

“Our plan for Hessen”

Hessen Minister President Volker Bouffier explains the new Corona regulations:

I. Introduction

The Corona pandemic has presented Hessen with major challenges. The massive restrictions, which were necessary to protect the population, have demanded a great deal from each of us. Through their sacrifice and disciplined behavior, all citizens have helped us to be able to relax the measures. The Hessen is especially grateful to the numerous helpers.

Despite the positive development of the infection figures in Germany and Hessen, we need to be very mindful with the new relaxations. In order to be able to gradually enable people to return to their normal everyday life, a strict set of conditions is required. We must continue to pay attention to each other and protect each other. We all have a special responsibility towards risk groups. The most important factors are distance, hygiene and contact-tracking.

We must all be very careful and follow distance and hygiene rules. In order to ensure the safety of the population, we have established a contact-tracking system to break infection chains as quickly as possible. For particularly affected regions, mobile units can perform contact tracking. We will continuously increase our testing capacities. For all those who don't follow the rules, we will use sanctions as a last resort. With the easing of the regulations, special responsibility is put on each and every one of us. More freedom also means more responsibility for each of us. Everyone can help contain the pandemic by following the rules.

The economic challenges have already been immense. We will continue to support our workers, the self-employed, small and medium-sized enterprises and the (large) companies that are losing money as a result of the crisis. Here, too, it is important to gradually return to normal operation as soon as possible, provided that hygiene rules are strictly followed.

II. The new rules in detail

As a general rule, the openings in the form shown below are only possible if the required hygiene concepts and distance rules are adhered to, and thus the number of newly infected people per 100,000 inhabitants does not exceed the 50 infected in one week in a district or city. If this does not work, new restrictions will be inevitable.

1. Contact Restrictions and Events

Contact restrictions are still necessary to further contain the virus and reduce the number of infected people. Due to the currently low infection rates, social contacts can be re-established gradually. Starting 9 May, it will again be permitted to meet in public with members of another household in addition to those living in one's own home.

For events, the Chancellor's agreement with the heads of the state governments to prohibit major events until 31 August 2020 still applies. Special regulations already apply to church services and

demonstrations. The Hessen event concept allows gatherings of up to 100 people, starting 9 May, under strict conditions. Exceptions for larger groups can be made by the responsible authorities as long as it is ensured that compliance with the conditions (e.g. hygiene and distance rules) is continuously monitored.

2. Schools

The state government will continue to gradually open the schools. After the partial openings that have already taken place, the following concept is based on the decisions of the Conference of Ministers of Culture, the law and the experience gained from the openings that have taken place so far.

The gradual opening for the schools entails the following:

- Starting 18 May: Sekundarstufe I (secondary education) at the same time as the introduction phase of Sekundarstufe II and Intensivklassen; 4th grade in elementary schools.
- Starting 18 May: Further opening of Berufsschulen (vocational schools) and InteA classes.
- Starting 2 June: Grades 1-3 as well as Vorklassen (pre-classes), Vorlaufkurse (preliminary courses) and Intensivklassen (intensive classes) in elementary schools.
- The resumption of the schooling of the Förderschulen is based on the dates of elementary and secondary schools.

We must keep in mind that schools must be given adequate time to prepare for the organization of lessons for small groups, the distribution of space and the implementation of the hygiene plan.

3. Higher Education

Starting 9 May 2020, universities will decide on their opening up within the framework of their self-government. Classroom events are generally possible again from this point on, at the same time online offers should continue to be used.

4. Childcare

Parallely with the opening of elementary schools, care in daycare centers must also be made possible again. We will move from the extended emergency care system to a model of restricted regular operation. The difficulties in implementing distance rules etc. in the field of children aged 12 months to 6 years must be met by particularly careful pedagogical work and organization. More lead time is therefore needed for these facilities.

Starting 9 May, it will be possible to form family care communities of up to three families. As a first step, we will expand the rights to participate in emergency care starting 11 May. From 2 June on, the daycare centers will then reopen to all children in restricted normal operations.

5. Services and trade

The retail sales area limit of 800 square meters will not be in effect anymore starting 9 May 2020. Instead, the rule applies that one customer is allowed for each 20 square meters.

Services such as hairdressers, cosmetic studios, massage practices, etc. have been allowed to reopen since 4 May.

6. Gastronomy and tourism

Starting 15 May 2020, restaurants, cafés, Biergärten, casinos and amusement arcades (inside and outside) will be open, subject to distance rules and hygiene concepts. Dance facilities and discotheques will remain closed for the time being.

Bed-and-breakfast facilities, private rooms and hotels will be able to resume operations for tourist purposes from 15 May 2020 on. Wherever food is offered, the same conditions apply as for gastronomy. This also applies to the distance rules and the permissible density per square meter of guest area, with the exception of guest rooms. In all public areas (reception, meeting rooms, breakfast rooms, restaurant) the distance rules between staff and guests as well as between guests must be observed at all times.

Also from 15 May 2020 on, holiday apartments and campsites can be rented and used again. Permanent camping and second home use are allowed. Theme parks can also reopen their doors from that day on, if they have a comprehensive hygiene concept. Swimming pools and Saunas etc. remain closed.

7. Sports and leisure activities

Sports and taking care of one's health go hand in hand. Starting 9 May 2020, sports can be resumed, provided that it is exercised without contact, a minimum distance of 1.5 meters between persons is observed, hygiene and disinfection measures are followed and no shower and washrooms etc. are to be used. The training and competition operation of top and professional sports is also permitted in coordination with the leagues, provided that this is based on a comprehensive hygiene concept.

Indoor playgrounds, climbing areas and gyms, bowling alleys including squash facilities can be reopened and used under comparable conditions starting 9 May 2020. Gyms will be open again from May 15, 2020 on.

For sports and other leisure activities, the hygiene concepts must meet the specific requirements in particular.

8. Theatres, museums, other cultural institutions

Under the conditions set out for events, theaters, opera and concert halls as well as other cultural institutions will also be able to reopen starting 9 May 2020. Excluded from this are events and concerts, which cannot be observed without increased risk of infection.

9. Amusement arcades, casinos and betting offices

Amusement arcades, casinos and betting offices will also be able to resume operations starting 15 May 2020.

All regulations will apply until 5 June 2020.

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