FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERALITIES

When do these measures enter into force?

From the afternoon of the 18th of March until the 5th of April (until the 3rd of April for the schools), the measures described below and those from the Prime Minister’s press release are applicable.

What does a federal phase mean for the decisions already taken?

A federal phase means that the governors and mayors must apply the general measures and actively repeal their previous decrees after the publication of the ministerial decree. The Ministerial Decree and further clarifications will follow in the next few hours. The aim is to harmonize the measures on Belgian territory.

What happens in case of non-compliance with measures decided at the federal level?

In case of non-compliance with federal measures (provided by the Ministerial Decree), the sanctions provided under Articles 182 and 187 of the law on Civil Security of May 15th 2007 are applicable. The emphasis is on prevention, dialogue and citizenship.

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

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

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Based on which principles are the measures taken?

- The general hygiene measures remain applicable.
- Authorities must be able to continue to function.
- Children must be welcomed in the schools if their parents have no other means of accommodating them than the grandparents, regardless of their age. Specific attention should be paid to the children of staff from the medical and essential public sector.
- The social distance (minimum 1.5 meters between persons) is maintained in all circumstances. For example: leave a seat free between two people during a necessary meeting.
- A mix of different ages should absolutely be avoided.
- Stay at home as much as possible, only essential movements (going to work when teleworking is impossible, going to the pharmacist, going to the post office, buying food, refuelling, etc.) should be made.
Will stores stay open?

Stay open, only:

- the food stores, including night shops;
- the pet food stores;
- the pharmacies;
- the newsstand;
- petrol stations and fuel suppliers;

All other shops - clothes shops, electrical shops, DIY stores, etc. - are closed.

What are the specific measures applicable to shops that remain open?

All shops must take the necessary measures to respect the social distancing rules and in particular to maintain a distance of 1.5m between each person.

In addition, access to large areas should be regulated as follows:

- one person per 10m² for a maximum period of 30 minutes;
- as far as possible, individual shopping.

Can you pay with cash?

Electronic payments are encouraged, not because cash is infected, but because electronic payments allow social distancing measures to be respected.

What about the night shops?

The night shops are allowed to open from their normal opening hours until 10 p.m., subject to compliance with social distancing measures.

What about mixed stores?

Food stores that sell non-food products (e.g. stationery) on a secondary basis: remain open without having to close the non-food departments.

Mixed stores offering food as a secondary product are closed.

What about outdoor markets?

The markets are forbidden except for those needed in the municipality to supply the local population (when there is no supermarket, for example). Only the food stalls may be opened in these areas on condition that the local authorities can guarantee social distancing measures.

If, despite the reorganisation of the market, the mayor cannot guarantee social distancing, he must prohibit the market.

What about banks and postal desks?

These services are part of the exceptions that may remain open during their normal opening hours but which must guarantee social distancing measures, for example at least 1.5m between each person.
I work in the private and special security sector, may I go to work?

Under the current measures, the exception should be limited to the fundamental and necessary activities of the private and special security sector.

The private security sector, which includes private security companies and in-house security services, as well as the security services of public transport companies such as Securail, may continue to operate.

For installers of alarm systems and camera systems, only urgent maintenance or repair work is permitted. Other daily activities, such as new installations, are prohibited.

The training institutions associated with the private security sector can only continue their activities through distance learning.

Security advisors can only continue their activities digitally.

There's a cell phone mast on my private property, on top of the hospital... Should I give the operators' maintenance teams access to these antennas?

Yes, it is essential that the electronic communication is maintained and that the operators can do all the necessary maintenance.

Are the hotels open?

Hotels are allowed to stay but WITHOUT access to bars, restaurants (communal areas) and leisure areas, in order to meet the demand for accommodation for essential journeys. However, room service is permitted. Terrace furniture must be placed inside.

The meeting rooms of these hotels are closed.

What about other types of accommodation?

Recreational and tourist residences (cottage, camping, B&B, holiday parks, AirBnB, ...) must close. The permanent residents of this type of accommodation may, of course, continue to live here.

In order to avoid mass mixes of people coming together in the same place, essential movements are only allowed in the vicinity of the place of residence.

What about hairdressers?

Hairdressing salons can stay open:

- On condition that hairdressers only work by appointment and receive one customer at a time in their business.
- If you have symptoms such as fever and coughing, as always: stay at home.
- Those who are fit and healthy can go to a hairdresser if the general hygiene measures are strictly and accurately applied.
- This can be done by, for example:
  - Not giving hands or kisses;
  - Washing your hands regularly with soap and water;
  - Use a new paper tissue each time and throw it away in a lockable dustbin
- For the hairdresser it is safe to cut the hair of a healthy customer. For a client with no symptoms, the risk of infection is very low.
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NCCN

What about beauty salons and sun centers?

They are closed.

Is the delivery of meals and the sale of meals to take away prohibited?

No, the delivery of meals and the sale of take-away meals are not prohibited provided that social distancing measures and the organisation of queues outside are complied with.

The sale of take-away meals and the delivery of meals may only be carried out between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Are food trucks allowed?

Food trucks are prohibited except food trucks offering take-away meals, which can be considered as a complete meal (no sale of ice creams and waffles).

What about urgent repair services for safety, hygiene and ICT infrastructure?

All urgent repairs may continue to be carried out.

For example: plumbers, mechanics, telecom suppliers, ...

Can the shops that supply the agricultural sector (phytoproducts, animal feed, etc.) remain open?

Yes, all companies supplying the agricultural sector continue to work in compliance with social distancing measures and apply teleworking wherever possible.

Can opticians and hearing aids stores remain open?

Yes, provided the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

May paramedical shops (drugstores, ...) remain open?

No, they have to close.

May veterinarians continue their activities?

Yes.

Can carwashes be open?

No, they are closed.

May places of worship remain open to the public despite the fact that services are prohibited?

Yes, the buildings remain open, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed. The managers of these buildings are expected to lay down the necessary rules for this and to pay close attention to their observance.

Can wine merchants remain open?

Yes, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

May physiotherapists, osteopaths, podiatrists, etc. continue their activities?

Health care professions may continue to be practised, but deferrable care should be adjourned.
Can sales representatives continue to move around and work as remote work is not feasible in their case?

No, these people are not allowed to continue their activities.

May lawyers, notaries and bailiffs continue to receive clients, especially for signing deeds?

Yes, if necessary, provided that social distancing measures are followed. Wherever possible, teleworking and electronic communication should be applied.

Can industrial laundries that wash mainly (bed) sheets from care centres remain open?

Yes.

What about laundromats?

They remain open subject to compliance with hygiene measures and social distancing.

Can beauty centres remain open?

They are closed and beauticians are not allowed to provide their services at home.

May drugstores (plant based products, herbal shops, parapharmacies, tea shops) remain open?

No, they may not stay open.

Can garages stay open?

Yes, just to carry out urgent repairs and observe social distancing rules. This also applies to tyre centres and glass repairs.

May dealers in building materials continue to supply their customers?

Yes, but only for professional use and respecting the rule of 1 customer per 10 m². For private individuals, e-commerce traders can be used.

Do workers who work outdoors (municipal workers, green services, etc.) have to stay at home?

They may continue to work as long as their employer can guarantee the social distancing measures.

Can e-commerce traders continue their activities if they are not considered essential (e.g. clothes, do-it-yourself, …)?

Yes, they may continue their activities, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

May cleaning services (service vouchers, etc.) continue to be provided to customers at home?

Yes, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

May wholesale markets (for professional customers) continue (early market Brussels, fish market Zeebrugge, …)?

Yes, as long as the rules of social distancing are followed as far as possible.

May self-employed window washers or window washers organised in companies continue their work and meet the demands of companies that call on them?

Yes, as long as they respect the social distancing measures.
Is it allowed to move?

Yes, it is allowed, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

What about chimney sweepers?

They are allowed to continue their activities, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

WORKING CONDITIONS IN COMPANIES

Is teleworking mandatory?

Yes, teleworking is compulsory for all non-essential companies, whatever their size, for all jobs for which it is possible to organise it.

What about the functions for which telework is not possible?

If telework is not possible, social distancing measures must be strictly adhered to.

If these measures are not adhered to, these companies risk fines in the event of a first infringement and, in the event of repeated non-compliance with the social distancing measures, they must close down.

Do these measures apply to all sectors and services?

No. These obligations do not apply to companies in key sectors and essential services.

However, these companies should, if possible, also implement a teleworking system and respect social distancing measures.

The complete list of these crucial sectors and essential services has been compiled and annexed to the Ministerial Decree of 18 March 2020.

What about public administrations (e.g. municipalities)?

These administrations must continue to function in order to guarantee their main tasks and ensure that social distancing measures and/or teleworking are implemented.

The public administrations must inform the population about the possibilities of obtaining documents and information via alternative ways (online). The administration must give preference to these alternative ways to limit the number of journeys.

May the municipal and provincial councils, boards of directors and general assemblies of public institutions, inter-communal associations, etc. continue?

Yes, to the extent that the agenda items cannot be postponed and where the meeting cannot take place virtually.

Should home nurses continue to work?

Yes, home care will continue.

Are the container parks closed?

Container parks are currently closed, however, the Regions are looking for a solution that will be communicated in the next few days.
What about prostitution and prostitution neighbourhoods?

They will be closed.

Should provincial domains be closed?

Yes, they should be closed.

Companies must respect the rules of social distancing. Those who don’t must close down. Failure to comply will result in fines. But what can an employee do about it? Where should he complain, etc.?

They can file a complaint with the labour inspectorate via call number: 022334111

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

Yes, provided the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

Can garages and tyre centres continue their activities?

Yes, but only for urgent repairs and provided that social distancing measures are followed.

TRANSPORT

Are there any specific measures for public transport?

Public transport is still active but needs to be organised in such a way that social distancing measures such as keeping 1.5m distance can be guaranteed.

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

What about taxi drivers (and other private transport services such as Uber)?

Taxi drivers are only allowed to transport one person per taxi ride.

The family is allowed in one taxi.

Carpool? How many people in a private car?

As with taxis, only one person is allowed to travel in a taxi.

Can companies continue to organize transport by bus for their employees?

Yes, when social distancing is respected.

JOURNEYS

May one go somewhere else?

Citizens must stay at home in order to avoid contact with people other than their immediate family as much as possible.

Are there any exceptions to this principle?

Movements are only allowed in case of necessity and for urgent reasons, such as for example:

- commuting between home and work;
- Absolutely necessary travel (doctor’s visit, food purchases, travel to the post office, bank, pharmacy, petrol station or assistance to the person in need);
- Physical outdoor activities, subject to social distancing measures.
Will they set up an attestation system to drive around like in France?

No, it's not planned.

Will it be possible to walk or jog outside?

Yes and is even recommended but only with those members of the family living under the same roof and possibly with a third party (e.g. always the same friend) and applying a 1.5m distance between them.

Can we still get together?

No, all gatherings of more than 2 people are forbidden.

As for outdoor activities, only walking, cycling and running tours are allowed according to the modalities described in the previous question (only in a family circle living under the same roof and recommended in the company of always the same friend), even if these are more than 2 persons from the same family living under the same roof.

Are visits allowed to family members who do not live under the same roof?

Visits to families that do not live under the same roof are not recommended, except to provide assistance and care for vulnerable people (to provide assistance and care for elderly people, for minors, for disabled people and for vulnerable people).

What if you do not live under the same roof with your partner?

The new measures stipulate that you must limit contact to your family and possibly one additional person. So you can still visit your partner. Of course, don't do it if you yourself are sick or show symptoms.

What about funerals?

Funerals in an intimate setting are allowed, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

I'm in my dorm right now. Can I go back to my parents?

It is necessary for students to choose a permanent place to stay during the crisis.

Can animal owners continue to visit and feed their animals?

Yes, provided that the measures relating to social distancing are followed.

May tourists continue to travel to Belgium (the coast, Ardennes, ...)?

No. It is forbidden for tourists to come to Belgium because recreational activities are forbidden.

Can I go to my holiday home, for example in the Ardennes or the coast?

No, this is not allowed. By implementing social distance measures to prevent social mixing (age, people who do not usually visit each other very often), and also to prevent regions where health facilities are not sufficient to cope with the influx of people from outside the region from becoming overburdened.
SCHOOLS

Will kindergarten, primary and secondary schools be closed?

The measures provide for the suspension of lessons in all kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, including extra-curricular activities.

The childcare, organized exclusively by internal staff, must be provided at least for children whose parents are parents:

- working in the health sector
- working in an essential public sector
- have no option but to have their children looked after by their grandparents, whatever their age.

The refectories may remain open.

Can we provide new childcare facilities ourselves?

Existing childcare facilities are permitted. New initiatives that do not exceed existing contacts are not allowed.

Are companies allowed to take initiatives for the care of children of their employees?

If such systems already existed, they can continue.

However, no new initiatives of childcare can be set up. It is necessary to avoid putting together children who were not in contact with each other beforehand.

Will boarding schools and special needs schools be closed?

The boarding schools and special needs education remain open, but the lessons are cancelled.

Will universities, colleges and other schools be closed?

Universities and colleges may only teach through distance learning.

Will schools for security professions be closed?

Fire, police and safety schools continue to provide basic training. It is recommended that the lessons are given remotely. If this is not possible, lessons may be continued in the schools when hygiene measures and social distancing are respected and no new mix groups are created between the different classes.

For the advanced courses, they are given according to the evaluation of the organizing body.

CARE OF CHILDREN UP TO 3 YEARS OLD

Will the nurseries be open?

The nurseries and childminders for children up to 3 maximum will remain open.
International

Is it still allowed to travel abroad?
Any non-essential travel abroad is forbidden.

Is cross-border work still allowed (e.g. French people working in Belgium)?
Yes, frontier workers may continue to carry out their activities within the limits of the measures imposed.

What about co-parenting for children between parents living on both sides of the border?
Co-parenting of parents living in the border region (one in Belgium, the other in the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg or Germany) can continue.