**Current: Coronavirus Protection Ordinance**

**Which key figures are important with regard to protective measures?**

The federal government's Council of Experts has issued an urgent warning that critical infrastructure is at risk from a large number of staff absences (infections and quarantine). This is also clearly stated as the aim of the regulation. In addition to the decided adjustment of the quarantine regulations, this requires above all the limitation of the total infection figures, which is why the total incidence, in addition to the hospitalisation incidence, will again become an essential indicator for the necessity of the protective measures. The automatism of adjustments of protective measures in the case of changes in the incidence of hospitalisation is consequently omitted.

**What contact restrictions apply?**

Contact restrictions apply to both non-immunised and immunised people.

**People who are neither fully vaccinated nor recovered** may only meet members of their own household and a maximum of two people from another household at private meetings in public and private spaces. Children under the age of 14 are not counted. For the purpose of determining the household, spouses, civil partners and partners in a non-marital partnership are considered as one household, even if they do not live together.

**Private meetings attended exclusively by vaccinated or recovered persons** may also be held with a total of up to 10 persons, without regard to how many households these up to 10 persons come from. Again, children under the age of 14 are not counted.

**Does a mask obligation still apply?**

Yes. There is still a duty to wear a medical mask in the following areas:

* in local and long-distance public transport,
* in indoor areas with public traffic, e.g. in shopping centres,
* outdoors in queues, queuing areas and directly at sales stands, checkout areas or similar service counters,
* outdoors, insofar as the competent authority expressly orders this for specifically designated areas by general decree.

For outdoor events and gatherings, the obligation to wear at least one medical mask is based on the respective access regulation or the following requirements:

1. If all persons have access to the event or assembly regardless of proof of testing or immunisation, at least one medical mask must be worn.

2. If only tested or immunised persons have access to the event or gathering, at least one medical mask must be worn only if the distance is less than 1.5 metres.

3. If only immunised persons have access, there is no obligation to wear a mask. However, it is recommended to wear a mask if the minimum distance of 1.5 metres from other persons cannot be maintained.

The persons responsible for the event or assembly must inform the persons participating about the applicable regulations and point out compliance in the event of violations.

In addition, the wearing of a mask is strongly recommended wherever the minimum distance of 1.5 metres from other persons cannot be maintained, even outdoors.

**What are the exemptions from the mask requirement?**

As an exception, the wearing of a mask can be dispensed with in the following cases, for example:

* in private rooms in the case of exclusively private meetings,
* in restaurants and other catering establishments at fixed seating or standing places,
* in operational situations of security authorities, fire brigade, etc,
* when communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing person,
* by persons who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons (certificate required).
* to eat and drink,
* by immunised members of choirs when singing together or of immunised singers or actors when performing within the framework of cultural offerings, including the necessary rehearsals, if the respective artistic activities are only possible without wearing a mask,
* and for other reasons, if the removal of the mask takes only a few seconds while maintaining the minimum distance of 1.5 metres.

All exemptions from the mask requirement are listed in § 3 paragraph 2 of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance. The document can be found [on the website www.mags.nrw/coronavirus-rechtlicheregelungen-nrw](https://www.mags.nrw/coronavirus-rechtlicheregelungen-nrw).

Children up to the age of school entry are exempt from the obligation to wear a mask. Where children from school entry to 13 years of age cannot wear a medical mask due to the fit, an everyday mask shall be worn as a substitute.

**What does the 3G rule mean?**

Fully vaccinated and recovered people are free to use the facilities and services covered by the 3G rule. All other persons must be proven to have tested negative. PCR tests that are not older than 48 hours and rapid tests that are not older than 24 hours are recognised.

**In which areas does 3G apply?**

The 3G rule (admission for vaccinated, recovered or currently tested) applies to, among others:

* funerals and civil weddings;
* offers and events of school, university, vocational or job-related education, early childhood education in day-care centres, political education and self-help as well as integration courses;
* non-tourist overnight stays (non-immunised persons must present negative proof of testing on arrival and each time after expiry of validity);
* hairdressing services (provided that the person providing the service and the client wear an FFP-2 mask and not just a medical mask);
* trade fairs and conventions for commercial suppliers and interested parties as well as events in which only members of companies and enterprises participate and which are carried out in compliance with infection control requirements under labour law;
* assemblies within the meaning of Article 8 of the Basic Law (regulates freedom of assembly) in indoorpublic spaces;
* outdoor assemblies within the meaning of Article 8 of the Basic Law with more than 750 participants at any one time;
* meetings of municipal bodies and legally required meetings of bodies of public and private law institutions, societies, communities, parties or associations as well as information and discussion events of political parties without a convivial character;
* the use of university libraries (including non-contact borrowing and return of media) and university canteens by university staff;
* the contactless lending and return of media in libraries;
* offers of youth social work and youth work for socially disadvantaged young people as well as offers according to § 16 of the Eighth Book of the Social Code (child and youth welfare);
* children's and youth and family recreational trips by public and independent child and youth welfare organisations (non-immunised persons must present negative proof of testing on arrival and again after four days or carry out a joint supervised self-test);
* in-patient child and youth welfare facilities requiring operating licences within the meaning of § 45 et seq. of Book Eight of the Social Code (Child and Youth Welfare), with children and youths being excluded from this regulation.

In the field of education, 3G applies to offers and events in school, university, vocational or work-related education (including training fairs, job fairs and vocational orientation events), early childhood education in child day care, political education and self-help, as well as integration courses and the use of university libraries and university canteens by persons who directly belong to the university or institution as employees or students.

The state has issued its own Coronavirus Epidemic Higher Education Ordinance for the higher education sector. According to this, universities and higher education institutions are also allowed to reduce the number of participants in attendance events depending on the level of infection and to adjust exemptions and withdrawals in such a way that students do not suffer any disadvantages as a result of the pandemic.

**What applies to visitors to hospitals, nursing homes and similar institutions?**

In the case of hospitals, nursing homes and fully or partially inpatient facilities for the care and accommodation of elderly, disabled people or people in need of care, the federal regulation of § 28b para. 2 IfSG applies: Here, employers, employees and visitors must be tested persons, i.e. be in possession of a test certificate issued to them. According to the legal regulation, this applies regardless of whether they are vaccinated or recovered at the same time. Visitors to facilities for the communal accommodation of asylum seekers, persons who are obliged to leave the country, refugees and ethnic German immigrants and inpatient social welfare facilities must also have a negative test result according to § 8 para. 5 Coronavirus Test Quarantine ordinance.

**What does the 2G rule mean?**

The 2G rule means that facilities and services may now only be used by fully vaccinated and recovered persons. The 2G rule applies in principle to all recreational services and facilities. All persons who are neither fully vaccinated nor recovered are not allowed access to these facilities or services. The only exceptions are people who have a medical certificate stating that they cannot be vaccinated against Covid-19 for health reasons, and children and adolescents up to and including 15 years of age.

**Where does the 2G rule apply? Which areas may only be visited by immunised persons (vaccinated or recovered, 2G)?**

The 2G rule (access only for vaccinated or recovered persons) applies to, among others:

* Retail shops and markets, with the exception of grocery stores, beverage markets, health food stores, baby stores, pharmacies, medical supply stores, drugstores, opticians, hearing aid acousticians, petrol stations, newspaper sales outlets, bookstores, florists, pet supply stores, feed markets, garden markets and the wholesale trade;
* Museums, exhibitions, memorials and other cultural institutions;
* Concerts, performances, readings and other cultural events, for example in theatres and cinemas;
* Christmas markets, folk festivals and comparable leisure events;
* Zoos;
* Theme parks;
* Amusement halls;
* The joint practice of sport (including training and competition) outdoors (professional and amateur sport);
* Educational services that do not explicitly fall under 3G (see above);
* Body-related services (with the exception of medical or nursing services);
* Hairdressing services where the person providing the service or the client wears only a medical mask instead of an FFP-2 mask;
* Tourist overnight stays in accommodation establishments as well as tourist coach tours.

 **The 2G rule does NOT apply to:**

* Persons who have a medical certificate stating that they cannot or could not be vaccinated at present or up to a maximum of six weeks ago for health reasons. However, these persons must show a negative test certificate;
* Children and young people up to and including the age of 15. You also do not need to show negative test evidence because of regular school testing outside the holidays.
* Up to and including 16 January 2022, schoolchildren aged 16 and 17 are also treated in the same way as immunised persons for the purpose of engaging in their own sporting, musical or acting activities. They also do not need to show a negative test certificate outside the school holidays.
* For the catering of professional drivers at rest areas and motorway stations if they have a negative test certificate.

**What does 2G+ mean and which people are exempt from the additional testing requirement?**

The 2G+ rule means that only fully vaccinated or recovered people can enter and they must also prove a negative test result. This can be done in the form of a rapid test (not older than 24 hours) or a PCR test (not older than 48 hours).

The 2G+ rule applies to, among others:

* the joint practice of sports indoors (sports halls, gyms, etc.) - exceptions apply to professional sports, among others;
* the use of indoor swimming pools and wellness facilities (saunas, thermal baths, tanning salons, etc.);
* company canteens, school canteens, university canteens and comparable facilities when used by persons who do not directly belong to the company or facility as employees, students, pupils, course participants, etc., if this use is not limited to the mere collection of food and beverages;
* all other gastronomic offers, if the use is not limited to the mere collection of food and beverages;
* choir members singing together, as well as other artistic activities that can only be performed without wearing a mask (playing wind instruments and the like);
* carnival events and comparable traditional events (scale: singing along/swaying while seated with arms linked; dancing not as a focus);
* private parties with dancing, without dancing being the main focus of the event (e.g. weddings);
* sexual services.

**No additional testing obligation for boostered and recovered persons**

The additional testing requirement in areas where 2G+ applies does not apply to immunised persons who, in addition to full basic immunisation,

* either have a 3rd booster vaccination
* vaccinated recovered persons, i.e. persons who had a Covid-19 infection detected by PCR test and received at least one vaccination before or after that
* people who have been vaccinated twice, with the second vaccination more than 14, but less than 90 days ago (also applies to Johnson&Johnson vaccine recipients who have not yet received a third vaccination) or
* have recovered from an infection in the last three months (confirmed PCR test more than 27 days, but not older than 90 days). The exception applies to all areas of application of 2G+, i.e. also for indoor sports, for example.

The North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Health has prepared a **detailed handout on the topic of 2G+**: Where does 2Gplus apply? What are the requirements for 2Gplus? When does negative test evidence have to be presented - and when does it not? These and other questions are answered in the handout, which can be  [downloaded here](https://www.mags.nrw/sites/default/files/asset/document/220114_infoblatt_2gplus_testnachweis_ausnahmen_vom_testnachweis.pdf).

**Are on-site tests possible when using 3G and 2G+ offers?**

In places where a test is required for access (i.e. 3G and 2G+), instead of presenting a test certificate from an official testing centre, a supervised self-test can also be carried out on site at the time of access, for example when accessing a fitness studio under the supervision of expert trained reception staff or when practising sport under the supervision of an expert or trained trainer/exercise instructor.

This supervised self-test only entitles you to access the specific offer. No test certificate can be issued by the supervisor that could be used to visit other facilities. Only the official test centres can continue to do this.

Whether and in what form testing is offered on site is decided by the respective operator of the facility. The offer of on-site testing is not mandatory and does not have to be offered free of charge by the respective operator.

**What applies to people who cannot be vaccinated?**

For persons who have a medical certificate stating that they cannot be vaccinated against Covid-19 for health reasons, they will be treated as immunised persons if they have a rapid antigen test dated no more than 24 hours ago or a PCR test certified by a recognised laboratory dated no more than 48 hours ago.

**What applies at events?**

Events are subject to relative capacity limits depending on the size of the event space and an absolute maximum of 750 participants. In future, this will also apply uniformly to supra-regional events such as Bundesliga football matches, etc.

Employees, volunteers and other comparable persons are not counted.

Access control must be guaranteed.

**What applies in clubs, discotheques or at dance events and carnival parties with dancing?**

In order to contain the spread of the coronavirus, clubs, discos and similar establishments with a particularly high risk of infection are closed. Comparable events (public dance events, private dance and disco parties and the like) are also not permitted due to the high risk of infection.

Due to the supra-regional catchment areas, this is deliberately done independently of the local incidence and thus applies to the whole of North Rhine-Westphalia.

**What applies to private parties?**

Private dance and disco parties and the like are currently prohibited.  Private gatherings indoors and outdoors, even of vaccinated and recovered persons, are only allowed with a maximum of ten persons since 28 December 2021. There is no limit to a certain number of households. Children up to and including 13 years of age are exempt. As soon as an unvaccinated person participates, only two people from another household are allowed to participate in addition to their own household.

**What regulations apply to employees?**

Employees, volunteers and similar persons working in areas with 3G, 2G or 2Gplus restricted access and having contact with guests, customers or users of the services or with each other must be immunised or tested.

If they are not immunised, they must wear a medical mask at all times while working in areas with 2G or 2Gplus restricted access, in addition to the requirement for current proof of testing. If it is not possible to wear a mask during professional practice, a PCR test must be available.

**How are the regulations reviewed and controlled?**

The verification of the vaccination and test certificates is carried out by the responsible organisers or operators, whereby a comparison with an official identification document is also carried out. Therefore, users, customers, visitors, etc. are obliged to carry and show the respective proof of identity together with an official identification document.

In the case of children and young people who do not yet have an official identity document, it is sufficient for them to declare their identity or to prove it by means of their parents' identity document, student ID or similar.

Persons who do not show the required proof of vaccination/testing and proof of identity shall be excluded from use or exercise.

The CovPassCheck app published by the Robert Koch Institute is to be used to check digital vaccination certificates.

Failure to carry out checks is punishable by fines. In case of disregard of central rules, the trade and restaurant inspectorate must be informed to be able to check the reliability of the operators.

**Do the general hygiene and infection control rules still apply?**

The well-known and proven AHA rules of conduct are still recommended: [Keep your distance, observe hygiene rules and wear a mask in everyday life.](https://www.zusammengegencorona.de/informieren/alltag-und-reisen/ein-neuer-alltag/).

And: Facilities with visitor or customer traffic are obliged to implement certain ventilation and hygiene rules.

Further information is summarised in the annex "Hygiene and Infection Protection Rules" to the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance, especially for business owners. It is [on the overview page on the legal regulations during the coronavirus pandemic](https://www.mags.nrw/coronavirus-rechtlicheregelungen-nrw)

**Do you have questions about the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance?**

Then you can send an email to corona@nrw.de.