

What contact restrictions apply?

The contact regulations will remain in effect: private meetings in public without adherence to the minimum distance requirement must be reduced to persons from one's own, and one additional household. But only a maximum of five people may get together, whereby children up to and including 14 years of age are exempted from the count.

An exception will apply from 24 to 26 December 2020.

How many people can I meet with on Christmas and New Year?

From 24 to 26 December 2020, another four close relatives may visit in addition to the persons from one's own household. Here, too, children up to and including 14 years of age are not counted. Close relatives include: spouses, life partners, non-marital partners, direct relatives, siblings, nieces and nephews. Their own household members may also be included, provided the number of four persons above 14 years of age outside of one's respective household is not exceeded.

On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, private meetings in public must be limited to one's own and one additional household. However, only a maximum of five persons may get together, whereby children up to and including 14 years of age are exempted from the count.

What are the legal regulations concerning food service and accommodations?

Restaurants and accommodation facilities will remain closed. Only delivery and pick-up are permitted. Accommodations for tourist purposes are also prohibited. Business trips and work-related overnight stays are permitted.

Where can alcohol be consumed?

From 16 December to 10 January, the consumption of alcoholic beverages in public is prohibited.

Will retail be closed?

Yes. Retail will be closed as of 16 December. This excludes: grocery stores, pick-up and delivery services, beverage stores, farmer's markets, pharmacies, health food shops, medical stores, baby needs stores, drug stores, petrol stations, banks, credit unions, kiosks and newspaper stands, feed markets and animal needs stores, Christmas tree outlets, wholesale (for wholesale customers), and the provision of goods by social services (food banks).

Are mail-order business and the pick-up of goods by customers permitted?

Yes. Mail-order business and the delivery of ordered goods are permitted. Customer pick-up of goods is only permitted if it can be done in a contact-free manner with adherence to protective measures.

Can construction stores open?

Construction and garden markets are only permitted to sell to commercial enterprises. Other persons are not allowed to enter the premises.

Are there changes to the mask requirement?

No, the mask requirement remains in effect, in particular in the following areas:

- enclosed areas accessible to the public, visitors or customers, and in public transit (including at stops),
- markets and similar outdoor sales areas,
- in front of retail businesses and on the respective parking lots and pathways,
- work and operating areas if applicable, but not at the workplace if the minimum distance can be adhered to.

Will schools remain open?

Schools will remain open up to and including 18 December. The obligation to attend school remains in effect. Mandatory in-person instruction was suspended. Parents of students in grades 1 through 7 decide for themselves whether their child will partake in in-person instruction or learn at home. Starting at grade 8, classes are held online.

You can find more info at www.msb.nrw

When do schools begin Christmas break?

Classes will continue up to 18 December 2020. Then the Christmas break begins. There will be no classes on 7 and 8 January 2021.

Will child care facilities close?

No, child care facilities will remain open. There will be no ban on entry as expressed earlier in the year. The care guarantee applies: children who have no choice but to attend child care will receive such care. Parents who are able to care for their children at home are urgently asked to do so in the coming weeks. However, if parents require assistance and care, they will receive it. You can find more information on the Ministry for Children and Families website:

<https://www.mkffi.nrw/lockdown-hinweise-fuer-die-kindertagesbetreuung-vom-1412-bis-101>

Is there a fireworks ban for New Year's Eve?

Fireworks will be prohibited on busy streets and squares (to be specifically defined by the municipalities). It is strongly recommended that you abstain from private fireworks at home and from lighting pre-purchased fireworks. This can prevent injuries that would place further strain on the already overwhelmed healthcare system. Furthermore, there is a ban on selling fireworks, effective immediately.

What will happen with cultural institutions?

Concerts and performances in theatres, operas and concert halls, cinemas and other public or private (cultural) facilities are prohibited until at least 10 January 2021. This also applies to museums, art exhibits, galleries, castles, palaces, monuments and similar facilities. Only drive-in cinemas with a distance of 1.5 metres between the cars are permitted.

What regulations apply to professional musicians?

Professional rehearsals are still allowed. Professional musicians are also permitted to perform concerts and performances without an audience for recording or broadcasting via radio and the internet.

What regulations apply to recreational and amateur sports?

As in the spring of this year, recreational and amateur sports are prohibited in all public and private sporting facilities, gyms, swimming pools and similar facilities. This also applies to single sports in sporting facilities/clubs such as tennis or golf. Jogging, walking, etc., are still permitted pending adherence to the contact restrictions.

What regulations apply to school sports?

School sports, sport-related exams for study programmes, and training at North Rhine-Westphalian federal and state bases are permitted.

What will happen with recreational and leisure facilities?

The following are prohibited from operating until 10 January 2021:

- swimming pools and public pools, saunas, hot springs and similar facilities,
- zoos, amusement parks, indoor playgrounds and similar recreational facilities (indoors and outdoors),
- casinos and similar facilities,
- dance halls, night clubs and similar facilities,
- brothels, places of prostitution and similar facilities,
- excursions via ship, coaches, historical trains and similar facilities.

In betting offices and bookies, only the submission of betting slips, tickets and bets, etc., is permitted. Spending additional time in these facilities (such as to follow the games and events that the bets concern) is prohibited.

Are events and gatherings still allowed?

Events and gatherings that do not fall under the purview of the special regulations of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance are prohibited until at least 10 January 2021. The following, among others, are permitted pending special conditions to be considered on an individual basis:

- gatherings in accordance with the Assembly Act (e.g. demonstrations, except on 31 December 2020 and 1 January 2021)
- events that serve the fundamental security of the population, maintenance of public security and order, or the provision of public services (e.g. party assemblies to appoint electoral district candidates or blood donations), and which cannot be postponed until after 10 January 2021 for legal or objective reasons
- meetings of legally appointed committees, companies, parties, associations or homeowner associations which cannot be conducted online
- funerals
- civil weddings
- religious services

What regulations apply to religious services and other gatherings for exercising religious beliefs?

Churches and religious communities decide for themselves, with consideration of the local infection rates, the extent to which gatherings can be held in person, and will notify the local authorities. They ensure adherence to the minimum distance requirements, limit the number of participants, implement a registration requirement for those gatherings at which visitor numbers that may exhaust the available capacities are to be expected, oblige the participants to wear a mask including at their seats, record the contact information of the participants, and abstain from communal singing.

The regulations for services and other religious gatherings, to be drafted by the parent organisations of the churches and religious communities pursuant to § 1 para. 3 Coronavirus Protection Ordinance, must be submitted to the State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia. **ONLY CHURCHES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES** are asked to contact the following e-mail address: Referat_I_B3@stk.nrw.de.

Communities belonging to a parent organisation are required to coordinate their safety concepts within the respective parent organisation. Safety concepts of independent congregations and religious communities must be submitted to the respective municipality.

Do you have any questions about the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance? Feel free to send an e-mail to corona@nrw.de.