

Article from [Ministry of Health and Social Affairs](#)

# About the COVID-19 virus, 4 March

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Sweden is still in an extraordinary situation. Read more about the recommendations and decisions in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance. The date in the title indicates when the article was written.

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## New measures to reduce the spread of infection

On 4 March the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden announced further measures to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The Government's previous call to municipalities and regions is extended. Services that are not essential and that the public has access to, and that are not regulated under the Restrictions Ordinance, should stay closed. The Government's assessment is that this call must continue to apply until at least 21 March 2021.

Pursuant to the Pandemic Act, the Government also decided on 4 March to amend the Restrictions Ordinance.

- First, municipalities are allowed to issue bans on being at certain places if there is a clear risk of crowding. This can, for instance, involve parks, bathing areas or municipal grill spots.
- Second, communicable disease control measures will now be required for services like amusement parks, zoos, theme parks, museums and art galleries.

The amendments to the ordinance enter into force on 11 March 2021.

## Extension of the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments

In a bill The Government also proposes extending the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments to the end of September 2021. This means it is proposed to apply for the same period as the Pandemic Act.

## Extension of temporary measures in health insurance

On 26 February the Government decided to extend measures previously announced in health insurance on account of COVID-19. The measures are intended to reduce the spread of infection, reduce the burden on health care, enhance financial security and alleviate the consequences for employers.

Here are the temporary measures that the Government has decided to extend until 30 April 2021:

- compensation at a standard amount of SEK 810 for the sick pay standard deduction;
- compensation to sole traders for their first 14 waiting days at a standard amount of SEK 810 per day;
- compensation to employers for the part of sick pay costs that is above the normal level.

## New recommendations for vaccinated individuals at care homes for older people

At a press meeting on 25 February the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden announced new recommendations for vaccinated individuals living in care homes for older people. The Government also gave information about a new vaccine agreement that more than doubles the number of vaccine doses from Moderna to Sweden. These doses will be delivered in quarters 3 and 4.

## Restricted opening hours for eating and drinking establishments and stricter general advice

The Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden made an overall assessment on 24 February that further measures are needed to prevent a third wave. As a first step, this will mean a national restriction of the opening hours of all eating and drinking establishments to 20.30. The amendments entered into force on 1 March 2021. However, eating and drinking establishments can be open for collection or home delivery after 20.30.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden is going to decide on further restrictions on the number of people allowed to be in shops, shopping centres and gyms. The advice already in place to sports associations is to refrain from arranging camps, matches, cups or other competitions, with certain exceptions for sport for children and top-level sport, for example. This restrictive advice needs to be repeated and tightened since spread of infection has been identified.

## Continued national restrictions

Sweden is still in a very serious and uncertain situation regarding the spread of COVID-19. As a result, the Government saw a need, after a dialogue with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, to retain a number of restrictions and recommendations.

On 18 February they announced that the winter sport break weeks must not be an opportunity for greater spread of infection. If people do travel, it is important to travel and act in as infection-proof a way as possible. This includes keeping a safe distance, refraining from new contacts, avoiding visiting places along their route where crowding may develop and following the rules in place.

The Government has called on regions and municipalities to keep services that the public has access to and that are not essential closed. This call applied until and including 7 March 2021. The Government's assessment is that there will continue to be a need for new or modified measures along with the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

## Proposal for new restriction measures pursuant to the temporary Pandemic Act

The Government has proposed new measures pursuant to the temporary Pandemic Act for COVID-19. If the state of the infection gets worse, the Government sees a need to make it possible to close various services. The Government also proposes new restrictions on services like zoos and museums.

The Government is also preparing proposals for a new system for public gatherings and events that will make more accurate rules possible when the state of the infection permits this. It was proposed that these proposals enter into force on 11 March 2021.

## Compensation period for additional costs extended

Health and social care have been under severe strain this winter due to the pandemic. Regions and municipalities are therefore given the possibility of also applying for compensation for additional costs that arose in December 2020. The present ordinance only permits compensation up until 30 November.

Against the background of the increased spread of infection and the high pressure on health and social care in December 2020, the Government's assessment is that the compensation period should be extended to also include December 2020. The Government is therefore allocating an additional SEK 1 billion.

## Restrictions introduced for long-distance public transport

Anyone operating or organising public transport by bus or train, with a route exceeding 150 kilometres, has to take appropriate measures to prevent the spread of infection. The number of passengers on the bus or train must not exceed half the number of seats on the bus or train. The provisions do not apply retroactively. A person who has booked a seat before entry into force, will be able to travel as planned, even if the occupancy level is higher. The Government is implementing this measure pursuant to the Pandemic Act and has obtained views from the Public Health Agency of Sweden during work on the measure. The entry-into-force dates of the provisions are 14 February and 31 May 2021.

## Support to health care for dealing with people with long-lasting symptoms after a COVID-19 infection

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned to develop support for health care in dealing with patients with long-lasting symptoms after having had a COVID-19 infection. This support should also be able to include municipal health care. The National Board of Health and Welfare may use SEK 3 million to carry out this commission in 2021.

## SEK 4 billion to the regions for deferred care and COVID-19-related care

On 11 February the Government commissioned Kammarkollegiet (Swedish LEGAL, Financial and Administrative Services Agency) to pay the regions SEK 4 billion in 2021. The regions will use this funding to deal with the costs of deferred care and COVID-19-related care. In the Budget Bill for 2021 the Government announced spending of SEK 4 billion to the regions to deal with the costs of deferred care and COVID-19-related care resulting from the pandemic.

The purpose was to support the regions in coping with the necessary recovery. Against the background of the increase in the spread of infection that has taken place since late autumn 2020, there is a need to ensure that health care has the necessary resources and that patients whose care has been deferred receive the care they need within a reasonable time.

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