

Current: Coronavirus Protection Ordinance

What contact restrictions apply?

Private meetings attended exclusively by vaccinated or recovered persons may be held again without numerical limitation starting Saturday, 19 February 2022.

Contact restrictions apply exclusively to non-immunised people until 19 March 2022.

People who are neither fully vaccinated nor recovered may still only meet members of their own household and a maximum of two people from another household at private meetings in public and private spaces. Children under the age of 14 are not counted. For the purpose of determining the household, spouses, civil partners and partners in a non-marital partnership are considered as one household, even if they do not live together.

What rules apply in the retail sector?

For retail shops and markets, the access restrictions of the 2G rule [vaccinated or recovered in last 6 months] will cease to apply from 19 February 2022. Thus, checking of a test or proof of immunisation is no longer required and entry is also permitted to non-immunised persons. However, the obligation to wear at least a medical mask remains; it is strongly recommended to wear an FFP2 mask in shops.

Shopkeepers can make wearing an FFP2 mask a condition of entry to the shop.

Does a mask obligation still apply?

Yes. It is still compulsory to wear a medical mask in many places, although wearing an FFP2 mask is strongly recommended because it offers even better protection.

There is an obligation to wear an FFP2 mask when utilising and providing body-related services for non-immunised persons.

There is still an obligation to wear a medical mask in the following areas:

- in local and long-distance public transport (wearing an FFP2 mask is strongly recommended here),
- in indoor areas with public traffic, e.g. in shopping centres,
- outdoors, insofar as the competent authority expressly orders this for specifically designated areas by general decree.
- when participating in an event depending on the permitted number of persons (indoors and outdoors)

For outdoor events and gatherings, the obligation to wear at least one medical mask is based on the respective access regulation or the following requirements:

1. If all persons have access to the event or assembly regardless of proof of testing or immunisation, at least one medical mask must be worn.

2. If only tested or immunised persons have access to the event or gathering, at least a medical mask must be worn only if the distance is less than 1.5 metres.

3. If only immunised persons have access, there is no obligation to wear a mask. However, it is recommended to wear a mask if the minimum distance of 1.5 metres from other persons cannot be maintained.

The persons responsible for the event or assembly must inform the persons participating about the applicable regulations and point out compliance in the event of violations.

In addition, the wearing of a mask is strongly recommended wherever the minimum distance of 1.5 metres from other persons cannot be maintained, even outdoors.

What are the exemptions from the mask requirement?

As an exception, the wearing of a mask can be dispensed with in the following cases, for example:

- in private rooms in the case of exclusively private meetings,
- in restaurants and other catering establishments at fixed seating or standing places,
- in operational situations of security authorities, fire brigade, etc,
- when communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing person,
- by persons who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons (certificate required),
- to eat and drink,
- by immunised members of choirs when singing together or of immunised singers or actors when performing within the framework of cultural offerings, including the necessary rehearsals, if the respective artistic activities are only possible without wearing a mask,
- and for other reasons, if the removal of the mask takes only a few seconds while maintaining the minimum distance of 1.5 metres.

All exemptions from the mask requirement are listed in § 3 paragraph 2 of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance. The document can be found [on the website www.mags.nrw/coronavirus-rechtlicheregelungen-nrw](http://www.mags.nrw/coronavirus-rechtlicheregelungen-nrw).

Children up to the age of school entry are exempt from the obligation to wear a mask. Where children from school entry to 13 years of age cannot wear a medical mask due to the fit, an everyday mask shall be worn as a substitute.

What does the 3G rule mean?

Fully vaccinated and recovered people are free to use the facilities and services covered by the 3G rule. All other persons must be proven to have tested negative. PCR tests that are not older than 48 hours and rapid tests that are not older than 24 hours are recognised.

In which areas does 3G apply?

The 3G rule (admission for vaccinated, recovered or currently tested) applies to, among others:

- funerals and civil weddings;

- offers and events of school, university, vocational or job-related education, early childhood education in day-care centres, political education and self-help as well as integration courses;
- joint or simultaneous practice of non-contact sports such as track and field, tennis or golf;
- Outdoor contact sports, if only persons of one's own household and additionally a maximum of two persons from another household participate;
- Driving schools;
- non-tourist overnight stays (non-immunised persons must present negative proof of testing on arrival and each time after expiry of validity);
- Body-related services (e.g. hairdressing, cosmetics, etc.) and tanning salons ;
- trade fairs and conventions for commercial suppliers and interested parties as well as events in which only members of companies and enterprises participate and which are carried out in compliance with infection control requirements under labour law;
- assemblies within the meaning of Article 8 of the Basic Law (regulates freedom of assembly) in indoorpublic spaces;
- outdoor assemblies within the meaning of Article 8 of the Basic Law with more than 750 participants at any one time;
- meetings of municipal bodies and legally required meetings of bodies of public and private law institutions, societies, communities, parties or associations as well as information and discussion events of political parties without a convivial character;
- the use of university libraries and university canteens by university staff;
- the use of public libraries (contact-free lending and return of media is also possible without 3G [recovered, vaccinated or tested]);
- offers of youth social work and youth work as well as offers according to § 16 of the Eighth Book of the Social Code (child and youth welfare);
- children's and youth and family recreational trips by public and independent child and youth welfare organisations (non-immunised persons must present negative proof of testing on arrival and again after four days or carry out a joint supervised self-test);
- in-patient child and youth welfare facilities requiring operating licences within the meaning of § 45 et seq. of Book Eight of the Social Code (Child and Youth Welfare), with children and youths being excluded from this regulation.

In the field of education, 3G applies to offers and events in school, university, vocational or work-related education (including training fairs, job fairs and vocational orientation events), early childhood education in child day care, political education and self-help, as well as integration courses and the use of university libraries and university canteens by persons who directly belong to the university or institution as employees or students.

The state has issued its own Coronavirus Epidemic Higher Education Ordinance for the higher education sector. According to this, universities and higher education institutions are also allowed to reduce the number of participants in attendance events depending on the level of infection and to adjust exemptions and withdrawals in such a way that students do not suffer any disadvantages as a result of the pandemic.

What applies to visitors to hospitals, nursing homes and similar institutions?

In the case of hospitals, nursing homes and fully or partially inpatient facilities for the care and accommodation of elderly, disabled people or people in need of care, the federal regulation of § 28b para. 2 IfSG applies: Here, employers, employees and visitors must be tested persons, i.e. be in possession of a test certificate issued to them. According to the legal

regulation, this applies regardless of whether they are vaccinated or recovered at the same time. Visitors to facilities for the communal accommodation of asylum seekers, persons who are obliged to leave the country, refugees and ethnic German immigrants and inpatient social welfare facilities must also have a negative test result according to § 8 para. 5 Coronavirus Test Quarantine ordinance.

What does the 2G rule mean?

The 2G rule means that facilities and services may now only be used by fully vaccinated and recovered persons. The 2G rule applies in principle to all recreational services and facilities. All persons who are neither fully vaccinated nor recovered are not allowed access to these facilities or services. The only exceptions are people who have a medical certificate stating that they cannot be vaccinated against Covid-19 for health reasons, and children and adolescents up to and including 17 years of age.

Where does the 2G rule apply? Which areas may only be visited by immunised persons (vaccinated or recovered, 2G)?

The 2G rule (access only for vaccinated or recovered persons) applies to, among others:

- Museums, exhibitions, memorials and other cultural institutions;
- Concerts, performances, readings and other cultural events, for example in theatres and cinemas;
- Organisation of public trade fairs;
- Folk festivals and comparable leisure events;
- Zoos;
- Theme parks;
- Amusement halls;
- The joint practice of contact sport (including training and competition) outdoors (professional and amateur sport);
- Educational services that do not explicitly fall under 3G (see above);
- Tourist overnight stays in accommodation establishments as well as tourist coach tours.

The 2G rule does NOT apply to:

- Persons who have a medical certificate stating that they cannot or could not be vaccinated at present or up to a maximum of six weeks ago for health reasons. However, these persons must show a negative test certificate;
- Children and young people up to and including the age of 17. You also do not need to show negative test evidence because of regular school testing outside the holidays.
- For the catering of professional drivers at rest areas and motorway stations if they have a negative test certificate.

What does 2G+ mean and which people are exempt from the additional testing requirement?

The 2G+ rule means that only fully vaccinated or recovered people can enter and they must also prove a negative test result. This can be done in the form of a rapid test (not older than 24 hours) or a PCR test (not older than 48 hours).

The 2G+ rule applies to, among others:

- the joint or simultaneous practice of sports indoors (sports halls, gyms, etc.) - exceptions apply to professional sports, among others;
- the use of indoor swimming pools and wellness facilities (saunas, thermal baths, etc.);
- company canteens, school canteens, university canteens and comparable facilities when used by persons who do not directly belong to the company or facility as employees, students, pupils, course participants, etc., if this use is not limited to the mere collection of food and beverages;
- all other gastronomic offers, if the use is not limited to the mere collection of food and beverages;
- choir members singing together, as well as other artistic activities that can only be performed without wearing a mask (playing wind instruments and the like);
- carnival events and comparable traditional events (scale: singing along/swaying while seated with arms linked; dancing not as a focus);
- private parties with dancing, without dancing being the main focus of the event (e.g. weddings);
- sexual services.

No additional testing obligation for boosted and recovered persons

The additional testing requirement in areas where 2G+ applies does not apply to persons who have received a total of three vaccinations with one of the vaccines licensed in the European Union according to [the overview published by the Paul Ehrlich Institute](#) (including any combination with the COVID-19 vaccine from Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)).

The additional testing obligation in areas where 2G+ applies is also omitted [according to the specifications of the Robert Koch Institute](#) for

- vaccinated recovered persons, i.e. persons who had a Covid-19 infection detected by PCR test and received at least one vaccination before or after that
- people who have been vaccinated twice, with the second vaccination more than 14, but less than 90 days ago (also applies to Johnson&Johnson vaccine recipients who have not yet received a third vaccination) or
- people who have recovered from an infection in the last three months (confirmed PCR test more than 28 days, but not older than 90 days) as well as
- persons with a specific positive antibody test and subsequent vaccination who are considered fully vaccinated according to the exemption definition, even with only one vaccination dose, if the vaccination took place less than 90 days ago.

The North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Health has prepared a **detailed handout on the topic of 2G+**: Where does 2Gplus apply? What are the requirements for 2Gplus? When does negative test evidence have to be presented - and when does it not? These and other questions are answered in the handout [on the website of the Ministry](#).

Are on-site tests possible when using 3G and 2G+ offers?

In places where a test is required for access (i.e. 3G and 2G+), instead of presenting a test certificate from an official testing centre, a supervised self-test can also be carried out on site at the time of access, for example when accessing a fitness studio under the supervision of

expert trained reception staff or when practising sport under the supervision of an expert or trained trainer/exercise instructor.

This supervised self-test only entitles you to access the specific offer. No test certificate can be issued by the supervisor that could be used to visit other facilities. Only the official test centres can continue to do this.

Whether and in what form testing is offered on site is decided by the respective operator of the facility. The offer of on-site testing is not mandatory and does not have to be offered free of charge by the respective operator.

What applies to people who cannot be vaccinated?

For persons who have a medical certificate stating that they cannot be vaccinated against Covid-19 for health reasons, they will be treated as immunised persons if they have a rapid antigen test dated no more than 24 hours ago or a PCR test certified by a recognised laboratory dated no more than 48 hours ago.

What applies at events?

For events, capacity limits apply depending on the size of the event. This will also apply uniformly to major events such as Bundesliga football matches, etc.

Events with more than 750 participants are permitted if

- the number of people indoors is a maximum of 30 per cent of the respective maximum capacity (maximum 4,000 people in total)
- the number of people outdoors is a maximum of 50 per cent of the respective maximum capacity (maximum 10,000 people in total)
- the participants comply with the 2G+ rule
- the participants wear at least one medical mask (surgical mask) for the entire duration of the event.

For private parties with dancing as well as carnival events and comparable customary events indoors, an increased number of persons (more than 750 participants) is not permitted.

Employees, volunteers and other comparable persons are not counted.

What applies in clubs, discotheques or at dance events?

In order to contain the spread of the coronavirus, clubs, discos and similar establishments with a particularly high risk of infection are closed. Comparable events (public dance events, private dance and disco parties and the like) are also not permitted due to the high risk of infection.

Due to the supra-regional catchment areas, this is deliberately done independently of the local incidence and thus applies to the whole of North Rhine-Westphalia.

What applies to private parties?

Private dance and disco parties and the like are currently prohibited. Private gatherings indoors and outdoors, even of vaccinated and recovered persons, are only allowed with a maximum of ten persons since 28 December 2021. There is no limit to a certain number of households. Children up to and including 13 years of age are exempt. As soon as an unvaccinated person participates, only two people from another household are allowed to participate in addition to their own household.

What regulations apply to employees?

Employees, volunteers and similar persons working in areas with 3G, 2G or 2Gplus restricted access and having contact with guests, customers or users of the services or with each other must be immunised or tested.

If they are not immunised, they must wear a medical mask at all times while working in areas with 2G or 2Gplus restricted access, in addition to the requirement for current proof of testing. If it is not possible to wear a mask during professional practice, a PCR test must be available.

How are the regulations reviewed and controlled?

The verification of the vaccination and test certificates is carried out by the responsible organisers or operators, whereby a comparison with an official identification document is also carried out. Therefore, users, customers, visitors, etc. are obliged to carry and show the respective proof of identity together with an official identification document.

In the case of children and young people who do not yet have an official identity document, it is sufficient for them to declare their identity or to prove it by means of their parents' identity document, student ID or similar.

Persons who do not show the required proof of vaccination/testing and proof of identity shall be excluded from use or exercise.

The CovPassCheck app published by the Robert Koch Institute is to be used to check digital vaccination certificates.

Failure to carry out checks is punishable by fines. In case of disregard of central rules, the trade and restaurant inspectorate must be informed to be able to check the reliability of the operators.

Do the general hygiene and infection control rules still apply?

The well-known and proven AHA rules of conduct are still recommended: [Keep your distance, observe hygiene rules and wear a mask in everyday life.](#)

And: Facilities with visitor or customer traffic are obliged to implement certain ventilation and hygiene rules.

Further information is summarised in the annex "Hygiene and Infection Protection Rules" to the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance, especially for business owners. It is [on the overview page on the legal regulations during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

Do you have questions about the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance?

Then you can send a message to the email address.