



General recommendations for the implementation of safety policies within the context of gradually easing measures against the coronavirus

(Last updated 23.04.2020)

The Federal Council presented its plan for the gradual easing of protective measures against the new coronavirus on 16.4.2020. The easing of measures will be gradually introduced and supported by safety policies.

To help businesses draw up and implement their own safety policies, the Department of Health of the Canton of Basel-Stadt has laid out recommendations for all sectors. This means that not all of the points listed below will be relevant to all sectors and/or services; instead they are presented more as a helpful point of reference for employers. The recommendations can be used in conjunction with other documents as a basis for any checks, provided the recommendations can be applied in the respective sector. Every business must be able to demonstrate its own safety measures supported by a policy.

No changes have been made to the Federal Government's code of conduct, which has been in force for some time:

- **Stay at home**, if you feel ill, especially if you have a high temperature or cough.
- **Washing your hands**: It is imperative that you wash or disinfect your hands on a regular basis.
- **Shaking hands**: Do not shake hands with others.
- **Sneezing and coughing**: Sneeze and cough into a tissue or handkerchief (or into your elbow if this is not possible).

The following points, among others, are of the utmost importance for businesses; they must be prioritised in the planning and implementation of safety measures:

Safety measures to ensure a safe distance is respected:

- **Distance of 2 metres**: The physical distance between individuals in the work place must be at least 2 metres. This applies to all locations where work is conducted as well as rooms used during breaks or for rest, changing rooms and canteens. If this is not possible, the time people are present in the same space must be as brief as possible and the necessary safety measures must be implemented.
- **The layout of tables and chairs** must be adapted to ensure this distancing is maintained. This applies to both employees in the office and during contact with the customer.
- **A safe distance must be maintained in areas used for breaks and eating**. This may involve "thinning out" the number of tables and chairs available to adhere to the minimum distance. Alternative options include staggered break times or a cap on the length of time employees may remain in an area/room.
- **Home office**: Remote working should be facilitated wherever possible.
- **Staggered working hours**: Implement staggered working hours so that fewer people are physically present at the same time.
- **Floor markings**: You can mark out the floor at 2-metre intervals to help employees and customers keep a safe distance from each other.
- **Queues**: If queues are unavoidable, direct these outdoors.
- **Number of customers per shop/place of business**: Only allow a few people into your shop or place of business (1 person per 10m² of retail area).

- **Travelling in groups:** Keep the number of people travelling in a vehicle to a minimum by making more trips or using more vehicles (possibly private vehicles). Travelling alone is preferable.
- **Dividing screens:** If possible, install dividing screens between employees or between employees and customers. Spacing strips can be used as an alternative in the reception areas of practices.
- **Ventilation:** It is advisable for rooms to be ventilated on a regular basis, in particular after each consultation.
- **No cash:** Customers must pay by card or Smartphone wherever possible.

Cleaning and disinfecting:

- **Washing your hands:** It is recommended that you wash your hands with soap and water as often as possible - especially when you arrive at work, before and after breaks, before and after going to the toilet and before and after meetings. Alternatively, you can use a disinfectant.
- **Disposable tissues:** Do not use a cloth handkerchief more than once. Alternatively, disposable tissues and hand sanitizers will be made available.
- **Cleaning and disinfecting your surroundings:** The surfaces customers and/or employees come into direct contact with must, in particular, be cleaned and /or disinfected on a regular basis. This includes, for example, work surfaces, door handles, buttons for the lift, banisters, coffee machines, keyboards, telephones, work tools, tables, chairs if possible, sofas / sofa covers, shopping trolley handles and other objects. WCs must be cleaned on a regular basis. A cleaning schedule must be drawn up to ensure the regular completion of these cleaning duties. Additional cleaning staff may be required.
- **Disinfectant / sanitizer for customers:** Many supermarkets already have hand sanitizer dispensers in their entrances. Customers should be encouraged to use these and/or antibacterial wipes to clean their hands and the trolley handle.
- **Sharing of crockery:** Please remind employees not to share cups, glasses, dishes and cutlery.
- **Remove all reading material:** Remove all magazines and papers, e.g. in waiting rooms and communal areas (such as coffee corners and kitchens).

Recommendations for groups who work in “close contact with people”

Here we refer to professions where there is a need to be in “close contact” i.e. less than the recommended 2 metres, with another person for more than 15 minutes, e.g. doctors, hairdressers, beauty salons, etc. In this instance, special measures must be taken to protect both the employee and the customer.

- **Masks:** It is not compulsory to wear a mask in Switzerland. However, the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) stipulates that both the employee and customer must wear a mask in instances where the safe distance of 2 metres cannot be upheld. This must be implemented in accordance with the Association’s safety policy.

Any exceptions to this obligation of wearing a mask when in close contact with others must be defined in the safety policy. These could include during examinations and operations in the mouth and nose area or for children in day care centres or schools.

Masks do not have to be worn if a safe distance can be maintained. This also applies to medical/therapy personnel who do not come into close contact with people. For more details, please refer to the safety policy of your department and further publications by the FOPH.

- **Protective gloves and coveralls:** Health professionals examining patients who are thought to be infected or have tested positive with COVID-19, are advised to wear protective gloves and coveralls as they will not be able to adhere to a safe distance of 2 metres.
- **Safety goggles:** The following individuals are advised to wear safety goggles: Health professionals performing corona screening tests, hospital staff who are directly exposed to the risk of transmission of infection when they carry out high-risk aerosol generating procedures (e.g.

bronchoscopy, resuscitation, suction with open systems, non-invasive ventilation) on patients who are thought to be infected or have tested positive with COVID-19.

- **People at risk:** We continue to advise people who fall into the groups at risk to always wear a mask outside of their home.
- **Disinfecting hands and surfaces:** The measures described above apply to the cleaning and disinfection of hands and surfaces. It is imperative that participants wash their hands, and that all contact surfaces and objects are disinfected, before and after every meeting. Protective covers used in the medical / therapy sector, e.g. treatment bed covers, must be changed after every patient.
- **Silence:** Animated conversations should be kept to the bare minimum in order to protect customers, unless it is part of the service. To avoid the silence being misinterpreted as antisocial behaviour, its reasoning can be explained at the beginning of the session.

Recommendations for services with appointments

- **Allow for plenty of time when scheduling appointments:** To avoid people gathering together, we recommend that you allow for plenty of time in between appointments to avoid any waiting times. Queues outside should also be avoided.
- **Punctuality:** To avoid waiting times as much as possible, customers must arrive on time and not too early. The customer should ideally be advised of this beforehand either by phone or email.
- **Cancelling an appointment:** Customers should be given the option of easily cancelling their appointments without being charged if they are ill. This removes any worries they may have had in cancelling and offers additional protection to employees.

List of clients: Businesses providing services that involve interaction with people should keep a list of their customers from the past 21 days including their name, phone number and email address. This applies in particular to sessions longer than 15 minutes and that breach the safe distance of 2 metres (service provided in close physical contact). This information is provided on a voluntary basis with the consent of the customer; this should be a straightforward procedure and not be seen as a premise for a service.

Travelling to work

- **Flexible working hours:** Staggered or flexible hours can be introduced where possible. This can reduce contact on the way to work.
- **Travelling in groups:** The number of people in the car should be kept to a minimum. If the minimum distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained, the necessary measures for personal protection must be implemented.
- **Parking:** Additional parking spaces can be provided for customers in order to keep the use of public transport to an absolute minimum.

What to do if an employee is ill:

- Employees suffering from a cough, sore throat, shortness of breath with or without a high temperature, who feel feverish or have aching muscles, must remain at home. These safety measures must be clearly communicated to all employees in the respective language. The FOPH has translated the safety measures into many different languages (www.bag-coronavirus.ch).
- Employees at work suffering from a cough, sore throat, shortness of breath with or without a high temperature, who feel feverish or have aching muscles, must go home immediately, or after calling in by phone, visit a doctor's surgery or emergency station. No employee is allowed to work if they are ill. Employees must also be informed of this measure.

We hope this information is helpful in writing up your own safety policy.
We will gladly answer any questions you may have (email: md@bs.ch).