

The Government is strengthening safety measures for long-haul co-existing with Covid-19

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Covid-19

News



On Thursday, 1 April, the Cabinet of Ministers specified the regulations necessary for the control of Covid-19, which will be in force from 7 April after the end of the emergency situation. With the decline in morbidity no longer observed in recent weeks, the Government has strengthened strict safety measures that, jointly observed, will permit to cautiously expand on-site education and retail, as well as private gatherings. If the morbidity increases rapidly, the Cabinet of Ministers may strengthen safety measures and introduce new restrictions.

As the Covid-19 pandemic threatens everyone's health and life, both during Easter and after, everyone must adhere to the basic principles of safe living - disinfection of hands and surfaces, ventilation of the premises, physical distancing from others, and the use of masks at work and in crowded places. Efforts should also be made to take advantage of remote services, online shopping, and non-cash payments.

Given that Covid-19 is most rapidly distributed indoors, instructions available on public transport must be observed also after Easter so that its occupancy does not exceed 50%. It is recommended to avoid use of public transport as far as possible opting for alternative means of transportation, for example, walking or riding a bicycle.

Safety measures for on-site education

Kindergartens will continue to operate on-site also after 7 April. To reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread, employees should strictly adhere to epidemiological safety requirements, including the use of mouth and nose covering. Kindergarten staff will continue to be tested once a week.

At other levels of education, it is primarily stated that learning takes place remotely, but with a number of exceptions, considering education as one of the government's priorities and children's psycho-emotional health. From 7 April, in municipalities where the two-week morbidity rate per 100,000 people does not exceed 200, on-site education can be organized for students from grades 1st to 6th and students of 12th grade. For students of grades from 7th to 11th on-site studying can take place on a rotating basis so that the classes in the educational institution do not overlap. In order to resume on-site studying, the educational institution must provide epidemiological requirements and weekly testing of staff.

Individual face-to-face consultations will also be available throughout Latvia for 12th grade students and those students that are subjected to risk of dropping out of school, and for those students of vocational study programs who have to pass state examinations in the first half of 2021. On-site consultations take place only at the individual invitation of the teacher in accordance with the epidemiological safety procedure. The consultation time should not exceed 40 minutes.

In municipalities where the 14-day cumulative morbidity rate of Covid-19 per 100,000 people exceeds 200, on-site studying for 12th graders can be organised no more than two days a week in the subjects where centralized examinations are taken. In these municipalities up to 5 on-site classes held outdoors per week can be organized for students of other grades and up to a maximum of 10 people per group.

From 7 April, it will be possible to organize on-site classes outdoors for groups for up to 10 people in vocational education, interest education and artistic collectives.

Face-to-face meetings

Both private and public events will be banned also after Easter. However, from 7 April, outdoor marches and pickets will be allowed for up to 10 people, subject to epidemiological safety measures. Two households (up to 10 people) will be able to meet privately outdoors. The current norm that up to ten people from two households are allowed to gather at a funeral and an emergency baptism ceremony, keeping a distance from others and using a mouth and nose covering, will remain in force.

Requirements for safer trade

As before, retail sales outlets and market pavilions will continue to provide at least 25 square meters per visitor and organize a one-way flow. Where carts, baskets, or shopping bags are available, their number must not exceed the number of people allowed in the store and entry into the store without them are prohibited.

Points of sale may be visited alone, except for children under the age of 12 and people in need of assistance. At points of sale, both indoors and outdoors, staff and visitors must use a mouth and nose covering.

Subject to epidemiological safety requirements, on-site sales will no longer be restricted by product lists from 7 April. The Cabinet of Ministers took into account the assessment of experts that the full resumption of operations of shopping centres poses too great a risk of gathering, and thus a risk of an increase in morbidity. Therefore, only grocery and hygiene stores, pharmacies, optical stores, florists, bookstores, and press outlets will be able to operate in shopping centres with an area of more than 7,000 square meters.

Consequently, as of 7 April, the stores with an assortment of product groups included in the product lists will no longer be able to operate on-site in shopping centres. In turn, service providers in shopping centres will be able to continue operating as before.

However, from 7 April, regardless of the assortment of goods and retail space, all stores having a separate entrance and not located in a shopping centre with a sales area of more than 7,000 square meters will be able to open their doors to customers. In smaller shopping centres all points of sale will be able to work. Of course, both merchants and customers must comply with safety requirements.

From 7 April, the organization of street trade without entertainment events, such as themed parties and attractions, will also be

allowed. Up to 20 merchants may participate in such fairs and the organizer must ensure a distance of at least two meters between the stands, the flow of visitors and the demarcation of the territory.

Catering

The Cabinet of Ministers approved the safety requirements that both caterers and visitors will have to comply with in the field of public catering when the epidemiological situation in the country will be safe enough to be able to resume outdoor catering areas. Until then, however, the catering establishments continue to operate, providing food and drinks for take away.

Source: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/en/>

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