

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document is applicable from 30 December 2021.

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

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## GENERAL

The Consultative Committee of 22 December 2021 has confirmed that the number of daily infections has fallen, along with a slight decrease in the pressure on care. Nonetheless, the number of staff deployed in intensive care remains high. Belgium, like other countries, is confronted with a new reality: the rapid spread of the new Omicron variant, which is already responsible for 27% of infections in Belgium. Given both the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant and uncertainties surrounding it, extreme caution is advised. In order to slow down the spread of the Omicron variant, minimise the impact on hospitals and not jeopardise the reopening of schools after the Christmas holidays, the Consultative Committee has decided to maintain the current measures and adopt a range of additional protective measures. These stricter measures include stricter rules for outdoor events, the closure (with a few exceptions) of indoor spaces in the festive **or** recreational **sectors** and of certain specific establishments, as well as stricter rules for shopping. **Since 30 December 2021, establishments belonging to the cultural or event sector have reopened to the public, and events and cultural performances can once again take place in these venues under certain conditions.**

The risk assessments by the relevant advisory bodies and the Minister of Public Health have shown that the criteria provided for in the Pandemic Law to qualify as an "epidemic emergency" have been met. On 29 October 2021, the epidemic emergency was declared by Royal Decree, and the measures were also included in a Royal Decree implementing the Pandemic Law.

Respecting the basic principles remains central.

- the hygiene measures (e.g. washing hands, coughing and sneezing hygiene) remain essential;
- outdoor activities should be prioritised wherever possible. Where necessary, indoor areas must be adequately ventilated;
- additional precautions must be taken for people belonging to a high-risk group.
- the safety distance of 1.5 m is recommended, except for the exceptions expressly provided for in the Royal Decree. People who are unable to respect social distancing are strongly advised to wear a face mask.
- it is strongly recommended to limit social contacts.

It is also advisable to remain cautious in terms of social contacts by applying the 'ten tips' as much as possible:

- Get vaccinated
- Wear a face mask
- Wash your hands regularly
- Do you feel ill or do you have symptoms? Stay home and contact your GP
- Test yourself
- Go outside
- Limit social contacts: a group of five is safer than a group of fifty
- Ventilate indoor areas
- Maintain a safe distance.
- Keep it safe while travelling, too.

### 1. What does the declaration of the epidemic emergency mean for local authorities?

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By means of a ministerial circular, it is explained how stricter measures can be taken at local level in the context of the Pandemic Law.

The Mayor is responsible for verbal and visual communication of the specific measures taken on the territory of his/her 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.

**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 for by the Royal Decree), sanctions are possible on the basis of Article 6 of the Law of 14 August 2021 on administrative police measures during an epidemic emergency.

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 Royal Decree are not applicable.

Nevertheless, the Minister of the Interior can, after reasoned advice from the competent ministers, the local authorities concerned and the Federal Minister of Health, grant permission to deviate from the rules of the Royal Decree during pilot projects.

The pilot projects are organised in accordance with the protocol defined by the competent ministers and the Federal Minister of Public Health. The protocol contains a framework, timeline and roadmap for the organisation of these pilot projects, both indoors and outdoors, in accordance with the agreements made during the Consultative Committee on the subject.

## ECONOMY

In order to minimise the number of infections at work and reduce the number of people on public transport during rush hour, teleworking will once again become compulsory. However, in order to enable employees to maintain a connection with their working environment and to safeguard, as far as possible, business continuity and competitiveness, employers may schedule a limited number of return visits to the office.

### WORK

The general principles are as follows:

- Teleworking is mandatory in all companies, associations and services for all staff, regardless of the nature of their employment relationship, 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. Teleworking is performed in accordance with the existing collective labour agreements.
- Employers must provide staff members who are unable to work from home, regardless of the nature of their employment relationship, with a certificate or any other evidence confirming the need for their presence at the workplace.
- Each month, employers must register the total number of employees in the company per business 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.
- The declaration for the period from 22 November 2021 to 31 December 2021 relates to the situation on the third working day following the entry into force of the Royal Decree of 19 November 2021 and must be submitted by 30 November 2021 at the latest. The following declarations relate to the situation on the first working day of the month and must be submitted by the sixth calendar day of the month at the latest. If the total number of people employed in the business unit and the number of people performing a function which cannot be performed remotely has not changed since the last valid declaration, the employer is not required to make a new declaration. The obligation to register does not apply to:
  - SMEs employing less than five people, regardless of the nature of their employment relationship;
  - establishments referred to in Article 2, 1° of the Cooperation Agreement of 16 February 2016 between the Federal Government, the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region and the Brussels-Capital Region concerning the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances, approved by the Law of 1 April 2016;
  - health care employers as referred to in Article 40 of the Law of 20 December 2020 on temporary support measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - all educational institutions for both the staff paid by the organising authorities themselves and declared to the NSSO and the staff paid via a Community Ministry and declared to the NSSO. This exception does not apply to universities, private schools and other training institutions which pay the salaries of all staff themselves;
  - The police services as referred to in Article 2, 2° of the Act of 7 December 1998 organising integrated police services as a two-level structure;
  - The operational services of civil security referred to in Article 2, 1° of the Law of 15 May 2007 on Civil Security;
  - The penal institutions, the judiciary and the intelligence services.

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- Companies, associations and services may organise voluntary return days for their staff who are obliged to telework, regardless of the nature of their employment relationship, subject to compliance with the preventative measures (see below) and the following conditions:
  - a mutual agreement between these companies, associations and services and their employees ensuring that they cannot be obliged to participate in the return days;
  - the aim must be to promote the psychosocial well-being and team spirit of the employees;
  - the employees must receive prior instructions on all measures required to ensure a safe return;
  - the employees must be informed that under no circumstances should they return to work if they feel ill or show symptoms of disease or are quarantining;
  - employers may not attach any consequence to this for their employees;
  - travelling to and from work during peak hours by public transport or carpooling should be avoided as much as possible;
  - the decision to organise return days must be made in accordance with the rules of the social dialogue in the company, whereby all conditions must be verified.
  
- With regard to return days to the office,
  - these may not exceed one day per week per person;
  - a maximum of 20% of the employees who are obliged to telework may be present at the unit of establishment at the same time;
  - for SMEs with less than ten employees, no more than five employees who are obliged to telework may be present in the business unit at the same time.
  
- Companies, associations and services shall take appropriate and timely preventive measures in order to guarantee the rules of social distancing as much as possible and to provide a maximum level of protection. If social distancing at work is not possible, it is strongly recommended to wear a face mask.
- These appropriate preventive measures are health and safety regulations of a material, technical and/or organisational nature, as provided for in the "Generic guide to counter the spread of COVID-19 at work", which is available on the website of the Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue ([https://werk.belgie.be/sites/default/files/content/news/Generiekegids\\_light.pdf](https://werk.belgie.be/sites/default/files/content/news/Generiekegids_light.pdf)), supplemented by guidelines at sectoral and/or company level, and/or other appropriate measures providing at least an equivalent level of protection. Collective measures always take precedence over individual measures.
- These appropriate preventive measures are drawn up at the level of the company, association or service, in compliance with the applicable rules of Social Dialogue and in consultation with the department for prevention and protection at work.
- The company, association or service must inform its employees in good time regarding the preventive measures in force and provide them with appropriate training. They must also inform third parties in good time of the preventive measures in place.
- Employers, employees and third parties are obliged to adhere to the preventive measures in force in the company, association or service.
- Wearing a face mask is mandatory in the publicly accessible areas of companies, associations, services and government buildings.

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Companies, associations and services may not organise indoor and outdoor in-person team-building activities in the workplace, nor company events not open to the public.

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.

Any obligations with regards to temporary work of employees and self-employed people not residing in Belgium are governed by the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021 concerning the processing of data relating to the EU-COVID digital certificate, the COVID Safe Ticket, the PLF and the processing of personal data of employees and self-employed people residing or staying abroad and performing activities in Belgium (Title IX, Art. 28 - 30).

## **1. Are corporate events and company parties still allowed to take place?**

If the event or party is open to the public, the rules applicable to public events will apply.

However, companies, associations and services may not organise indoor and outdoor in-person team-building activities in the workplace, nor company events not open to the public (e.g. a Christmas party for employees and partners).

Professional gatherings that are necessary for the continuity of business operations, activities or services (e.g. meetings and training courses) are permitted and must be organised in accordance with the rules that apply to the workplace, including the obligation to work from home and to organise return days to the office in such a way that only a limited number of staff members are present at the same time. In the workplace, the safety measures specified in the "Generic guide to counter the spread of COVID-19 at work" apply.

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

Companies and associations offering goods or services to customers 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, companies and associations offering goods or services to customers must comply with the general minimum rules set out in the Royal Decree:

1. the company or association must visibly inform its customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force;
2. the company or association must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
3. the company or association must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
4. the company or association must ensure good ventilation;
5. public areas, including terraces in public areas, are organised in accordance with the regulations laid down by the local authorities;
6. the company or association must take the appropriate measures in order that the social distancing rules are respected, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5 m between each group;
7. a maximum of one customer is allowed per 10 m<sup>2</sup> of accessible space to the public;
8. if the accessible floor space is less than 20 m<sup>2</sup>, either two customers are allowed simultaneously provided that a distance of 1.5 metres between each person is guaranteed, or a group of customers are allowed;
9. 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;
10. the activity must be organised in such a way that the social distancing rules can be respected, also with regard to people waiting outside the establishment.

Consumers can be received in groups of no more than two, not including children up to the age of 12 and supervisors of people in need of an escort. Groups of more than two people are allowed as long as they belong to the same household.

The rules described under points 7 and 8 do not apply to photography studios.

Companies must 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.

**Shops and shopping centres**

Wearing a face mask is mandatory in shops and shopping centres from the age of 6.

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The following conditions apply to receiving visitors in shopping centres:

- the minimum rules described above;
- a maximum of one visitor is allowed per 10 m<sup>2</sup> of accessible floor space to the public;
- shopping centres must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand-hygiene facilities at entrances and exits;
- shopping centres must use signs and floor markings to help shoppers maintain 1.5 metres physical distance;
- adequate access control must be provided. For more information, please refer to the question relating to access controls.

Visitors can be received in groups of no more than two, not including children up to the age of 12 and supervisors of people in need of an escort. Groups of more than two people are allowed as long as they belong to the same household.

Night shops must close between 11pm and 5am.

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.

Petrol stations with convenience stores are not considered to be night shops and therefore do not have to close between 11pm and 5am. However, catering establishments must close between 11pm and 5am (including takeaways), in accordance with the rules which apply to professional catering activities.

## **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. This includes monitoring whether the number of permitted customers is not exceeded, face masks are worn and social distancing is 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.

### **Trade Fairs and Exhibitions**

Trade fairs and exhibitions remain allowed. They must adhere to the minimum rules as described above and must respect the applicable protocol. Organisers must take the appropriate measures in order that the social distancing rules are respected, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5 m between each person.

If access is organised using the Covid Safe Ticket (CST), in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021, the above-mentioned rule does not apply.

Wearing a face mask is, in any case, compulsory.

### **Close-contact professions**

Wearing a face mask remains mandatory for both service providers and customers in establishments and places where close-contact professions are carried out, i.e. where there is direct physical contact between the service provider and the customer or where the distance of 1.5 metres cannot be guaranteed between the service provider and the customer for a duration of at least 15 minutes. This includes both medical and non-medical close-contact professions, for example, hairdressers, barbers, beauticians, tattooists and sex workers.

### **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.

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

There are no longer restrictions on the sale of alcoholic beverages.

### **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.

### **ITINERANT ACTIVITIES**

Markets, including year markets, bric-a-brac and flea markets and funfairs, whether they are organised by professionals or not, can only take place with prior permission from the competent municipal authority.

The necessary measures must be taken at all markets and fairs 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 group of visitors. 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.

Each market and fair must comply with the following conditions:

1. market and fairground vendors must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
2. market and fairground vendors may only offer food or drinks in compliance with the catering regulations;
3. when the number of visitors at markets, year markets, bric-a-brac and flea markets and funfairs exceeds 5,000 people at any one time, a one-way traffic system must be put in place with separate entrances and exits;
4. operators must ensure that all individuals respect the applicable social distancing measures in the attraction;

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5. the applicable rules regarding sanitary measures, such as disinfecting hands before entering the attraction and social distancing must be clearly signposted at the stand or attraction.

Visitors can be received in groups of no more than two, not including children up to the age of 12 and supervisors of people in need of an escort. Groups of more than two people are allowed as long as they belong to the same household.

Markets or fairs can also be organised as mass events by means of the Covid Safe Ticket (CST). In this case, the conditions applicable to mass events apply, and not the above-mentioned specific rules regarding markets and fairs.

These rules do not apply to Christmas markets and winter villages. These are considered to be events and must respect the rules applicable to events.

### **HOSPITALITY SECTOR**

Professional caterers must comply with the following minimum rules, notwithstanding the applicable protocols:

- these activities are prohibited between 11pm and 5am, except for private wedding and funeral gatherings;
- takeaway meals and drinks cannot be sold or delivered between 11pm and 5am;
- a maximum of six people per table is allowed, children up to the age of 12 not included. People living under the same roof can share a table, regardless of how many. Several parties of a maximum of six people can sit at the bar, depending on its length, and the social distancing rules between different parties must be respected;
- only table and bar seating is allowed;
- each person must remain at their own table or at the bar, except to go to the buffet or bar;
- operators must visibly inform their customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force;
- operators must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
- operators must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
- the operator must ensure good ventilation;
- public areas, including terraces in public areas, are organised in accordance with the regulations laid down by the local authorities;
- wearing a face mask is mandatory for both staff and customers who are not seated at a table or at the bar.

The above rules also apply to professional catering activities at permitted private gatherings and events.

In the case of home catering services, the above-mentioned rules do not apply, with the exception of the restriction on opening hours. For private wedding or funeral gatherings at home, however, there is no restriction on opening hours either.

The use of an air quality meter (CO<sub>2</sub>) is mandatory in indoor areas of food and drinking establishments belonging to the hospitality sector, including in dance pubs. This meter must be installed in a place clearly visible to visitors, unless a publicly accessible alternative display system is provided in real time. At least one air quality meter must be present in every single room where food and drinks are prepared and served, as well as in smoking rooms. The indoor air quality guideline is 900 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>. If the value of

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900 ppm is exceeded, the operator must have an action plan, based on a risk analysis, to ensure compensatory measures for ventilation and/or air disinfection and/or air filtration, which guarantee adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm. If the value of 1200 ppm is exceeded, the operator is advised to also provide an approved air disinfection and/or air filtration system that ensures adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm.

Access to catering establishments must be organised in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021 concerning the Covid Safe Ticket on the basis of the Decree or Ordinance that has been adopted in this respect.

For more details, the hospitality protocols are available at [info-coronavirus.be](https://info-coronavirus.be):

- [measures for the hospitality sector](#)
- In addition, the collective use of hookahs remains prohibited in places accessible to the public. Individual use with an individual mouth piece is permitted.

#### **4. Are buffets allowed?**

Yes, buffets are allowed. Customers must wear a face mask when they are going to the buffet. In the case of a self-service buffet, particular attention must be paid to hand hygiene (customers must disinfect their hands before serving themselves). Customers are recommended to keep their distance when queuing at the buffet. The same logic applies when customers go to (beverage) vending machines, refrigerators, etc.

#### **5. Are pop-up terraces and winter bars allowed?**

Provided that they have permission from the municipality and are in compliance with the catering measures, they may be organised in public spaces.

#### **6. Are sports (billiards, snooker, darts, etc.) allowed in a catering establishment?**

Pub games and gambling are not allowed in catering establishments.

#### **7. What rules apply to company restaurants?**

The above-mentioned minimum hospitality rules also apply to company restaurants. Food and lunch breaks in companies are explicitly addressed in the Generic Guide (p. 37).

### **ANIMAL CARE**

Businesses or associations offering grooming services (veterinary care and comfort care) and animal shelters may offer their services, subject to compliance with the above-mentioned minimum rules and any protocols that apply. The provision of services at home is allowed.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **Federal:**

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

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- <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-een-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>  
measures for the catering industry:
- <https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/ondernemingen/coronavirus/toegelaten-economische/coronavirus-tips-voor-de>
- [Outdoor Protocol for the Hospitality Industry: 20210512\\_Safe+in+the+horeca\\_Buitenprotocol\\_NL+\(PC\).pdf](#) (health-rack.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com)
- 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-Capital 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"?

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 not accepted as an alternative to face masks.

#### 2. What are the measures in terms of social distancing and wearing face masks in public places?

People are no longer required to follow the social distancing rules in the following cases:

- people living under the same roof;
- children mixing up to the age of 5;
- people belonging to the same group;
- people meeting each other at home;
- between counsellors and their clients (people in need of counselling).
- during private gatherings;
- during civil marriages;
- during funerals;
- during congregational worship and the collective practice of non-denominational moral services and of activities within a philosophical association;
- during individual worship and the individual practice of non-denominational moral services and of activities within a philosophical association;
- when individually or collectively visiting places of worship or buildings intended for non-denominational moral services;
- if this is impossible due to the nature of the activity;
- if access is organised using the Covid Safe Ticket (CST), in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021, including mass events.

Everyone from the age of 6 is strongly advised to cover their mouth and nose with a face mask in all situations where it is impossible to ensure compliance with the rules of social distancing (unless stated otherwise). The use of FFP2 face masks is recommended for the protection of vulnerable persons.

In certain places, however, wearing a face mask remains mandatory:

1. on public transport from entering the indoor areas of 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 operators and all bus operators carrying out public transport services 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;
2. in the indoor areas of organised collective transport (i.e. transport organised in advance with a clear itinerary or final destination and a vehicle with at least 9+1 seats (passengers + driver)), this does not apply to public transport operators, insofar as the driver is well-isolated in a cabin

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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;

3. in establishments and places where close-contact professions are carried out. This applies to service providers and customers where there is direct physical contact between the service provider and the customer or where the distance of 1.5 metres cannot be guaranteed between the service provider and the customer for a duration of at least 15 minutes;
4. the publicly accessible areas of companies, associations and services;
5. the publicly accessible areas of commercial establishments, shops and shopping centres;
6. libraries, game and multimedia libraries;
7. the indoor areas accessible to the public of establishments belonging to the sports sector, including fitness centres and establishments that may remain open in accordance with Article 7, §1 of the Royal Decree, subject to items 11 and 12 below;
8. in places of worship and buildings intended for the public practice of non-denominational moral services;
9. 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;
10. the publicly accessible areas of government buildings;
11. establishments and places where catering activities are permitted, both for staff and those customers who are not seated at a table or at the bar;
12. locations where authorised private gatherings and activities in an organised context take place with more than 50 people indoors or 100 people outdoors;
13. venues for events of any size, including mass events, **authorised outdoor conferences** and authorised sports competitions;
14. trade fairs, including exhibitions;
15. other locations where access is organised in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021 with regard to the CST;
16. the indoor areas of schools and educational institutions;
17. the indoor areas of the after-school care facilities for primary school children.

The face mask requirement stated in points 16 and 17:

- does not apply to children 6 years and older who have not yet started primary education;
- does apply to children younger than 6 years old who have already started primary education;
- does not apply under the specific conditions set by the communities.

Questions concerning the face mask obligation in schools should be addressed to the communities.

Face masks may be removed occasionally whilst eating and drinking, and when it is impossible to wear one due to the nature of the activity.

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

People who are unable to wear a face mask 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 basic principles for individual behaviour**:

- limit your social contacts;
- respect hygiene measures;
- choose outdoor activities where possible;

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- be considerate to vulnerable people;
- keep 1.5 metres distance.

For more information about fabric face masks, please visit:

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

### 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 and isolation rules should be followed?

The rules regarding **quarantine** can be found [on the Sciensano website](#).

The rules regarding **isolation** can be found [on the Sciensano website](#).

## **USE OF TELECOMS DATA**

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

No, the government only has access to anonymous data, and carries out analyses that help in the fight against 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 coronavirus 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.

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 activities requiring physical presence and aimed at people with specific care and support needs allowed?**

Yes, professional activities requiring physical presence, aimed at people with specific care and support needs are allowed, both indoors and out, as long as they are organised by accredited bodies within primary health care, preventive health care, mental health care, elderly care and home care.

It concerns, for example, (family) therapy sessions with all members of the household, group therapy sessions, supervised self-help group activities, group prenatal care and group stop smoking sessions.

**17. 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:

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

Walloon 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)

## 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.jac.be](http://www.jac.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. When you need someone to talk to: 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 : 080/650065

### 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/detail/categories/maltraitance/">https://www.one.be/public/detail/categories/maltraitance/</a>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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**Federal:**

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

**Flemish Community:**

- <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)

**Wallonia-Brussels Federation:**

- <https://www.ecouteviolencesconjugales.be/>
- <http://www.asblpraxis.be/>
- <https://www.one.be/public/1-3ans/maltraitance/equipe-sos-enfants/>
- <https://www.one.be/public/coronavirus/>

## EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

### CHILDREN AND CHILDCARE

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

These establishments are 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>

It is important to note that everyone, from the age of 6, is obliged to cover their mouth and nose with a face mask in the following places:

- the indoor areas of schools and educational institutions;
- the indoor areas of the after-school care facilities for primary school children.

This obligation:

- does not apply to children 6 years and older who have not yet started primary education;
- does apply to children younger than 6 years old who have already started primary education;
- does not apply under the specific conditions set by the communities.

Face masks may be removed occasionally whilst eating and drinking, and when it is impossible to wear one due to the nature of the activity.

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

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

Questions concerning the face mask obligation in schools should be addressed to the communities.

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

The rules regarding **quarantine** can be found [on the Sciensano website](#).

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The rules regarding **isolation** can be found on the Sciensano website.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Childcare:**

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

### **Education:**

- Flemish Community:
  - <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/nl/coronavirus>
  - <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-voor-ouders>
  - <https://examencommissiesecundaironderwijs.be/>
  - <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-richtlijnen-voor-scholen-en-clbs>
  - HIGHER EDUCATION:  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/draaiboek-2020-2021-universiteiten>  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/draaiboek-2020-2021-hogescholen>
  - ADULT EDUCATION:  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-informatie-voor-volwassenenonderwijs>
  - PART-TIME ARTS EDUCATION:  
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus-informatie-voor-deeltijds-kunstonderwijs>
- Wallonia-Brussels Federation:
  - <http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=28291>
  - HIGHER EDUCATION : [http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do\\_id=8060](http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do_id=8060)
  - 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:
  - <http://ostbelgienbildung.be/coronavirus>
  - [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

The Consultative Committee considers it necessary, as a preventive measure, to limit the number of indoor contacts, given the precarious epidemic situation and the uncertainties surrounding the Omicron variant. Therefore, the indoor areas of establishments or parts of establishments belonging to the festive or recreational sector are closed to the public, except for authorised activities.

In any event, the indoor areas of the following are closed to the public:

- night clubs and dance halls;
- subtropical swimming pools and the recreational areas of swimming pools;
- amusement parks;
- zoos and animal parks;
- indoor playgrounds;
- trampoline parks;
- bowling alleys;
- snooker and billiard halls;
- darts halls;
- paintball and laser shooting venues;
- escape rooms;
- casinos, fruit machine halls and bookmakers.

In any event, the following establishments or parts of establishments may remain open, including indoor areas:

- libraries, game and multimedia libraries;
- party and reception rooms, but only for weddings and funerals;
- wellness centres, including saunas, jacuzzis, steam rooms and hammams;
- museums.

“Museum” means:

- a structure recognised as a museum or art gallery by at least one of these entities: the Federal Government and the federated states;
- A permanent institution in the service of society and development, open to the public, that acquires, stores, studies, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of study, training and entertainment through exhibitions, activities for the public and scientific publications or vulgarisation, always carried out by professionals.

The following minimum rules and applicable protocols must be observed in establishments belonging to the sports, cultural or events sectors and in the above-mentioned establishments and parts of establishments that are allowed to stay open:

1. operators must visibly inform visitors, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force;
2. public areas, including terraces in public areas, are organised in accordance with the regulations laid down by the local authorities;
3. the operator or organiser must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;

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4. the operator or organiser must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
5. the operator or organiser must ensure good ventilation;
6. wearing a face mask is mandatory in the publicly accessible indoor areas of these establishments, including in fitness centres;

In addition to these minimum rules, the following rules must be observed in cinemas:

- a maximum of 200 people per cinema screen;
- operators must take the appropriate measures in order that the social distancing rules are respected, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5 m between each group. This rule does not apply when access is organised in accordance with the cooperation agreement of 14 July 2021 on the basis of a decree or an ordinance.

The use of an air quality meter (CO<sub>2</sub>) is mandatory in enclosed communal areas of establishments belonging to the sports sector, including fitness centres, and of establishments belonging to the events sector. This meter must be installed in a place clearly visible to visitors, unless a publicly accessible alternative display system is provided in real time. The air quality meter must be present in every single room where food and beverages are prepared and served, where smoking is permitted, where sports are played, where events take place, where there are queues, and in changing rooms. The indoor air quality guideline is 900 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>. If the value of 900 ppm is exceeded, the operator must have an action plan based on a risk analysis to ensure compensatory measures for ventilation and/or air disinfection and/or air filtration as referred to in the Ministerial Decree of 12 May 2021 provisionally determining the conditions for the placing on the market of ventilation purification systems for the control of SARS-CoV-2 not for medical purposes, which ensure adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm. If the value of 1200 ppm is exceeded, the operator is advised to also provide an approved air disinfection and/or air filtration system that ensures adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm.

Communal areas are places where several people gather for a period of more than 15 minutes:

- In the context of sports facilities, this refers to places where sports activities take place and to changing rooms, but not to corridors. An action plan must be drawn up for changing rooms where visitors stay for less than 15 minutes;
- In the context of health centres, this refers to places where people gather (for activities, catering, waiting, resting), but not to corridors or rooms;
- In the context of event infrastructure, this refers to places where the activity(ies) take place, as well as catering and waiting areas. However, indoor events are currently prohibited.

The obligation to use an air quality meter (CO<sub>2</sub>) depends on the nature of the establishment, and not on the nature of the activity. This obligation therefore only applies to establishments in the sports sector, including fitness centres, or in the events sector, and not to establishments belonging to the cultural, festive or recreational sector (such as youth clubs).

Please note: in the enclosed areas of infrastructures where mass events takes place (with an audience of 50 or more people), it is mandatory to use an air quality meter (CO<sub>2</sub>). This is not necessarily an establishment belonging to the events or sports sector. In the case of a mass event, the obligation therefore depends on the nature of the activity. However, mass indoor events are currently prohibited.

## **SOCIAL CONTACT**

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It is strongly recommended that social contacts be kept to a minimum and preferably take place outdoors. It is recommended to respect the basic principles in all social contacts to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, self-testing is strongly recommended.

## **TRANSPORT**

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

Public transport users from the age of 6 must cover their mouth and nose by wearing a face mask in the indoor areas of airports, stations, on platforms or at a stop, in the bus, the (pre)metro, the tram, the train or any other means of transport organised by the public authorities. If it is not possible to wear a face mask for medical reasons, a face shield can be worn.

Public transport operators and all bus operators carrying out public transport services 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 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.

### **2. 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.

In the indoor areas of organised collective transport (i.e. transport organised in advance with a clear route or final destination with a vehicle with at least 9+1 seats (passengers + driver)), passengers from the age of 6 must cover their mouth and nose by wearing a face mask and keep a distance of 1.5 m where possible. If it is not possible to wear a face mask for medical reasons, a face shield can be worn.

### **3. 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.

People who do not have to respect the social distancing measures amongst each other may share the same vehicle. It is recommended to regularly ventilate and clean the vehicle.

It is highly recommended to cover mouth and nose with a face mask if the social distancing measures cannot be respected. Wearing a face mask is mandatory as soon as the means of transport meets the above-mentioned definition of organised collective transport.

### **4. 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.

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People who do not have to respect the social distancing measures amongst each other may share the same vehicle. It is recommended to ventilate and clean the car regularly.

It is highly recommended to cover mouth and nose with a face mask if the social distancing measures cannot be respected. Wearing a face mask is mandatory as soon as the means of transport meets the above-mentioned definition of organised collective transport.

## **TOURISM**

For more details regarding international travel, please consult the "International" section.

All forms of accommodation (including hotels, Aparthotels, gîtes, B&Bs, holiday parks and campsites), including their restaurants and bars, are open, subject to compliance with the measures and protocols in force. The other communal facilities of these must respect the modalities provided for in the Royal Decree, as described above. For example, swimming pools (with the exception of subtropical swimming pools and recreational areas of swimming pools), wellness centres, jacuzzis, etc., are open, subject to compliance with the measures and protocols in force.

Overnight stays in tourist accommodation are allowed based on their capacity, including those that are able to accommodate more than 15 people.

People staying in a tourist accommodation with more than 15 people are not allowed to receive additional guests indoors, except for a wedding or funeral.

## **PRIVATE GATHERINGS AND ACTIVITIES IN AN ORGANISED CONTEXT**

Private gatherings and activities in an organised context must be organised outdoors.

Private gatherings and activities in an organised context may only be organised indoors in the following circumstances:

- when they take place at home;
- when they take place in a small tourist accommodation. If it is activities in an organised context, only sports activities, sports competitions, sports camps or sports training are allowed inside a small tourist accommodation, as well as activities aimed at vulnerable groups, as described below. However, these activities cannot take place with an overnight stay;
- when they take place in the context of a wedding or a funeral;
- if it is sports activities, sports competitions, sports camps or training sessions;
- when it concerns activities aimed at vulnerable groups, in particular socio-cultural, lifelong learning and youth activities that are supervised by professionals, in accordance with the applicable protocols.

The activities authorised in an organised context must not involve overnight stays.

It is always compulsory to wear a face mask during private gatherings and activities in an organised context from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present indoors or more than 100 outdoors. It is highly recommended to respect the basic principles in all social contacts to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, self-testing is strongly recommended.

Private gatherings are gatherings where, prior to the start of the gathering, the organiser restricts access by means of individual invitations to a well-defined target group associated with the organiser that can be clearly distinguished from the general public.

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In the following cases, among others, it does not concern a private gathering:

- the invitation can be obtained at the initiative of the invitee;
- the invitation can be obtained after the start of the gathering;
- the invitation can be obtained by people who cannot prove any connection to the organiser.

An activity in an organised context is an activity organised, for example, by a club or association of which one is a member.

### **1. Private gatherings and activities in an organised context which are organised outdoors**

These gatherings and activities are allowed. The following measures must be respected:

- it is compulsory to wear a face mask from the age of 6 if more than 100 people are present;
- the use of the Covid Safe Ticket, once the Cooperation Agreement allows it, is mandatory for private gatherings from 100 people. The organiser must inform those present in advance. This measure does not apply at home, unless professional catering services are used:

### **2. Private gatherings and activities in an organised context which are organised indoors**

#### **a) Private gatherings and activities in an organised context which are organised indoors at home:**

Private gatherings and activities in an organised context can be organised when they take place indoors at home.

When professional catering services at home are used, the following applies:

- it is compulsory to wear a face mask at private gatherings and activities from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present;
- the use of the Covid Safe Ticket, once the Cooperation Agreement allows it, is mandatory for private gatherings from 50 people. The organiser must inform those present in advance;
- catering activities are not permitted between 11pm and 5am, unless it is a private wedding or funeral gathering;
- the remainder of the catering rules do not apply.

When professional catering services at home are not used, the following applies:

- these gatherings and activities are always allowed. It is strongly recommended to self-test when receiving guests at home;
- it is compulsory to wear a face mask at private gatherings and activities from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present;
- the use of the Covid Safe Ticket is never required nor possible;

#### **b) Private gatherings and activities in an organised context which are organised indoors in a small tourist accommodation:**

Private gatherings may be organised indoors if they take place in a small tourist accommodation.

If it is activities in an organised context, only sports activities, sports competitions, sports camps or sports training are allowed inside a small tourist accommodation, as well as activities aimed at vulnerable groups. These activities cannot take place with an overnight stay.

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Overnight stays in tourist accommodation are allowed based on their capacity, including those that are able to accommodate more than 15 people.

A small tourist accommodation is a holiday home that can accommodate up to 15 people. People staying in a tourist accommodation with more than 15 people are not allowed to receive additional guests indoors, except for a wedding or funeral.

### c) Private indoor wedding or funeral gatherings

If the gathering takes place indoors **at home or in a small tourist accommodation**, the following rules apply:

- When professional catering services are used:
  - it is compulsory to wear a face mask at private gatherings from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present;
  - the use of the Covid Safe Ticket, once the Cooperation Agreement allows it, is mandatory for these private gatherings from 50 people. The organiser must inform those present in advance;
  - the catering rules do not apply. There is no limit to the length of the stay.
- When professional catering services are not used:
  - it is compulsory to wear a face mask at private gatherings from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present;
  - the use of the Covid Safe Ticket is neither required nor possible when the gathering takes place at home. On the other hand, if the gathering takes place in a small tourist accommodation, the use of the Covid Safe Ticket, once the Cooperation Agreement allows it, is mandatory from 50 people. The organiser must inform those present in advance;
  - there are no specific additional obligations.

If the gathering takes place indoors, **at a location other** than at home or in a small tourist accommodation:

- When professional catering services are used:
  - it is compulsory to wear a face mask at private gatherings from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present;
  - the use of the Covid Safe Ticket, once the Cooperation Agreement allows it, is mandatory for these private gatherings from 50 people. The organiser must inform those present in advance;
  - the catering rules apply, with the exception of the restriction on opening hours; dancing is allowed, but only with a face mask; only seated food and beverage consumption.
- When professional catering services are not used,
  - it is compulsory to wear a face mask at private gatherings from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present;
  - the use of the Covid Safe Ticket, once the Cooperation Agreement allows it, is mandatory for these private gatherings from 50 people. The organiser must inform those present in advance.

**d) Private gatherings and activities in an organised context (other than those mentioned above in points a and b) concerning indoor sports activities, sports competitions, sports camps or sports training**

It is compulsory to wear a face mask at such gatherings and activities from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present. However, face masks may occasionally be removed during sports activities. These activities in an organised context must not involve overnight stays.

**e) Private gatherings and activities in an organised context, aimed at vulnerable groups, in particular socio-cultural, lifelong learning and youth activities that are supervised by professionals, in accordance with the applicable protocols**

It is compulsory to wear a face mask at private gatherings and activities from the age of 6 if more than 50 people are present. Face masks may however be removed occasionally when wearing one is impossible due to the nature of the activity. People who are unable to wear a face mask or a face shield due to a disability, substantiated by a medical certificate, do not have to comply with this obligation. These activities in an organised context must not involve overnight stays.

### **1. Can co-owner meetings take place?**

The Consultative Committee has decided that private meetings are prohibited, apart from the above-mentioned exceptions. Despite the fact that general co-owner meetings are a legal obligation, they are considered to be private gatherings and therefore cannot take place physically unless they are held in a private residence. Therefore, they must be organised remotely. If it is not possible to organise the meeting remotely, they can legally be postponed to a later date when the current measures no longer apply. They should then be organised as soon as the measures allow for physical general co-owner meetings to take place.

## **YOUTH SECTOR**

### **2. What measures are in force with regard to youth associations and youth activities?**

Such activities can only be organised outdoors, with the exception of:

- sports activities, sports competitions, sports camps or training sessions;
- activities aimed at vulnerable groups, in particular socio-cultural, lifelong learning and youth activities that are supervised by professionals, in accordance with the applicable protocols.

These activities in an organised context must not involve overnight stays.

Specific measures for youth associations and authorised youth activities have been elaborated by the Ministers for Youth of the federated entities.

The following youth sector protocols can be consulted via the link below:

- 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-speaking Community:
  - <https://servicejeunesse.cfwb.be/>

- German-Speaking Community:
  - East Belgium Live - Jugend

### **SPORTS TRAINING SESSIONS AND COMPETITIONS (PARTICIPANTS)**

Both the indoor and outdoor areas of the establishments belonging to the sports sector are accessible to all athletes and any other support needed in the context of matches and training (e.g. referees, trainers, supervisors of minors), subject to compliance with the minimum rules listed above and the applicable protocol.

In the enclosed communal areas of establishments belonging to the sports sector, including fitness centres, the use of an air quality meter (CO<sub>2</sub>) is mandatory. It must be installed in a place clearly visible to the visitor. This meter must be installed in a place clearly visible to visitors, unless a publicly accessible alternative display system is provided in real time. The air quality meter must be present in every single room where food and beverages are prepared and served, where smoking is permitted, where sports are played, where events take place, where there are queues, and in changing rooms. The indoor air quality guideline is 900 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>. If the value of 900 ppm is exceeded, the operator must have an action plan to ensure compensatory measures for ventilation and/or air disinfection and/or air filtration as referred to in the Ministerial Decree of 12 May 2021 provisionally determining the conditions for the placing on the market of ventilation purification systems for the control of SARS-CoV-2 not for medical purposes, which ensure adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm. If the value of 1200 ppm is exceeded, the operator is advised to also provide an approved ventilation and/or air disinfection and/or air filtration system that ensures adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm.

Communal areas are places where sports activities take place and changing rooms where visitors stay longer than 15 minutes. This does not include corridors. An action plan must be drawn up for changing rooms where visitors stay for less than 15 minutes.

Sports competitions and sports training sessions can take place without any limitation on the number of participants.

The presence of the public is prohibited at professional and non-professional sports competitions and sports training, both indoors and outdoors. However, participants up to the age of 17, and any participant in need of assistance, may be accompanied by two adults.

#### **3. What about ice rinks?**

All ice rinks (including rinks at Christmas markets) are regarded as establishments belonging to the sports sector and are therefore open (both indoors and outdoors).

#### **4. What are the rules for swimming pools?**

Swimming pools, with the exception of the subtropical pools and the recreational parts of swimming pools, are open, including any wellness facilities. The protocols of the communities govern the modalities of access and organisation. Tourist accommodations can also admit customers to their swimming pools (with the exception of subtropical swimming pools and the recreational parts of swimming pools), provided that the rules of the protocol applicable to the swimming pools are respected.

The operation of the swimming pool and the activities that take place in the swimming pool must respect the above-mentioned minimum rules.

## **CULTURE AND RECREATION**

The indoor areas of establishments or parts of establishments belonging to the festive **or** recreational **sector** are closed to the public, except for authorised activities.

**In any event**, the following establishments or parts of establishments may remain open, **including indoor areas**:

- libraries, game and multimedia libraries;
- party and reception rooms, but only for weddings and funerals;
- wellness centres, including saunas, jacuzzis, steam rooms and hammams;
- museums.

See also above for more information.

The minimum rules and applicable protocols must be observed in the above-mentioned establishments and parts of establishments that are allowed to stay open.

### **5. Can interactive centres, art galleries and heritage sites remain open to the public?**

Museums recognised by the government as well as heritage sites, memorials, forts, abbeys, private museums, visitor centres, interactive centres and art galleries can remain open to the public in accordance with the conditions imposed on museums by the Royal Decree (including the obligation to wear face masks, hygiene measures and ventilation) and the modalities set out in the sector guide for museums.

### **6. Which rules apply to cinemas?**

**A cinema is an entertainment venue with one or with multiple screens primarily used for film screening.**

**In addition to the above-mentioned minimum rules that apply to establishments belonging to the sports, cultural and events sectors, the following rules must be observed in cinemas:**

- **a maximum of 200 people per cinema screen;**
- **operators must take the appropriate measures in order that the social distancing rules are respected, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5 m between each group. This rule does not apply when access is organised in accordance with the cooperation agreement of 14 July 2021 on the basis of a decree or an ordinance.**

### **7. Can clubs and associations organise indoor activities not yet open to the public?**

No, such activities can only be organised outdoors, with the exception of:

- sports activities, sports competitions, sports camps or training sessions;
- activities aimed at vulnerable groups, in particular socio-cultural, lifelong learning and youth activities that are supervised by professionals, in accordance with the applicable protocols.

These activities in an organised context must not involve overnight stays.

The restrictions for private gatherings and activities in an organised context do not apply to professional meetings which must adhere to the rules relating to teleworking.

For the youth sector, see above.

## **THE ORGANISATION OF PUBLIC EVENTS, CULTURAL AND OTHER PERFORMANCES**

### **General measures applicable to all events and cultural or other performances open to the public**

Professional caterers must comply with the following catering rules during events, notwithstanding the applicable protocols:

- professional catering activities are prohibited between 11pm and 5am;
- takeaway meals and drinks cannot be sold or delivered between 11pm and 5am;
- a maximum of six people per table is allowed, children up to the age of 12 not included. people living under the same roof can share a table, regardless of how many;
- only table and bar seating is allowed;
- each person must remain at their own table or at the bar;
- operators must visibly inform their customers, employees and third parties in good time regarding the preventive measures in force;
- operators must provide staff and customers with the means to ensure the necessary hand hygiene;
- operators must take the appropriate hygiene measures to regularly disinfect the establishment and the material used;
- the operator must ensure good ventilation;
- public areas, including terraces in public areas, are organised in accordance with the regulations laid down by the local authorities;
- staff must wear a face mask;
- customers must wear a face mask when they are not seated at a table or at the bar.

In addition, the minimum rules and protocols applicable to establishments belonging to the cultural, sports, and events sectors, as explained above under the general introduction in this chapter "Public Life", apply for the remainder.

It is mandatory to wear a face mask at all events, both for the audience and the staff and organisers, regardless of the size of the event, and regardless of whether the CST is used.

In addition, **all (mass) events and cultural or other performances that use tents or covered areas to accommodate an audience are considered indoor events and performances.** A covered area is any area protected from the weather by a roof, a ceiling, a canvas or any other means or surface used to obtain a similar result, irrespective of the number of open sides. Covered areas include tents, arbours, canopies, parasols, etc. which are intended to shelter people, and Christmas market stalls which are large enough to host the public.

**Finally**, additional rules apply depending on whether the event takes place with or without CST.

1. **Events without the Covid Safe Ticket**
  - a. **Events organised indoors without the Covid Safe Ticket**

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Public events and cultural and other performances that take place indoors or in a covered space are only allowed for a seated audience of maximum 50 persons, not counting employees and organisers, if the Covid Safe Ticket is not used.

It is recommended to comply with the social distancing rules and it is mandatory to wear a face mask.

It is not possible to deviate from these maximum numbers by using the CERM/CIRM or based on specific catering regulations.

b) Events organised outdoors without the Covid Safe Ticket

Public events, including Christmas markets and winter villages, cultural and other performances, and conferences that take place outdoors in an open space, are only allowed for an audience of up to 100 people, not including employees and organisers, if the Covid Safe Ticket is not used.

Organisers must take the appropriate measures in order that the social distancing rules are respected, in particular maintaining a distance of 1.5 m between each group, and are responsible for crowd control. Wearing a face mask is compulsory. A maximum of one visitor is allowed per 4 m<sup>2</sup> of accessible floor space to the public.

It is not possible to deviate from these maximum numbers by using the CERM/CIRM or based on specific catering regulations.

2. Events with Covid Safe Ticket (mass events and pilot projects)

The maximum number of 50 seated people indoors and 100 seated or standing people outdoors, as mentioned above, can only be exceeded when using the Covid Safe Ticket, in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021.

A mass event is a public event, such as Christmas markets and winter villages.

a) Events organised indoors with the Covid Safe Ticket

Mass events and pilot projects that take place indoors or in a covered area are only authorised for a seated audience of at least 50 people, and of no more than 200 people per day, not including employees and organisers, subject to prior authorisation from the competent municipal authority and in compliance with the terms of the cooperation agreement of 14 July 2021.

b) Events organised outdoors with the Covid Safe Ticket

Mass events and pilot projects may be organised outdoors in a non-covered area, for an audience of at least 100 people and up to 75,000 people per day, not including employees and organisers, subject to prior authorisation from the competent municipal authority and in compliance with the terms of the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021 concerning the Covid Safe Ticket. A maximum of one visitor is allowed per 4 m<sup>2</sup> of accessible floor space to the public. If 100 or more visitors can be present at any one time, a one-way traffic plan must be drawn up, with separate entrances and exits. Wearing a face mask is compulsory, also on the dance floor.

The above-mentioned minimum numbers are subject to change by the local authorities as well as by the federated entities in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021. A mass event with an audience of less than 50 people indoors or less than 100 people outdoors may also be organised under the conditions of the Cooperation Agreement of 14 July 2021, provided that the organiser informs visitors in advance.

The use of an air quality meter (CO<sub>2</sub>) is mandatory in every enclosed area of infrastructures where mass events with an audience of 50 or more people take place. This meter must be installed in a place clearly visible to visitors, unless a publicly accessible alternative display system is provided in real time. The indoor air quality guideline is 900 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>. If the value of 900 ppm is exceeded, the operator must have an action plan, based on a risk analysis, to ensure compensatory measures for ventilation and/or air disinfection and/or air filtration, which guarantee adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm. If the value of 1200 ppm is exceeded, the operator is advised to also provide an approved air disinfection and/or air filtration system that ensures adequate air quality equivalent to the air quality standard of 900 ppm.

The arrival zone to the mass event will be organised in such a way that social distancing rules can be respected. At mass events, it is not mandatory to comply with social distancing rules, however, it compulsory to wear a face mask.

For more information, please consult the Coronavirus Commission's Events FAQ [here](#).

The Minister of the Interior can, after reasoned advice from the competent minister(s), the local authorities concerned and the Federal Minister of Health, grant these pilot projects permission to deviate from the rules of the Royal Decree. However, this does not apply to the maximum number of 75,000 visitors. The pilot projects are organised in accordance with the protocol defined by the competent ministers and the Federal Minister of Public Health. The protocol contains a framework, timeline and roadmap for the organisation of these pilot projects, both indoors and outdoors, in accordance with the agreements of the Consultative Committee.

### 3. Presence of public during sporting competitions and sports training

The presence of the public is prohibited at professional and non-professional sports competitions and sports training, both indoors and outdoors. However, participants up to the age of 17, and any participant in need of assistance, may be accompanied by two adults.

### 4. Organisation of publicly accessible conferences

#### a) Conferences that take place indoors:

Conferences open to the public that take place indoors or in a covered area are prohibited.

#### b) Conferences that take place outdoors:

Conferences open to the public that take place outdoors in a non-covered area are only permitted if the rules that apply to events organised outdoors are complied with. For more details, see the above-mentioned rules for (mass) events organised outdoors.

### 8. **Which rules apply to parades (e.g. Christmas parade)?**

During parades, the rules for (mass) events apply to the different zones, including the departure and arrival areas, which can be hermetically sealed, although access to the homes of residents or their visitors must not be prevented. Organisers are responsible for *crowd control*, also along the route. The Consultative Committee has urged local authorities to monitor these measures strictly. Any event that does not respect these measures must be cancelled.

### 9. **Is the consumption of food and drinks at outdoor events allowed?**

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Yes, the consumption of food and drink at outdoor events is allowed, in compliance with the catering regulations. This implies people must be seated while eating or drinking. Customers may take off their face mask when they are seated at a table or at the bar.

It also remains possible to order food and/or drinks at a bar, chip shop, etc. at the event and to consume this in your seat. In this case, the face mask may be removed occasionally and briefly while eating or drinking. It is not permitted to eat or drink while standing.

### **DEMONSTRATIONS**

Demonstrations are allowed with no limit to the maximum number of participants. However, it remains mandatory to comply with the social distancing rules.

### **CIVIL MARRIAGES, FUNERALS, RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND CEREMONIES**

Wearing a face mask is mandatory in places of worship and buildings intended for the public practice of non-denominational moral services and in the areas of public administration buildings open to the public.

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

In places of worship and buildings intended for the public practice of non-denominational moral services, it is mandatory to wear a face mask except:

- when the nature of the activity makes it impossible to wear them, for example for the preacher during the sermon or for the choristers whilst singing;
- to eat or drink, for example to drink water during congregational worship or at the coffee table at the place of worship, following the congregational worship.

### **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-Capital Region:
  - <https://mobilite-mobiliteit.brussels/fr>
  - <https://www.arp-gan.be/fr/Recypark.html>

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- German-Speaking Community:
  - <https://www.ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-327/>
  - Ostbelgien Sport - Maßnahmen ab dem 1. Oktober

## INTERNATIONAL

### GENERAL

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

- A. Can I travel to and from Belgium?
- B. What travel-related measures are in place (forms, quarantine, testing)?

#### **A. CAN I TRAVEL TO AND FROM BELGIUM?**

Please note:

1. As Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, and the Holy See/Vatican City are considered to be EU countries, their residents are to be considered EU residents for the purposes mentioned below. Nationals of these countries are therefore considered to be EU citizens.
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.
3. For the purposes mentioned below, a 'third country' means any country which is not part of the European Union or the Schengen Area.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Non-essential travel to Belgium is prohibited for people who are not a national of the EU, nor of a country that is part of the Schengen Area, and who have their primary residence in a third country not listed in Annex I to Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/912 of 30 June 2020 on the temporary restriction of non-essential travel to the EU and its possible lifting, except for travellers with a vaccination certificate, as well as for young people up to the age of 17 travelling with a supervisor who has a vaccination certificate. This is an EU Digital COVID Certificate or a vaccination certificate issued in a country not belonging to the European Union deemed equivalent by the European Commission on the basis of the implementing acts or by Belgium on the basis of bilateral agreements proving that all doses of a vaccine against the SARS-Cov-2 mentioned on the list on <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/nl/> have been administered for at least two weeks before travelling.

In the absence of an equivalence decision by the European Commission, a vaccination certificate issued in a country not belonging to the European Union and containing at least the following information in Dutch, French, German or English will also be accepted:

- data specific to the person who has been vaccinated (name, date of birth and/or ID number);
- data demonstrating that all doses of a vaccine against SARS-Cov-2 have been administered for at least two weeks before travelling, as indicated in the leaflet on the website "info-coronavirus.be" of the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment;
- the brand name and the name of the manufacturer or marketing authorisation holder of each vaccine administered. If one of the two names is not mentioned, the batch number should also be given;
- the date each dose of the vaccine was administered;
- the name of the country, the province or the region where the vaccination certificate was issued;

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- the issuer of the vaccination certificate.

Travel to countries outside the European Union and the Schengen Area remains strongly advised against.

**Please note:** Special measures apply to people who, at any time during the past 14 days, have been on the territory of countries classified as very high-risk.

### COLOUR CODES

Since 1 February 2021, the colour codes describing the epidemiological situation of the COVID-19 pandemic are 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 classified as red zones, with the exception of the countries listed on the following 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 arrival in Belgium.

- **Red zones** are regions or countries where individuals are at a high risk of infection. Upon return from a red zone, additional measures are in force (PLF, test, quarantine, certificates), subject to possible exemptions.
- **Orange zones** are regions or countries for which a moderately elevated risk of infection has been identified. Apart from filling in the PLF, there are no special measures in place.
- **Green zones** are regions or countries for which a low risk of infection has been identified. Apart from filling in the PLF, there are no special measures in place.

In addition to the colour coding system, there are also special measures relating to the territory of **countries classified as very high-risk**. These countries are subject to stricter measures.

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

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

**SPECIFIC SITUATIONS**

***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 white list. May I travel to or from Belgium?***

You are allowed to travel to and from Belgium.

Non-essential travel to countries outside the European Union and the Schengen Area is, however, strongly discouraged.

Upon your return to or arrival in Belgium, you must respect the applicable measures (Passenger Locator Form, tests, quarantine, etc.).

**Please note:** Special measures may apply to people who, at any time during the past 14 days, have been on the territory of countries classified as very high-risk.

***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 which is not included on the white list, and is not considered to be a very high-risk country. May I travel to Belgium?***

Since 1 July 2021, you can travel to Belgium if you have been vaccinated for at least two weeks before travelling with all the doses indicated in the leaflet of a vaccine against SARS-Cov-2 listed on <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/nl/> and can prove this by means of a vaccination certificate such as the EU Digital COVID Certificate or an equivalent (based on a decision of the European Commission). From 1 September, other vaccination certificates can be accepted from a country outside the EU in the absence of an equivalence decision.

If you do not have a vaccination certificate, you may only travel to or from Belgium for the following trips which are considered to be essential and you must carry an Essential Travel 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;

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- 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 people 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);

12° travel by the spouse or partner of a person who is a national of the EU or the Schengen Area, insofar as they live under the same roof, as well as travel by their children who live under the same roof. The de facto partners must also be able to provide plausible evidence of a stable and long-term relationship.

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). More information on the procedure can be found at: [Immigration Office | IBZ](#)

Where a carrier is used, the carrier is obliged to check that passengers are carrying this certificate or vaccination certificate before boarding. In the absence of this certificate or vaccination certificate, the

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carrier is obliged to refuse boarding. Upon arrival on Belgian territory, the carrier must check again whether the traveller is carrying this certificate or vaccination certificate.

**Please note:** Special measures may apply to people who, at any time during the past 14 days, have been on the territory of countries classified as very high-risk.

### ***3. Special measures specific to territories of countries classified as very high-risk***

These countries are classified as very high-risk zones.

**An entry ban** applies to these third countries classified as very high-risk zones:

- It is **forbidden** for people who have been on the territory of third countries classified as very high-risk at any time during the past 14 days to travel, either directly or indirectly, to Belgian territory.
- Only the following people are allowed to travel to or through Belgium:
  - People holding Belgian nationality;
  - People having their main residence in Belgium;
  - The spouse or partner of a person who has Belgian nationality or has his/her main residence in Belgium. This spouse or partner must live under the same roof as the person with Belgian nationality or who has his/her main residence in Belgium. These travellers must have an Essential Travel Certificate issued by the Belgian diplomatic or consular post. The de facto partners must have provided plausible evidence of a stable and long-term relationship (see [FAQ](#));
  - The children of a person who has Belgian nationality or has his/her main residence in Belgium or of his/her spouse or partner as described above, insofar as they live under the same roof. These travellers must have an Essential Travel Certificate issued by the Belgian diplomatic or consular post;
  - People who travel through Belgium from a very high-risk country to the country of the European Union or Schengen Area of which they are a national or where they have their main residence;
  - People travelling outside the European Union and the Schengen Area (transit via a high-risk country without leaving the international zone of the airport or transit in Belgium from a high-risk country without leaving the airport's non-Schengen Area);
  - People travelling for compelling humanitarian reasons. These people must have a Certificate of Travel for Humanitarian Reasons issued by the Belgian diplomatic or consular post and approved by the Immigration Office;
  - Transport personnel, freight and cargo personnel, mariners, tug crews, pilots and industrial staff working at offshore wind farms travelling for work. These travellers must have a certificate issued by their employer;
  - Diplomats, staff of international organisations and people invited by international organisations whose physical presence is required for the proper functioning of those organisations, when performing their duties. These travellers must have an Essential Travel Certificate issued by the Belgian diplomatic or consular post;
  - People whose physical presence is indispensable for national security purposes, provided that they hold an essential travel document issued by the Belgian diplomatic or consular post and approved by the Immigration Office.

For the above-mentioned authorised travellers, **stricter measures** apply before and upon arrival in Belgium:

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- Before arriving in Belgium, they must always fill in a **Passenger Locator Form (PLF)**, regardless of how they travel or for how long they are staying in Belgium or abroad.
  - Exception: transport personnel, freight and cargo personnel, mariners, tug crews, pilots and industrial staff working at offshore wind farms travelling for work. These travellers must have a certificate issued by their employer;
- If they do not have their main residence in Belgium, anyone older than 12 must always be able to present a test certificate showing a **negative PCR test taken less than 72 hours** prior to arrival in Belgium or proof of a negative Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) taken less than 36 hours prior to arrival in Belgium and collected by a healthcare professional;
- They must get **tested** in Belgium on day 1 and day 7. All people returning from a very high-risk third country must spend 10 days in **quarantine**, except for carrying out activities which are the essential reason for travelling to Belgium in the case of diplomats and transport staff;
- The measures relating to arrival in Belgium (testing/quarantine) apply even to fully vaccinated persons.

The above-mentioned specific terms are in addition to the normal conditions of access to Belgium. It is, for instance, important to always take into account which entry requirements for the Schengen Area and which visa procedures are in force for certain travellers.

Possible exemptions to testing and quarantine are stipulated in the decrees of the relevant federated entities.

#### 4. *Can I travel to visit my partner?*

Visiting a partner who does not live under the same roof is considered to be essential travel, **except** for third countries which have been classified as a very high-risk zone.

For travellers whose primary residence is in a third country marked as "**red**" 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.

## **B. WHAT TRAVEL-RELATED MEASURES ARE IN PLACE?**

**Please note:** If police services (for example the airport police) suspect that a person has forged a document related to the enforcement of the coronavirus protection measures, for example a vaccination, test or recovery certificate or the Passenger Locator Form, and/or has made use of the false document, an official report will be drawn up. The official report will be forwarded to the public prosecutor.

This is considered to be a serious offence with fraudulent intent. The coronavirus strategy to fight COVID-19 depends on the authenticity of these documents. A direct summons to appear before the criminal court will be issued where there is sufficient proof of fraud whilst accounting for any mitigating circumstances.

### **1. Vaccination, test or recovery certificate (EU Digital COVID Certificate)**

#### General

Certificates are issued by the competent authorities depending on the type of certificate.

The validity and correctness of the certificate are checked by scanning the QR code or by checking the minimum information that must be present on the certificate.

Certificates for children can be downloaded by the parents.

Carriers<sup>1</sup> are obliged to check whether all passengers returning from a red zone, who are older than 12 and non-residents in Belgium, are able to submit a vaccination, test or recovery certificate before boarding the organised transport. In the absence of a vaccination, test or recovery certificate, carriers are obliged to refuse boarding.

#### A. Vaccination certificate

An EU Digital COVID Certificate or a vaccination certificate issued in a country not belonging to the European Union deemed equivalent by the European Commission on the basis of the implementing acts or by Belgium on the basis of bilateral agreements proving that all doses of a vaccine against the SARS-Cov-2 mentioned on the website "info-coronavirus.be" of the Federal Public Service for Public Health, Food Chain Safety and the Environment have been administered for at least two weeks before travelling.

In the absence of an equivalence decision by the European Commission, a vaccination certificate issued in a country not belonging to the European Union and containing at least the following information in Dutch, French, German or English will also be accepted:

- data specific to the person who has been vaccinated (name, date of birth and/or ID number);
- data demonstrating that all doses of a vaccine against SARS-Cov-2 have been administered for at least two weeks before travelling, as indicated in the leaflet on the website "info-coronavirus.be" of the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment;
- the brand name or the name of the manufacturer or marketing authorisation holder of each vaccine administered. If one of the two names is not mentioned, the batch number should also be given;
- the date each dose of the vaccine was administered;
- the name of the country, the province or the region where the vaccination certificate was issued;
- the issuer of the vaccination certificate.

#### B. Test certificate

An EU Digital COVID Certificate or another certificate in Dutch, French, German or English which indicates that a negative Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) was carried out in an official laboratory not more than 72 hours prior to arrival on Belgian territory, or a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) with a negative result carried out no more than 36 hours before arrival on Belgian territory by a professional.

#### C. Recovery certificate

An EU Digital COVID Certificate of recovery or a recovery certificate from a country which is not part of the European Union that is deemed equivalent by the European Commission on the basis of the implementing act or by Belgium on the basis of bilateral agreements.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "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.

A recovery certificate can only be issued for a positive PCR test older than 11 days (= the isolation period after infection), and performed in the previous 180 days. The certificate is valid for 180 days and the period of validity begins at the time of sampling. Please note that other countries may impose additional restrictions or conditions.

## 2. What should I do if the country of destination requests a negative COVID-19 test before entering 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 get 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".

## 3. When should I have a test certificate to travel to Belgium?

People who do not have their primary residence in Belgium **must have a negative test result** from the age of 12 upon arrival from a third country classified as a red zone (see [colour codes](#)) or from a country classified as a very high-risk zone (cf [this list](#)), based proof of on a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) carried out at the earliest 72 hours before arrival on Belgian territory in an official laboratory or a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) with a negative result carried out no more than 36 hours before arrival on Belgian territory by a professional.

### • Exceptions:

- People not travelling<sup>2</sup> 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 test certificate;  
Travellers must have a test certificate before arriving in Belgium if this is needed to travel on to the final destination. They cannot get tested in Belgium since the entry conditions have not been met;

These exemptions from having a negative test result prior to travelling do not apply to people who have been on the territory of a third country classified as a very high-risk zone at any time during the 14 days prior to their arrival in Belgium. Travellers coming from these countries must always have a negative test result based on a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) carried out at the earliest 72 hours before arrival in Belgium in an official laboratory or a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) with a negative result carried out no more than 36 hours before arrival on Belgian territory by a professional.

Carriers are obliged to check whether passengers are able to submit a vaccination, test or recovery certificate before boarding the organised transport. If they do not have the required document, the carrier is obliged to refuse boarding.

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<sup>2</sup> The term "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.

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In terms of the exception regarding transit and onward travel, airlines must verify that the person has a confirmed airline ticket for immediate onward travel and that the person has the required certificate if needed 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.

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

**Please note:**

The test certificate must be immediately available for inspection on paper or in electronic form.

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

- A **negative** test result.
- The date the sample was collected must be clearly indicated
- It concerns an approved **PCR test for SARS-CoV-2** carried out in an official laboratory no more than 72 hours prior to arrival on Belgian territory, a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) with a negative result carried out by a professional no more than 36 hours before arrival on Belgian territory.

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, checks may be carried out at the borders.

The following people are not required to have a vaccination, test or recovery certificate (unless it replaces an Essential Travel Certificate):

1. If they are 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);
2. Border pupils who travel to Belgium in the context of compulsory education;
3. People travelling to Belgium in the context of cross-border co-parenting.
4. People transferred between Belgium and another EU Member State within the framework of the Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, as well as within the framework of bilateral agreements, when the necessary arrangements have been made in this respect between Belgium and the other EU Member State on a reciprocal basis.

**Please note:** there are no exemptions in terms of the obligation to have a negative PCR or RAT test result or an EU Digital COVID Certificate for people who, at any time during the past 14 days, have been on the territory of third countries classified as very high-risk.

#### 4. 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 180 days before arriving in Belgium.

**Exceptions:**

- People not travelling to Belgium via a carrier<sup>3</sup> 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;
  - Pupils, students and interns travelling to Belgium at least once a week as part of their cross-border studies or internship;
  - People travelling to Belgium in the context of cross-border co-parenting.

**Please note:** these exemptions from completing the PLF do not apply to people who have been on the territory of third countries classified as a very high-risk zone at any time during the 14 days prior to their arrival in Belgium. People travelling from these countries must always complete a PLF.

A separate form must be completed for each passenger aged 12 years and over. The details of children under the age of 12 must be filled in on the form of an accompanying adult, if this is the case. If children under the age of 12 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 Belgian territory by the police. The form may be checked by the airport operator or the police upon arrival in Belgium.

The PLF must **be completed electronically**. 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 an optional 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".

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<sup>3</sup> The term "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.

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As of 1 October 2021, the paper version of the PLF can no longer be used. From then on, the PLF must be completed electronically and a paper version of the PLF will no longer be valid. However, there is a 'transition period' until 14 October. In addition, there will also be special measures to support travellers:

- To give everyone the opportunity to fill in the PLF electronically, it can be completed online as early as 180 days before your expected arrival in Belgium.
- If you do not have access to the Internet or the necessary electronic equipment during your stay, you can ask a third party to help you fill in the electronic PLF in advance.
- The carrier may provide traveller support for completing the electronic PLF or printing the QR code. This will also be provided in airport terminals.
- After completing the electronic PLF, you will receive the completed e-PLF with a QR code by e-mail. You can also print out this electronic PLF with the QR code to submit it for verification.

The PLF will take the last 14 days into account when determining quarantine.

As of 1 July, the PLF takes into account whether or not a person has a vaccination, test or recovery certificate when determining whether to quarantine or get tested.

If the information entered on the form changes within 14 days of arrival, you must report this by filling in a new e-PLF via <https://travel.info-coronavirus.be/> with the complete and updated details.

If the PLF has been falsified, an official report may be drawn up which will then be submitted to the public prosecutor.

In the absence of this form or in case of false, misleading or incomplete information, entry into Belgian territory may be refused by the police. The form may be checked by the airport operator or the police upon arrival in Belgium

## 5. Which travellers must quarantine?

**People returning from third countries or countries in the EU and the Schengen Area classified as red zones**, 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**.

- A. Upon return from the territory of a **third country classified as a red zone** and not included in the white list as a red zone
  - a. For people who have their main residence in Belgium: upon arrival
    - i. if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative result and a further PCR test on day 7,
    - ii. if not fully vaccinated: 10-day quarantine + PCR test on day 1 and day 7. Quarantine may possibly end after 7 days (quarantine/testing exemptions: see table below, point 8).
  - b. EU nationals and EU residents: mandatory RAT or PCR test before departure.

Upon arrival

- i. if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative test result and a further PCR test on day 7,
- ii. if not fully vaccinated: 10-day quarantine + PCR test on day 1 and day 7. Quarantine may possibly end after 7 days (quarantine/testing exemptions: see table below, point 8).
- c. Non-EU residents: mandatory RAT or PCR test before departure.

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- i. Essential travel permitted (in accordance with existing categories)
  - if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative test result and a further PCR test on day 7,
  - if not fully vaccinated: 10-day quarantine with PCR test on day 1 and day 7. Quarantine may possibly end after 7 days (quarantine/testing exemptions: see table below, point 8).
- ii. Non-essential travel is only allowed if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative test result and a further PCR test on day 7.

- B. When returning from **a red zone in the European Union or Schengen Area**, or a zone on the white list as a red zone it is mandatory to get tested with a PCR test on day 1 or 2 and to stay in quarantine until the negative result of the test is known. Individuals must get tested on day 7, without having to quarantine after a negative test result on day 1 or 2.

**Exception:** travellers who can prove that they have been fully vaccinated with a vaccination certificate do not need to get tested nor quarantine (situation B), except when travellers have been on the territory of very high-risk countries any time during the 14 days prior to their arrival in Belgium.

Travellers coming from a third country classified as a very high-risk zone must quarantine for 10 days.

The PLF will take the last 14 days into account when determining quarantine, also when the zone changes colour.

A person who received a diagnosis of COVID-19, confirmed by a positive PCR test, more than 11 days and less than 180 days ago is temporarily protected by immunity. Currently, the regulations provide for an exemption from quarantine for travellers from EU/Schengen zones and countries on the white list.

Children under the age of 12 do not have to get tested, but they must respect the quarantine if the accompanying adult needs to quarantine.

For people who are considered to be 'high-risk contacts', the **quarantine period starts** on the day they leave the third country classified as a 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 third country classified as a red zone, unless stipulated otherwise by the treating physician/decreet of the federated entities.

This will be checked by the police. Those who do not abide by the rules risk a fine of EUR 250 or more in the case of repeat offenders.

- 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)

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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. This does not apply to travellers returning from a third country classified as a very high-risk zone.

Belgians and Belgian residents identified abroad as a confirmed case or at high risk must always complete their isolation and quarantine before returning and according to the rules of the host country. To request an exemption, travellers must contact the Belgian health authorities and diplomatic services. An exemption will only be considered in cases of absolute necessity and on an exceptional basis.

## 6. What does 'quarantine' mean?

**Quarantine** means preventive isolation. During the quarantine period, you must remain at one single address, which must be provided in advance in 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 permitted for the** following essential activities that cannot be postponed until after the quarantine period has ended, and provided that particular attention is paid to hygiene measures, social distancing and wearing a (fabric) face mask:
  - o Travel related to urgent medical care and access to medicines;
  - o Travel to buy basic necessities, such as food, but only if no one else can provide them and by exception;
  - o Travel for urgent legal/financial matters and parental authority, subject to proof;
  - o Travel to provide urgent and necessary care for (domestic) animals, if no one else can provide it;
  - o Travel in the context of funerals.

### Quarantine versus isolation: the difference

If you test positive and/or are ill, you must self-isolate for a period of at least 10 days. During isolation period, you should avoid contact with other people, including those living in the same house.

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.

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

### ***A. From an EU country or the Schengen Area***

Residents in Belgium who return from a red zone and have stayed there for more than 48 hours must get tested (PCR or RAT) on day 1 of their return to Belgium and quarantine until the result of the test is known. If you return from a red zone, you must also be tested on day 7, without having to quarantine after a negative test result on day 1 or 2. If the red zone is also considered to be a very high-risk zone, a test is also mandatory on day 7 after arriving in Belgium.

Non-residents in Belgium who come from a red zone and have stayed there for more than 48 hours must have a test certificate as described above. If you return from a red zone, you must also be tested on day 7, without having to quarantine after a negative test result on day 1 or 2. If the red zone is also considered to be a "very high-risk" zone, a test is also mandatory on day 7 after arriving in Belgium.

### **Exceptions:**

- Travellers who can prove that they have been fully vaccinated with a vaccination certificate, or who have a recovery certificate, do not need to get tested;
- Travellers who are not coming to Belgium via a carrier and who have been abroad for a maximum of 48 hours or who will be staying in Belgium for a maximum of 48 hours, do not need to fill in a PLF and therefore do not need to get tested;
- The following categories of people do not have to fill in a PLF if they are not travelling via a carrier:
  - 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;
  - 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.
  - People transferred between Belgium and another EU Member State within the framework of the Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the

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Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person, as well as within the framework of bilateral agreements, when the necessary arrangements have been made in this respect between Belgium and the other EU Member State on a reciprocal basis.

They will receive a text message upon their return with which they can register at a test centre where a PCR test can be taken. 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 must isolate for at least 10 days from the day the test was taken.
- ⊖ If the test result prior to travelling is negative, quarantine is not necessary. Or if the test result on day 1 is negative after returning to Belgium, quarantine may be ended. However, people travelling from a "very high-risk zone" still have to get tested on day 7 after their return or arrival in Belgium.

Children under the age of 12 do not have to get tested, but they must respect the quarantine.

**B. From a third country classified as a red zone and not on the white list**

- a. For people who have their main residence in Belgium: upon arrival
  - i. if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative result and a further PCR test on day 7,
  - ii. if not fully vaccinated: 10-day quarantine + PCR test on day 1 and day 7. Quarantine may possibly end after 7 days (quarantine/testing exemptions: see table below, point 8).
- b. EU nationals and EU residents: mandatory RAT or PCR test before departure.

Upon arrival

- i. if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative test result and a further PCR test on day 7,
  - ii. if not fully vaccinated: 10-day quarantine + PCR test on day 1 and day 7. Quarantine may possibly end after 7 days (quarantine/testing exemptions: see table below, point 8).
- c. Non-EU residents: mandatory RAT or PCR test before departure.
    - i. Essential travel permitted (in accordance with existing categories)
      - if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative test result and a further PCR test on day 7,
      - if not fully vaccinated: 10-day quarantine with PCR test on day 1 and day 7. Quarantine may possibly end after 7 days (quarantine/testing exemptions: see table below, point 8).
    - ii. Non-essential travel is only allowed if fully vaccinated: PCR test on day 1 and quarantine until you receive a negative test result and a further PCR test on day 7.

**Exceptions:**

- Travellers who are not coming to Belgium via a carrier, and who have been abroad for a maximum of 48 hours or who will be staying in Belgium for a maximum of 48 hours, do not have to fill in a PLF document and therefore do not have to get tested, except for people who have been on the territory of a third country classified as a very high-risk zone at any time during the 14 days prior to their arrival in Belgium.

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- 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 a PCR test can be taken. 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 must isolate for at least 10 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 get tested again on day 7.
- If the test is negative on day 7, the high-risk contact can end quarantine.

Children under the age of 12 do not have to get tested, but they must respect the quarantine.

If no test is taken (e.g. child under the age of 12), or if the test result is not available in time, asymptomatic travellers can end quarantine after 10 days, commencing the last day in the high-risk area.

### 8. 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.

	<b>List of <u>quarantine</u> exemptions</b>	<b>List of <u>testing exemptions</u> <sup>[1]</sup></b>
<b>General exception(s), due to essential travel, for people who are obliged to quarantine/have a sample taken</b>	<p>Going outside is only permitted for the following necessary activities that cannot be postponed until after the quarantine period has ended, and provided that particular attention is paid to hygiene measures, social distancing and wearing a (surgical) face mask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Travel related to urgent medical care and access to medicines;</li> <li>– Travel to buy basic necessities, such as food, but only if no one else can provide them and by exception;</li> <li>– Travel for urgent legal/financial matters and parental authority, subject to proof;</li> <li>– Travel to provide urgent and necessary care for farm animals, if no one else can provide it;</li> <li>– Travel in the context of funerals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People who cannot get tested for medical reasons and who are able to provide proof of this (medical certificate);</li> <li>- People who attend a test centre but for whom the doctor responsible for administering the test decides that a test cannot be administered.</li> </ul>
<b>People who are fully exempt from quarantine/testing because of essential or professional reasons after returning/arriving from a red zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Border residents or frontier workers travelling in this capacity;</li> <li>- Transport staff responsible for the transport of goods and other transport personnel travelling when performing their duties;</li> <li>- Mariners, tug crews, pilots and industrial staff working at offshore wind farms<sup>2</sup>;</li> <li>- People travelling in the context of cross-border co-parenting;</li> <li>- Pupils, students and interns who travel abroad on a daily or weekly basis as part of their studies or a cross-border internship;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Border residents or frontier workers travelling in this capacity;</li> <li>- Transport staff responsible for the transport of goods and other transport personnel travelling when performing their duties;</li> <li>- Mariners, tug crews, pilots and industrial staff working at offshore wind farms<sup>2</sup>;</li> <li>- People travelling in the context of cross-border co-parenting;</li> <li>- Pupils, students and interns who travel abroad on a daily or weekly basis as part of their studies or a cross-border internship;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Border pupils travelling to and from school in the context of compulsory education or higher and adult education;</li> <li>- Border Force Officers from the United Kingdom.</li> </ul> <p>Please note: People who have had a positive PCR test 180 days prior to return do not need to quarantine again nor do they require testing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Border pupils travelling to and from school in the context of compulsory education or higher education;</li> <li>- Border Force Officers from the United Kingdom.</li> </ul> <p>Please note: People who have had a positive PCR test 180 days prior to return do not need to quarantine again nor do they require testing.</p>
<p><b>People who are partially exempt from quarantine or testing after returning/arriving from a red zone.</b></p> <p><b>The quarantine exemption only applies to <i>either</i> essential travel to Belgium or the performance of professional activities in Belgium<sup>[3]</sup> after returning from a red zone for essential or professional reasons<sup>[4]</sup>. The remaining time (e.g. leisure time, weekends, holidays, evenings,</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils, students and interns in the context of exams or a compulsory task;</li> <li>- Members of the diplomatic and consular community, holders of an office, elected and official representatives of international organisations and institutions based in Belgium, whilst performing essential activities which cannot be carried out remotely or by video conference;</li> <li>- Heads of State and Government, members of parliament and senior officials, diplomatic, consular and technical staff on professional missions, whilst performing essential activities which cannot be carried out remotely or by video conference;</li> <li>- Staff of an international organisation or people invited by such an organisation whose physical presence is necessary for the proper functioning of that organisation, including inspectors of nuclear facilities;</li> <li>- Seasonal workers<sup>6</sup>;</li> <li>- People travelling for compelling family reasons (hospitalisation due to a serious illness, preterminal situation, death);</li> <li>- Highly qualified people travelling for economically necessary reasons which cannot be postponed (determined, where relevant, by the employer in consultation with the company doctor - given that the latter must be aware of the possible risks at work).</li> </ul> <p>This includes professional sportsmen and women, professionals in the cultural sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passengers in transit who are staying less than 48 hours in Belgium.</li> </ul> <p>Please note: People who have had a positive PCR test 180 days prior to return do not need to quarantine again nor do they require testing.</p>

	and scientific researchers travelling for work;	
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<p><b>) the person concerned must continue to respect quarantine.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journalists when travelling for work;</li> <li>- Passengers in transit who are staying less than 48 hours in Belgium. Patients travelling for urgent medical reasons or the continuation of an urgent medical treatment;</li> <li>- People travelling to provide assistance or care to an elderly person, minor, disabled or vulnerable person</li> </ul> <p>Please note: these people must fulfil the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. in a general sense, they may have no symptoms;</li> <li>2. they may not be a high-risk contact of someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 living under the same roof;</li> <li>3. they may not have tested positive for COVID-19;</li> <li>4. they must avoid close contact with other people;</li> <li>5. they must not use public transport where possible;</li> <li>6. they are unable to telework;</li> <li>7. they must respect the social distancing rules and always wear a (surgical) face mask properly at work; they must limit their contact with other employees: in practice, this means separate entrances and exits as much as possible, separate changing rooms and separate break and eating areas.</li> </ol> <p>Please note: People who have had a positive PCR test 180 days prior to return do not need to quarantine again nor do they require testing.</p>	
<p><b>48h rule</b></p>	<p>People entering Belgium who have been in a red zone for a maximum of 48 hours or who will be in Belgium for a maximum of 48 hours, unless the person has been in a high-risk country (VOC country) during the 14 days prior to arrival in Belgium.</p>	<p>People entering Belgium who have been in a red zone for a maximum of 48 hours or who will be in Belgium for a maximum of 48 hours, unless the person has been in a high-risk country (VOC country) during the 14 days prior to arrival in Belgium.</p>

<p><b>People who are partially exempt from quarantine because of a high-risk contact (the so-called "medical quarantine") or after returning/arriving from a red zone for essential or professional reasons.</b></p> <p><b>The quarantine exemption only applies to <i>either</i> essential travel to Belgium <i>or</i> the performance of essential professional activities in Belgium.</b></p> <p><b>The remaining time (e.g. leisure time, weekends, holidays and evenings ) the person concerned must continue to respect quarantine.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (subject to employer certificate where relevant) Employees who, due to the nature of their work in laboratories, come into contact with the virus that causes COVID-19.</li> <li>- People employed in an essential sector as listed in Annex 1 of the MO of 28 October 2020, where their work meets the following cumulative criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o urgent request (determined by the employer in consultation with the company doctor - given that the latter must be aware of the possible risks at work);</li> <li>o essential situation (determined by the employer in consultation with the company doctor - given that the latter must be aware of the possible risks at work);</li> <li>o indispensable and irreplaceable job role that is described in the company's Business Continuity Plan. The employees of companies that do not have a Business Continuity Plan will never be able to benefit from this quarantine exemption;</li> <li>o the continuity of the company's essential services is threatened in the short term (duration of the quarantine);</li> <li>o all other alternatives to resolve the issue have been</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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	<p>considered and are inadequate.</p>	
	<p>The employer provides the Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work and the company doctor with a list of the people concerned. Upon approval by the company's Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work, the quarantine exemption is approved and a nominative list of affected individuals is maintained on a daily basis.</p>	
	<p>Please note: these people must fulfil the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in a general sense, they may have no symptoms;</li> <li>• they may not be a high-risk contact of someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 living under the same roof;</li> <li>• they may not have tested positive for COVID-19;</li> <li>• they must avoid close contact with other people;</li> <li>• they must not use public transport where possible;</li> <li>• they are unable to telework;</li> <li>• they must respect the social distancing rules and always wear a (surgical) face mask properly at work;</li> <li>• they must limit their contact with other employees: in practice, this means separate entrances and exits as much</li> </ul>	

	as possible, separate changing rooms and separate break and eating areas.	
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<sup>[1]</sup> People who refuse to get tested are considered to have tested positive and must quarantine.

<sup>[2]</sup> Provided that the protocols drawn up to reduce the risk of contamination are strictly observed.

<sup>[3]</sup> E.g. a foreign top athlete travelling from a red zone to Belgium for a competition in Belgium.

<sup>[4]</sup> 5 E.g. a member of the Belgian government who travelled to a red zone for a meeting and returns back to Belgium and carries out his/her duties in Belgium.

### **9. 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.

### **C. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **Info Coronavirus**

##### **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/>