



Article from [Ministry of Justice](#)

Ordinance on a prohibition against holding public gatherings and events

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On 11 March, the Government adopted an ordinance on a prohibition against holding public gatherings and events.

Information about the ordinance can be found below and on the Swedish Police Authority website.

> [Information \(in Swedish\) on the Swedish Police Authority website](#) 

What does this decision mean?

The Government is making use of the possibility in the Public Order Act (Chapter 2, Section 15) to prohibit public gatherings and events if this is necessary to combat an epidemic. The prohibition is issued in an ordinance.

The ordinance means that, as of Thursday 12 March and until further notice, it is forbidden in the whole of Sweden to hold public gatherings and events with more than 500 participants.

The Government will continuously examine the need for this ordinance and it will be revoked when the prohibition is no longer needed.

What constitutional support does the Government have for taking this decision?

Under the Instrument of Government, the Government is permitted, by authority in the law, to restrict freedom of assembly and freedom to demonstrate to combat disease (an epidemic). Such a restriction may not be more far-reaching than is necessary considering the purpose that gave rise to it. Every restriction must therefore be proportionate.

What is a public gathering? What is a public event?

These terms are defined in Chapter 2, Sections 1–3 of the Public Order Act.

Public gatherings include demonstrations, lectures, gatherings for religious practice, theatre performances, cinema screenings and concerts.

Public events include sporting events, dance performances, markets and fairs.

For a gathering to be considered public, it is necessary for it to have been arranged for the public or for the public to have access to it, or that the gathering should be regarded as equivalent to such a gathering given the conditions that apply for access to it.

For an event to be considered public, it is necessary for it to have been arranged for the public or for the public to have access to it.

Does the prohibition only concern events that require a permit?

No. The general rule is that public gatherings and events only require a permit if they are held in public places. This ordinance also applies to public gatherings and events that are not held in public places, if the number of participants exceeds 500.

What are the consequences if anyone ignores the prohibition?

Under Chapter 2, Section 22 of the Public Order Act, the Swedish Police Authority may cancel or disband a public gathering or event held in contravention of a regulation issued under Chapter 2, Section 15 of the same Act. This also includes permits that have already been issued.

The penalty for violating the prohibition is a fine or imprisonment for at most six months pursuant to Chapter 2, Section 29 of the Public Order Act.

Does the prohibition only apply to indoor events?

No, it also applies to outdoor events. The Public Order Act makes no distinction between gatherings/events held indoors or outdoors.

Is it prohibited to organise demonstrations?

Yes, if they are large enough to be covered by the ordinance. The Public Order Act explicitly states that demonstrations are to be considered public gatherings.

Shortcut

> [The Government's work in response to the virus responsible for COVID-19](#)