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Government decides to tighten border traffic

Government Communications Department, Ministry of the Interior

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On 22 January, the Government decided at an extraordinary meeting to tighten border traffic and the recommendations on testing and quarantine.

The aim is to prevent the re-escalation of the growth of the COVID-19 epidemic and the spread of the COVID-19 variant in Finland. Should the new virus variant become more widespread, it could result in a potentially much more transmissible epidemic.

Decisions to tighten internal and external border traffic

Border control at internal borders will be continued until 25 February. Entry into the country based on employment will be restricted to essential duties. At internal borders, essential travel constitutes work that is important for the functioning of society or for security of supply. It also extends to certain specifically defined special groups. Entry requires a separate form from the employer.

Certain special groups are permitted to enter the country. Such special groups cover those involved in culture, sports and business life, for example. In business life, these include people carrying out tasks necessary to secure the recovery, new growth, regional economy, or long-term operating conditions of a certain sector.

Belonging to a border community will no longer be a valid reason for an exemption. The right of the border municipalities' residents to freely use the services in a neighbouring country will be terminated. Quarantine recommendation will be reintroduced to border crossings.

Narrower definition of 'relative' to be used in internal border traffic (**revised on 27 January**). In future, for the purpose of the restriction, family members will include only the following: spouse (including cohabitant and close personal relationship), children, parents, parents-in-law and grandparents.

In addition, the Imatra border crossing point will be closed to passenger traffic. Goods traffic will continue as usual. There may be changes to the opening hours of border crossing points at the western and northern borders in Lapland.

For the main part, the decisions will enter into force on 27 January at 00.00.

The reintroduction of internal border control does affect the freedom of movement as laid down in the Constitution, according to which Finnish citizens have the right to enter and leave the country unless their right to free travel has been restricted.

Inquiries:

Border Guard helpline, tel. +358 295 410 100 (over the weekend of 23–24 January at 8.00–16.00, on weekdays at 8.00–16.00) and by e-mail: rajavartiolaitos@raja.fi

The press release was revised on 27 January. The narrower definition of 'relative' will be used only in internal border traffic (restriction category 1, Schengen countries and certain other countries). In the case of external border traffic, the restriction remains unchanged (restriction category 2, e.g. Russia): within the scope of the restrictions, entry from other third countries is possible only for imperative family reasons (e.g. the birth of one's own child, a serious illness of an immediate family member, one's own wedding, a close personal relationship).

[Restrictions on entry into Finland to be tightened on 27 January | press release, Ministry of the Interior, 22 January 2021](#)

[Government decision on amending the decision to temporarily reintroduce border control at internal borders and to extend the validity of the decision | 22 January 2021 \(in Finnish\)](#)

[Government decision on amending the decision to restrict traffic at border crossing points and to extend the validity of the decision | 22 January 2021 \(in Finnish\)](#)

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