

# Memorandum from the Epidemiologist in regards to infection control measures within Iceland and at the borders

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In the last 10-14 days, there was an outbreak of COVID-19 among individuals who have not travelled abroad and who have no connection to cases from abroad for the first time since the epidemic this spring came to an end. The number of cases are increasing and there are currently at least two groups of infection as some of the new cases do not have a clear epidemiological relationship with other cases in the group.

In light of these new infections, the Epidemiologist recommends the following measures to strengthen infection control:

## Domestic Action:

- A limitation on gatherings of individuals to 100 adults
- Where individuals do come together, there will be 2 meters between individuals. This will be the rule and no longer optional.
- If it is not possible to ensure a distance of 2 meters between unrelated individuals, the use of a face mask covering the nose and mouth will be required.
  - This applies to public transport including domestic flights and passenger ferries; and activities such as hairdressing salons and massage parlors.
  - Face masks used outside of healthcare should at least meet the requirements set out in the workshop standard of the European Standards Organization (CEN).
- Workplaces, public buildings, shops and service companies that are open to the public should organize their activities in accordance with the above measures and ensure that there are no more than 100 individuals in the same space and that there is enough space should be provided to ensure a distance of 2 meters between individuals.
- Shops, public buildings and service companies that are open to the public:
  - Ensure access to hand sanitizers for the general public and employees both at the entrance and in the vicinity of surfaces which many people touch (e.g. touch screens and checkout counters)
  - Good cleaning and disinfection of surfaces that many people touch as often as possible
  - Post signs to remind the public of individual protection measures
- Swimming pools and restaurants can ensure that guests will have 2 meters between individuals by instituting a limit on the number of guests in accordance with the size of each space.
- Activities which involve guests using common equipment (e.g sports activities, fitness centers, arcade machines and arcade halls) shall suspend operations or disinfect such equipment between users.
- Museums, entertainment venues and other public places suspend operations if it is not possible to comply with the gathering ban or ensure that a distance between unrelated parties is 2 meters or more.
- The opening hours for entertainment and wine restaurants will no later than 23:00.

## Operations at the Border

The current cases of COVID-19 in Iceland, based on their sequencing pattern, arrived in Iceland after the epidemic here this spring and despite the measures that have been taken during border screening.

Therefore, while mapping the spread of infection within the community here in Iceland and in order to prevent the further spread of infection, the Epidemiologist considers it necessary to strengthen border measures.

The Chief Epidemiologist recommends the use of double sampling wherein an individual is tested on arrival and after 4-6 days if the first test is negative, be extended to all who come here from risk areas and stay here for 10 days or more with additional measures outlined in the Homecoming Infection Control procedure currently in place until a negative result is obtained from the second test.

If this measure is not effective and domestic infections occur with arriving passengers despite the application of the above measures, further action is needed.

The following options need to be considered:

1. No border sampling. 14 days quarantine for all individuals coming from high risk areas. This measure was previously used for travel from high risk areas from the beginning of the epidemic until 15 June and is believed to have been a major factor in limiting the extent of the epidemic this spring.
2. No border sampling, quarantine for 5-7 days for all individuals with a test taken on Day 5. The quarantine will be removed if the test is negative. This action requires more involvement of the authorities and the health system in preparation and coordination than quarantine for 14 days, but is less burden for the individual.

It is important to note that the analysis of samples from individuals with symptoms always takes precedence over the samples taken for screening purposes. When administering border screening, it is important to ensure that the number of arriving passengers aligns with the ability to take samples and diagnose. Delays in analysis of samples at the border due to an increased number of samples from symptomatic individuals may lead to infectious individuals entering the country and spreading the infection while their result is not clear.

The Chief Epidemiologist proposes that these measures take effect no later than noon on 31 July and last for two weeks, until 13 August.

Regards,  
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