7. Which travellers should get tested in Belgium?

**Residents returning from a red zone after a stay of more than 48 hours must undergo a mandatory test on day 1 and day 7 of quarantine. Non-residents arriving from a red zone after a stay of more than 48 hours must undergo a mandatory test on day 7 of quarantine.**

**Exceptions:**

- People not travelling to Belgium via a carrier and who have been abroad for a maximum of 48 hours, or will remain in Belgium for a maximum of 48 hours, do not have to fill in a PLF and therefore do not have to get tested.
- The following categories of people not travelling via a carrier do not have to fill in a PLF and, therefore, do not have to get tested:
  - Transport workers or providers, including lorry drivers transporting goods for use within the territory and those merely in transit;
  - Mariners, **tug crews, pilots and industrial staff working at the offshore wind farms**;
  - “Border Force Officers” from the United Kingdom;
  - Frontier workers (a frontier worker is defined as a worker employed in one Member State and residing in another Member State to which the worker returns daily or at least once a week);
  - Border pupils who travel to Belgium in the context of compulsory education;
  - People travelling to Belgium in the context of cross-border co-parenting.

They will receive a text message upon their return with which they can register at a test centre where the sampling for a PCR test will be done. To this end, Belgian residents with a valid National Register Number or BIS number can make an appointment via the appointment tool which can be found at [mijngezondheid.belgie.be](https://mijngezondheid.belgie.be).

- If the test is positive, the high-risk contact will be placed in isolation for at least 7 days from the day the test was taken.
- If a resident tests negative on day 1, they will receive a new invitation via text message on day 5 in order to be tested again on day 7. Despite the negative test on day 1, quarantine must be respected.
- If the test is negative on day 7, the high-risk contact can come out of quarantine, but we stress the importance of being extra vigilant up to a total of 14 days from the day of the last high-risk contact (taking into account applicable exceptions for care workers).

Children under the age of 6 should not be tested, but they must respect quarantine.

If no test is taken (e.g. child under 6 years of age), or if the test result is not available in time, asymptomatic high-risk contacts can come out of quarantine after 10 days, commencing the day of the last high-risk contact. This quarantine must then be followed by a period of 4 days of being extra vigilant.

Travellers arriving from the United Kingdom, South Africa or South America for a stay of more than 48 hours must get tested on day 1 and day 7 of quarantine

**Possible exemptions from testing and quarantine upon arrival in Belgium**

Despite the fact that in certain circumstances it is possible to obtain an exemption from quarantine or testing, the intention should always be to respect the general rules on testing and quarantine as much as possible.

**a. In a limited number of cases, there are quarantine exemptions. In this event, does this also imply an exemption from testing (days 1 and 7)?**

An exemption from quarantine does not mean you do not need to take a test. In other words, these individuals should still get tested on day 1 and day 7.

**b.(1). Guidelines for frontier workers returning after a working day / working week:**

- from abroad to Belgium
- from Belgium abroad

**b.(2). Should people undertaking towing services who work abroad for more than 48 hours and then return home for a week quarantine every time they come to Belgium?**

**b.(3). What are the current rules for Belgian cross-border workers who stay from Monday to Friday (i.e. > 48 hours) in a neighbouring country on a regular basis?**

The people described in this question (b(1), b(2), b(3)) do not have to quarantine nor do they have to undergo testing.

They must, however, strictly comply with the measures both in Belgium and in neighbouring countries. Both employers and employees need to be made more aware in order that tests can be conducted as soon as symptoms appear. Whilst waiting for the results, the individuals concerned must self-isolate.

**c. Guidelines for health professionals, health researchers and professionals providing care for the elderly?**

The current measures are applicable (no additional exemptions).

Health professionals can only be exempt from quarantine if there is a continuity problem due to their absence.

**d. Guidelines for seasonal agricultural workers and seconded workers**

The current measures are applicable (no additional exemptions).

They can only be exempt from quarantine if they are a key worker in an essential sector.

**e. Guidelines for transport staff including crew/pilots/load masters/etc. of aircraft, shipping (ocean shipping and inland navigation), trains, lorries, buses, etc.**

These people do not have to quarantine nor do they have to undergo testing.

They must, however, strictly comply with the measures in force both in Belgium and in neighbouring countries. Both employers and employees need to be made more aware in order that tests can be conducted as soon as symptoms appear. Whilst waiting for the results, the individuals concerned must self-isolate.

**f. Guidelines for heads of state and government leaders, diplomatic and consular staff, staff of international organisations and institutions and people invited by missions, international organisations and institutions whose physical presence is required, business travel of military staff, Civil Protection staff, and humanitarian staff**

The current measures are applicable (no additional exemptions).

*They can only be exempt from quarantine in the case of business travel or if they are a critical worker.*

[https://covid-19.sciensano.be/sites/default/files/Covid19/COVID-19\\_FAQ\\_travel\\_NL.pdf](https://covid-19.sciensano.be/sites/default/files/Covid19/COVID-19_FAQ_travel_NL.pdf)  
[https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl/Diensten/Naar\\_Belgie\\_komen](https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl/Diensten/Naar_Belgie_komen)

**g. Guidelines for qualified professionals travelling for economically necessary reasons which cannot be postponed; including professional sportsmen and sportswomen with elite sport status, cultural sector professionals and journalists travelling for work?**

The current measures are applicable (no additional exemptions).

*They can only be exempt from quarantine in the case of business travel or if they are a critical worker.*  
[https://covid-19.sciensano.be/sites/default/files/Covid19/COVID-19\\_FAQ\\_travel\\_NL.pdf](https://covid-19.sciensano.be/sites/default/files/Covid19/COVID-19_FAQ_travel_NL.pdf)  
[https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl/Diensten/Naar\\_Belgie\\_komen](https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl/Diensten/Naar_Belgie_komen)

**h. Family: Guidelines for people travelling for compelling family reasons, i.e.:**

**(1). travel justified by family reunification**

**(2). travel in the context of co-parenting (e.g. cross-border co-parenting in a week-to-week arrangement and treatment related to medically assisted reproduction)**

**(3). travel in the context of funerals or cremations**

The current measures are applicable (no additional exemptions), except for the question relating to co-parenting.

h.(2). People travelling in the context of co-parenting (e.g. cross-border) do not need to quarantine or undergo test(s).

They must, however, strictly comply with the measures in force both in Belgium and in neighbouring countries. They must also be made aware of the importance of testing in case of symptoms, in which event they should self-isolate whilst waiting for the results.

**i. Guidelines in the context of education:**

• **Foreign pupils at boarding school: pupils who attend boarding school in Belgium during the week and go home at the weekend (the Netherlands, France, Germany, etc.)**

• **Border traffic: pupils, course participants and students who live abroad but follow lessons in Belgium and therefore commute.**

These people do not have to quarantine nor do they have to undergo testing.

They must, however, strictly comply with the measures both in Belgium and in neighbouring countries. They must also be made aware of the importance of testing in case of symptoms, in which event they should self-isolate whilst waiting for the results.

This advice relates to regular travel. Students who travel exceptionally, such as foreign students and students who are living in student accommodation in our country, are advised to return in time so that the quarantine period is over before the exams start. Where this is not possible, 'taking an examination' shall be considered an authorised essential journey, provided that the period before and after is spent in quarantine.

**j. Mobility**

**(1). Transport of goods and people: is there a mandatory test for foreign carriers, PLF/quarantine for stays longer than 48 hours?**

**(2). Application of quarantine rules by barge skippers.**

j.(1). These people do not have to quarantine nor do they have to undergo testing.

They must, however, strictly comply with the measures both in Belgium and in neighbouring countries. They must also be made aware of the importance of testing in case of symptoms, in which event they should self-isolate whilst waiting for the results.

Maintaining the 48-hour rule is essential to ensure the smooth transport of goods and people to and from Belgian territory. Where filling in the PLF is necessary (e.g. because the transport is by air, sea or inland waterway), an exemption from quarantine for the carriers (based on the PLF) remains possible. After all, these are 'business trips'.

j.(2). Barge skippers can spend quarantine on their vessel and continue to sail during quarantine providing they are in the same situation as the entire crew (e.g. family). As they are 'critical workers' in the transport sector which is considered essential, they can also unload their vessel once if the products involved are perishable or indispensable - provided that the necessary precautions are taken. Reloading is not allowed.

#### **k. Sports**

**The impact of the current quarantine rules, with the exception of professional travel, does not provide a solution for many elite athletes. Due to the nature of their sports activity (because of team travel or contact with opponents), their PLF score will be too high and, as a result, they will have to quarantine after all. This poses a problem for both Belgian athletes going abroad for a competition and foreign athletes coming to Belgium for a competition (specifically the Cyclocross World Championships at the end of January).**

Professional athletes are exempt from quarantine in Belgium for their sporting activities, regardless of their PLF score. The activities for which they can come out of quarantine must be very strictly organised: training according to the strict rules of high-level sports and competition according to the various protocols imposed by the communities and/or international federations.

#### **l. Culture: What are the guidelines for international artists?**

The current measures are applicable (no additional exemptions).

#### **m. Humanitarian reasons**

- **Guidelines for people travelling for humanitarian reasons; This includes travel for compelling medical reasons or to continue urgent medical treatment as well as to provide assistance or care to an elderly, minor, disabled or vulnerable person;**

The current measures are applicable (no additional exemptions).

The obligation to quarantine can be temporarily lifted in order to fulfil an essential activity but only if this activity cannot be postponed. This also includes urgent medical assistance or support.

#### **8. What happens if the travel advice is ignored? What about travel insurance if these people fall ill while travelling?**

The general terms and conditions of a specific travel insurance policy determine the cases in which the travel insurance intervenes. If you ignore the advice not to travel and fall ill at your holiday destination, the general terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy will stipulate whether there will be cover for medical and/or repatriation costs. In the majority of the cases, there will be no cover. With regard to hospitalisation insurance, the general terms and conditions will also specify the conditions under which the hospitalisation insurer intervenes abroad.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Info Coronavirus**

[Home | Coronavirus COVID-19 \(info-coronavirus.be\)](#)

### **FPS Foreign Affairs:**

<https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl>

### **FPS Mobility:**

- [https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/luchtvaart/covid\\_19\\_coronavirus](https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/luchtvaart/covid_19_coronavirus)
- [https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/wegverkeer/covid\\_19\\_coronavirus](https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/wegverkeer/covid_19_coronavirus)
- [https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/scheepvaart/covid\\_19\\_coronavirus](https://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/scheepvaart/covid_19_coronavirus)

For more information, please go to: <https://coronalert.be/en/faq/>