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COVID-19 Information note on health measures and border controls

This information note complements the verbal notes and circular communications sent by the [Swiss Mission](#) and the FDFA Protocol in relation to the measures taken by the Swiss authorities to combat the spread of the coronavirus (covid-19). It summarizes the rules applicable to international passenger traffic arising from the [COVID-19 Ordinance on Measures to Combat the Coronavirus in International Passenger Transport¹](#), in particular the requirements for data collection, testing and quarantine.

This information is mainly intended for persons expected in an official capacity at a diplomatic or consular representation, a permanent mission/representation/delegation or an international organization (hereafter institutional beneficiaries). It concerns mainly:

- staff members and persons authorized to accompany them;
- State delegates or other official representatives, personally invited by one of the above-mentioned entities.

This information note is regularly updated as the rules evolve. However, only the information available on the websites of the [Federal Office of Public Health \(FOPH\)](#) and the [State Secretariat for Migration \(SEM\)](#) is valid.

1. Data collection

All persons entering Switzerland are required to register their details (Art. 3, para. 1).

The contact details can be recorded electronically [here](#) before starting a journey or in writing on the entry form made available on arrival in Switzerland (paper form to be kept for 14 days).

The following persons are exempt from the obligation to register their details:

- who carry passengers or goods across the border in the course of their business (Art. 3, para. 2, let. a);
- who cross the border into Switzerland without stopping (Art. 3 para. 2 let. b);
- who enter Switzerland as cross-border commuters (Art. 3, para. 2, let. c).

2. Test for SARS-CoV-2 (PCR test and rapid immunological test)

All persons entering Switzerland (Art. 8, para. 1), regardless of where they are arriving from, must present a negative PCR test, carried out within 72 hours before entering Switzerland, or a rapid immunological test carried out within 48 hours before entering Switzerland, at the time of boarding and on request upon arrival.

Persons subject to mandatory testing on entry into Switzerland must undergo a second test between the 4th and 7th day after arrival in Switzerland. They must then follow the instructions of cantonal authorities (see links to the cantonal websites at the end of this document).

¹ Annex I and the various articles mentioned in brackets in this information note refer to this Ordinance

Are exempted from the testing requirement, provided that they do not show symptoms of COVID-19:

1. for a period of 12 months from the date of full vaccination²: persons who have been vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2³ with a vaccine listed below. Children under 18 years of age who enter Switzerland accompanied by adults considered to be vaccinated do not need to prove that they are vaccinated (Art. 4, para. 2bis).
 - a. Pfizer/BioNTech (BNT162b2 / Comirnaty® / Tozinameran)
 - b. Moderna (mRNA-1273 / Spikevax / COVID-19 vaccine Moderna)
 - c. AstraZeneca (AZD1222 Vaxzevria®/ Covishield™)
 - d. Janssen / Johnson & Johnson (Ad26.COV2.S)⁴
 - e. Sinopharm / BIBP (SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine (Vero Cell))
 - f. Sinovac (CoronaVac)
2. for a period of 6 months from the 11th day after confirmation of infection: cured persons who can provide proof that they have contracted SARS-CoV-2 (art. 9a, para. 1, let. f);
3. children under 16 years of age (Art. 9a para. 2, let. a);
4. persons with a medical certificate proving that, for medical reasons, they cannot undergo a test (Art. 9a para. 2, let. b);
5. persons whose entry into Switzerland cannot be postponed for important medical reasons (Art. 9a para. 1, let. g);
6. persons who enter Switzerland as cross-border commuters (Art. 9a para. 1, let. h).

Persons subject to the test requirement who cannot present a negative test result when entering Switzerland must, immediately after arrival and in agreement with the competent cantonal authority, be tested either by a PCR test or by a rapid antigen test according to the "[diagnostic standard](#)" for SARS-CoV-2.

3. Quarantine

Only travellers who are not vaccinated⁵ or healed⁶ and who have stayed in a [country or area where a variant of concern is circulating](#) must undergo a quarantine period. They are required to return immediately after entering Switzerland to their home or other suitable accommodation. They must remain there permanently **for a period of 10 days** after entering Switzerland.

Persons subject to the quarantine period must notify the competent cantonal authorities of their entry into Switzerland within 2 days and follow their instructions (see links to cantonal sites at the end of the document).

Early termination of the quarantine period

Persons under quarantine may, at the earliest on the 7th day of quarantine, be re-tested by means of a rapid antigen test according to the "diagnostic standard" or a PCR test. In the event of a negative result, the quarantine may be terminated without prior authorization from the competent cantonal authority. Persons whose quarantine is thus terminated early are required to wear a face mask outside their home until the end of the 10-day period and to keep a distance of at least 1.5 meters from other persons.

Persons who show symptoms of COVID-19 should be placed in isolation, unless the symptoms can be attributed to another cause.

² unless the persons enter Switzerland from a State or area with an antibody-resistant or as yet unknown antibody-resistant virus variant of concern (Annex I, ch. 1) - a list that is currently blank

³ As this list is subject to change, the lists of vaccines [approved in Switzerland, authorized by the European Medicines Agency](#) for the European Union or authorized according to the [WHO list of emergency situations](#) are authoritative

⁴ For the Janssen vaccine, the period of validity of the vaccination is 12 months from the 22nd day after the complete vaccination.

⁵ See exception 1 of point 2: Test for SARS-CoV-2 (PCR test and rapid immunological test). Also valid for quarantine, unless the persons enter Switzerland from a State or area with an antibody-resistant or as yet unknown antibody-resistant virus variant of concern (Annex I, ch. 1) - a list that is currently blank

⁶ See exception 2 of point 2: Test for SARS-CoV-2 (PCR test and rapid immunological test). Also valid for quarantine, unless the persons enter Switzerland from a State or area with an antibody-resistant or as yet unknown antibody-resistant virus variant of concern (Annex I, ch. 1) - a list that is currently blank

Procedure for requests for exemption from test and quarantine on official grounds

Exceptionally, by decision of the Swiss Mission in a multilateral context or of the FDFA Protocol in a bilateral context (according to the procedure "Requests for exemption from quarantine on official grounds" below) the following persons, provided they do not show any symptoms of COVID-19,

1. may be exempted from the test requirement:

- a. whose activity is absolutely necessary to maintain the functioning of institutional beneficiaries within the meaning of Art. 2 para. 1 the [Host State Act](#) and **who can prove this by means of a certificate from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)** (Art. 9a para. 2, let. d);
- b. whose activity is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of Switzerland's diplomatic and consular relations and **who can prove this by means of a certificate from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)** (Art. 9a para. 2, let. e).

The requirement for a test will, in principle, not be subject to derogation, as it is a measure that does not affect the performance of official duties.

2. may be exempted from the quarantine requirement, persons:

- a. whose activity is absolutely necessary for the continued operation of institutional beneficiaries within the meaning of Art. 2 para. 1 of the Host State Act (Art. 9a para. 2bis, let. c);
- b. whose activity is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of Switzerland's diplomatic and consular relations (Art. 9a para. 2bis, let. d).

Requests for abovementioned exemption must be submitted by note verbale to the Swiss Mission (geneve.visa@eda.admin.ch) for multilateral affairs and to the Protocol of the FDFA for bilateral affairs (www.eda.admin.ch/protocole), at least 5 working days before the planned date of travel. This must specify:

- The State or area which the person is travelling from;
- The dates of stay or return to Switzerland;
- For persons in post: a description of the circumstances justifying the absolute necessity of a face-to-face activity for the continued functioning of the institutional beneficiary concerned;
- For delegates to meetings/conferences: title, function, role played in the meeting, number of persons in the delegation. In such cases, an exemption from quarantine may be considered provided that the visit cannot be replaced by virtual meetings or by the participation of diplomatic staff already based in Switzerland. If applicable, the size of the delegation should be reduced to the strict minimum.

The examination of exemption requests is extremely restrictive, taking into account the recommendations of the responsible health authorities. Thus, requests for exemption for family members are, in principle, not accepted.

In all cases, it is specified that **exemption from quarantine is only valid for compelling professional reasons** and in application of all protective measures (distance, face mask, hygiene and distance rules). It does not allow for any other activities (e.g. no leisure activities, sightseeing, or festive outings).

In the event that a letter generated automatically by the Cantonal Medical Service requests a justification of the exemption from quarantine from a person who is entitled to such an exemption, such justification should be sent to the Cantonal Medical Service in the form of a verbal note, for example.

Derogations requests for compelling private reasons

If justified special interests so require, requests for derogations for private reasons may be addressed to the competent cantonal authority:

Basel: epi@bs.ch

Bern: info.gsi@be.ch

Geneva: derogation.covid@etat.ge.ch

Vaud: quarantaine.covid19@vd.ch (requests are processed during weekdays only. In case of emergency during non-working days, call 0800 316 00 between 8 am and 6 pm.)

Persons in transit

Persons who have stayed in [a State or zone where an antibody-resistant variant of the virus of concern is circulating](#) for less than 24 hours as a transit passenger⁷ (Art. 8, para. 2, let. c, of the [Ordinance COVID-19 on measures in the field of international passenger transport](#)) are not subject to the quarantine obligation on their return to Switzerland.

Persons who only enter Switzerland to pass through, with the intention and the possibility of continuing their journey directly to another country (Art. 8 para. 2 let. d. of the above-mentioned Ordinance), are not subject to the quarantine obligation, nor to the test, nor to the data collection obligation (Art. 3 para. 2 let. b of the above-mentioned Ordinance)..

Issuance of a Swiss Covid certificate for persons vaccinated abroad with a vaccine licensed by Switzerland or the European Medicines Agency (EMA)

Since 20 September 2021, all persons who are resident in Switzerland or who enter the country can obtain a **Swiss Covid certificate** from the competent cantonal authority if they have been vaccinated abroad with a vaccine licensed in [Switzerland](#) or authorised by the [EMA](#). Members of permanent missions and international organisations can also obtain a Swiss Covid certificate if they have been vaccinated abroad with a vaccine validated for emergency use by [WHO](#). To do so, they must contact the cantonal medical service of their place of residence or stay ([Geneva](#), [Vaud](#) (in French), [Bern](#) (in French) and [Basel-Stadt](#))..

Please note that a [Covid-19 information note: rules of entry into Switzerland for persons expected in an official capacity by international organisations and permanent missions](#) can be consulted on the website of the Swiss Mission.

Further information about quarantine and tests are also available at the following websites:

Geneva <https://www.ge.ch/covid-19-voyageurs-quarantaine>

Vaud <https://www.vd.ch/toutes-les-actualites/hotline-et-informations-sur-le-coronavirus/>

Bern www.be.ch/corona

Basel <https://www.coronavirus.bs.ch/>

⁷ Transit means that the person does not leave the international transit zone of the airport concerned. Travelling to a State or area with a high risk of infection and returning within 24 hours is not considered transit.