



Government of the Netherlands

Lockdown measures tightened in response to concerns about new variants of virus

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Please note: this news item was published on 20 January. Read more about [the current approach to tackling coronavirus in the Netherlands](#).

The government is gravely concerned about the UK variant of coronavirus, which is even more infectious than the virus we are familiar with in the Netherlands. There are also other variants of the virus that are sparking concern. New measures are needed in order to get these new variants under control. To that end, the government plans to introduce a curfew within a few days once the measure has been approved by parliament. The government is also issuing stricter advice on visitor numbers: receive no more than one visitor aged 13 or older per day, and make no more than one visit to another household per day. Further restrictions will also be introduced to limit international travel.

The aim of the new measures is to reduce the current infection rate, delay the spread of the original and new coronavirus variants and prevent the new variants' entry into the Netherlands as much as possible. This will enable us to prevent these variants from gaining the upper hand for as long as possible. And that will help ensure that hospitals have sufficient room for COVID-19 patients in the months ahead, and that regular medical procedures can continue as planned wherever possible. We don't want to look back a few weeks from now and realise that we did not do enough.

Curfew

The government plans to introduce a curfew across the Netherlands within a few days of obtaining parliamentary approval of the measure. This will mean that everyone must stay inside between 20.30 and 04.30. The aim of the curfew is to slow the infection rate by preventing people from visiting each other and gathering in groups. While the curfew is in force people will not be allowed outside without a valid reason. If you need to go out at this time, you may do so only in the following circumstances:

in the event of an emergency;

- you need urgent medical assistance, your pet needs urgent veterinary assistance or someone needs your urgent assistance;
- your employer requires you to leave your home for your work;
- you are travelling abroad or returning to the Netherlands;
- you are going to or returning from a funeral and can prove this;
- you are travelling in connection with a summons issued by a court or public prosecutor, or in connection with a court hearing in objection, judicial review or appeal proceedings, and you can prove this;
- you are walking a dog on a lead. You must do this on your own.

If it is necessary for you to go outside during the curfew, you must take a 'curfew declaration' with you. If you have to go out for your job, you must also be able to produce an employer's declaration. In certain cases, no declaration is required. For more information, visit www.rijksoverheid.nl/avondklok.

The House of Representatives still needs to consider the government's proposal to introduce a curfew. Once the House has approved the measure, more information will be posted on www.government.nl.

A curfew is a far-reaching measure, but it will help the Netherlands to further slow the spread of the virus. According to the Outbreak Management Team (OMT), research conducted abroad has shown that a curfew can reduce the R number by 8 to 13%. In principle, the curfew will remain in force until 04.30 on 10 February 2021.

Extra travel restrictions

Every journey a person makes increases the chance of causing more infections or of bringing new variants of coronavirus into the Netherlands. For this reason, the government has issued a strict travel advisory: do not travel abroad and do not book any trips abroad in the period up to and including 31 March 2021.

The government is introducing extra measures to prevent new variants of the virus being imported via travellers and to further restrict the number of travel movements. A ban on flights from the United Kingdom and a docking ban for ferries from the United Kingdom is in force. A flight ban is also in force for passenger flights from the following other countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, South Africa, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela. At present the flight ban is expected to remain in force for one month, or until planned legislation on mandatory quarantine rules for travellers is in place.

In addition, all passengers travelling to the Netherlands by air or sea from high-risk areas must be able to produce a negative result of a rapid COVID-19 test performed shortly before their departure. The test must not have been performed more than four hours prior to boarding the aircraft or ship. This requirement is in addition to the existing mandatory negative test result for a PCR test performed no more than 72 hours before arrival in the Netherlands. These measures also apply to people travelling to the Caribbean parts of the Netherlands. What is more, travellers must self-quarantine for 10 days on arrival in the Netherlands. After five days they can get tested. If the result of this PCR test is negative they may end their self-quarantine. Since rapid test facilities are not available near all ports and airports, the government expects that the double-test requirement will reduce the amount of travel to the Netherlands. As a result it may be

difficult for some people to get home. Dutch nationals who have a compelling reason to travel to the Netherlands and cannot produce a negative PCR and rapid test result in time should contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For travellers from countries outside the EU, a travel ban has been in force since March 2020. The government has decided to reduce the number of exemptions from this ban. As a result, business travellers, students, highly-skilled migrants, professionals from the cultural and creative sectors and people in long-distance romantic relationships wishing to travel to the Netherlands for a short period will no longer be granted entry.

These measures will take effect on Saturday 23 January 2021 at 00.01.

Stay at home, work from home and keep contact with others to a minimum

The aim of the lockdown is to prevent people from coming into contact with each other wherever possible. Less contact means fewer infections. Staying at home is the best way to minimise contact with others. Only go outside to shop for essentials, to get medical care for yourself or provide it for others or animals, to get some fresh air or to go to work or school if working or learning remotely is not possible.

Limiting your contacts means not meeting up with others too often. Keep in touch via telephone or video calls instead. If you do decide to receive visits, the government's strict advice is to have no more than one visitor aged 13 or over per day. You should not visit more than one other household per day either. These measures will help prevent the spread of the virus. But, of course, seeing fewer people is hard on everyone. So look out for any people around you who might need extra attention, especially those who are ill, lonely or struggling with mental health issues.

In principle everyone should work from home. Only people whose presence is essential to operational processes and who cannot do their work from home can go to their workplace. So, for example, a bus driver can go to work, but an office worker should work entirely from home. The current situation is very serious. So employers and staff should review their existing agreements about coming into work. At the moment, people should not be going to work to meet with colleagues or clients. Employers must ensure that any employee who can work from home does so. Employees who are requested to come into work even though their presence is not essential, should raise this with their employer.

Self-quarantine requirement

Anyone who has tested positive for coronavirus or has had direct contact with someone who has tested positive must self-quarantine. This also applies to people arriving in the Netherlands from high-risk countries, and to people who are experiencing symptoms and waiting for their test result. But not everyone is following the rules properly. Now that we are dealing with new virus variants, this poses an additional risk of the virus continuing to spread. The government is therefore looking at how self-quarantining can be made mandatory. Preparations are under way for registering incoming travellers and contacting people by phone to check they are self-quarantining. More details will be announced in due course. More [information about the current rules](#) is available on government.nl.

Funerals

On the basis of the OMT's advice, the government has introduced further restrictions on the number of people permitted to attend a funeral. From Monday 25 January 2021, the maximum number of people permitted will be 50.

Future events

The government also wishes to explore the scope for allowing people to attend events safely and responsibly in the future. It has therefore agreed that experiments can be carried out in real-life settings to gain insight and gather data on how to reduce the risk of infection at events. This will be done at two football matches, a comedy performance, a business conference, a concert and several other events to see what happens when one or more basic measures are relaxed.

Overview of measures

Until at least 9 February 2021 the following measures apply:

Receive no more than 1 person aged 13 or over at your home per day.

Visit no more than 1 other household per day.

Work from home. Only people whose presence is essential to operational processes and who cannot do their work from home can go to work.

Only go outside with members of your household, on your own or with 1 other person.

A curfew is in force between 20.30 and 04.30. This means you are not permitted to be outside between these times.

➔ [Most locations](#) are closed, including:

shops (except those selling essentials like food)

locations where contact-based professions are carried out, such as hairdressers, nail salons and sex establishments.

theatres, concert halls, cinemas, casinos, etc.

zoos, amusement parks, etc.

indoor sports facilities, gyms, swimming pools, saunas, spas etc.

restaurants and cafes.

Educational institutions will provide most teaching remotely until at least 7 February. Daycare and out-of-school care centres will remain closed during this period.

Secondary schools can offer practical training, school exams for pupils in the upper years and lessons for pupils with upcoming final exams on site.

Secondary vocational schools (MBO), higher professional education institutions (HBO) and universities can offer exams and practical training on site.

All educational institutions can make exceptions to provide support to vulnerable children or students.

For children ➔ [whose parents work in critical sectors](#), emergency childcare is available at their primary school, daycare centre and/or out-of-school care centre. Parents are urged to use emergency childcare

only if they have no other option.

Only [↗ medical professionals and allied health professionals](#) may carry out work that involves close contact with clients or patients.

Hotels are open, but hotel restaurants are closed and room service is not available.

Adults can exercise alone or with one other person, and only outside. Children aged 17 and under may take part in team sports and play matches against children at the same club, but only outside.

Use public transport for essential travel only.

Do not travel abroad and do not book trips abroad until 31 March inclusive. Travel restrictions apply.

See also

- › [Coronavirus COVID-19](#)
Topic

Ministry responsible

- › [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#)
- › [Ministry of Justice and Security](#)