



Press release - 1110/12/2020

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North Rhine-Westphalia is immediately and retroactively ordering quarantine and testing obligation upon arrival from Great Britain and South Africa

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The Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs has issued the following statement:

On 20 December 2020, in response to current reports of what are presumed to be significantly more contagious mutations of the coronavirus, the State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia immediately enacted a special ordinance for incoming travellers from Great Britain and South Africa. The new regulations are effective as of midnight on 21 December 2020, and in conjunction with the general restrictions for incoming travellers from these countries passed at the federal level, which also come into effect on 21 December 2020.

The state's Coronavirus Incoming Travel Ordinance stipulates that incoming travellers from Great Britain and South Africa must undergo home quarantine and isolation for ten days. This ten-day period is based on the day of departure from the respective countries. These persons must also get tested for the coronavirus either immediately before or during arrival, and once more five days later. If the test results are negative after five days, the quarantine can end early.

With regard to passenger flights from Great Britain landing at North Rhine-Westphalian airports on Sunday, the local health authorities – as directed by the Health Ministry of North Rhine-Westphalia – will ensure via direct instructions at the airport that the incoming persons immediately enter into quarantine.

"The unsettling developments in Great Britain show that we must not abate in our efforts to combat this treacherous virus," says Health Minister Karl-Josef Laumann. "Together the federal, state and local

authorities have proven today that they are able to respond swiftly in order to keep the population as safe as possible.“

This quarantine comes into effect at midnight for all persons who travelled into North Rhine-Westphalia from Great Britain or South Africa within the last ten days (as of 11 December 2020). These persons must also undergo quarantine for up to ten days following arrival, and get tested five days after arrival.

There was no incoming travel quarantine in North Rhine-Westphalia after the Higher Administrative Court declared this quarantine disproportionate, and thus illegal, based on the criteria of the Robert Koch Institute's (RKI) identification of risk areas. Although the RKI has not changed its criteria, the state government strongly believes that recent developments in Great Britain and South Africa constitute a new, special risk scenario. This justifies and necessitates an immediate and retroactive quarantine on arrival in order to prevent the importing of the virus as much as possible.

Please direct civilian enquiries to: telephone 0211 8555.

Please direct press enquiries to the Press Office of the Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs: telephone 0211 855-3118.

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