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# Change in effect for the necessary travel for work across internal borders

Ministry of the Interior

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NEWS ITEM



**After discussions with the chairpersons of the parliamentary groups represented in the Government, Minister of the Interior Maria Ohisalo has instructed that practices for crossing internal borders be specified in order to combat the threat to internal security posed by the spread of the coronavirus.**

Starting from midnight on Sunday 22 March 2020, crossing internal borders will only be permitted for persons who, based on a permanent employment contract, work in the areas along the borders with Sweden and Norway where travel for work is common.

This means that, in future, people from Estonia will not be able to travel for work to Finland every week, except for those in certain lines of work. However, this more detailed policy will not interfere with Estonians' right to reside and work in Finland.

## Why was such a decision made?

- Restricting border traffic is necessary to slow down the spread of the coronavirus. The coronavirus is now spreading widely across Europe.
- Travel for work between Finland and Estonia is important for the national economy of both countries. However, in order to combat the virus, difficult decisions must be made to restrict movement.
- For the time being, it will not be possible to continue working in Finland and to live or visit family members in Estonia. Everyone has to make a choice.

## What does the Government's policy mean in practice for Estonia?

- In future, people from Estonia will not be able to travel for work to Finland, except for people in certain lines of work. These include healthcare and rescue service professionals, freight transport personnel and elderly care professionals. This also includes such tasks critical to society that require someone from abroad to perform the work and that have to be carried out without delay. A detailed list can be found on the website of the Finnish Border Guard.
- This means that Estonian construction workers, for example, cannot commute to work to Finland.
- When entering Finland, all people traveling for work regardless of the occupational group are recommended to stay in quarantine-like conditions for 14 days.

## However, it is possible to get back and forth across the border for imperative family reasons. What does this mean?

- Decisions regarding necessary travel for work or other necessary traffic are ultimately made by the Border Guard at the border-crossing point concerned. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of various reasons, but such a reason could be the funeral of a relative, for example.

## Can Estonian workers, such as construction workers, continue to work in Finland at all?

- Estonian employees can stay in Finland to work if they so wish. However, when the restrictions are in force, they cannot return to Finland based on a permanent employment contract, unless their work is related, for example, to the maintenance of critical infrastructure that cannot be delayed.

## Why is commuting to Sweden and Norway still permitted?

- The circumstances at various internal borders are very different. For example, at the Swedish border the movement across is, in practice, local traffic between villages. Such decisions on restrictions are very difficult, but they are taken to combat the health threat.

- The restrictions apply above all to those modes of transport where the transport brings together several people at one time and encounters between them cannot be avoided. It should be noted that similar commuting is also not permitted in ferry connections from Stockholm to Turku or Helsinki

## Is commuting permitted across the Russian border?

- The Russian border is an external border, and no changes have been made there. On the Finnish side, necessary traffic has been permitted across the border, as described in the Border Guard's instructions.

## How long will the restrictions be in force?

- Based on currently available information, the restrictions will remain in force until 13 April 2020.

### More information for citizens and businesses:

Border Guard helpline +358 50 597 2255

### More information for the media:

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[Finnish Border Guard guidelines for border traffic](#) 

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## See also

### Restrictions on entry into Finland extended until 27 June

PRESS RELEASE 3.6.2021 14.04

### Restrictions on entry into Finland extended until 15 June

PRESS RELEASE 20.5.2021 14.15

### Restrictions on entry into Finland extended until 25 May

PRESS RELEASE 22.4.2021 14.18



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