



**Press release – 809/09/2020**

## **North Rhine-Westphalia extends Coronavirus Protection Ordinance: Regulations for Christmas markets and private parties**

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

The State Cabinet has extended the coronavirus ordinances until, and including, 31 October 2020. Changes and additions apply to Christmas markets and private parties, among other events. A separate annex to the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance will specify the regulations for Christmas markets to make them legally valid. Private festivities for special occasions (such as weddings) outside of the private sphere must be registered with the local public order office in advance if the event will have more than 50 guests.

"Infection rates over recent days have shown that private parties have a considerable effect on the spread of infection," says Health Minister Karl-Josef Laumann. "We do not want to have to come to the point at which we prohibit parties altogether. And so we must ensure that visitors to these events follow the rules. Contact information is the most important element for preventing the further spread and breaking infection chains."

"The basic right to privacy applies to parties in one's own home," Laumann continues. "But I urgently implore everyone to continue taking the coronavirus seriously, adhere to the hygiene and distance requirements, keep yourselves and others safe! The more consideration an individual takes in their conduct, the greater the effect on society as a whole. The autumn and winter months will be particularly challenging for combating the coronavirus pandemic."

**The regulations for Christmas Markets**

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A comprehensive infection protection, hygiene and access plan that considers the respective local situation is required for successfully organising Christmas Markets during the coronavirus pandemic. Standing tables with assigned spots are permitted at Christmas Markets if they are physically partitioned from the walkways and streets. This regulation also applies to food service, effective immediately.

Furthermore, business can open on multiple Sundays during and immediately following the Christmas season. This serves to alleviate crowding in stores on Saturdays and to prevent large groups of people in downtown areas.

### **The regulations for private parties**

Private parties for special occasions (such as weddings) outside of the private sphere, and with at least 50 expected guests, must be registered with the local public order office at least three business days in advance. Furthermore, an individual responsible for the event must be named and a guest list for the event must be kept and updated during the event. It is important that the public order offices do not issue permits, but only tend to the registration. This allows municipal authorities to know about festivities happening in their respective jurisdictions, and if necessary to monitor whether the regulations of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance are being adhered to. Such festivities remain limited to a maximum 150 guests. Protection of trust applies to the registration deadline for festivities in early October. However, event organisers are required to belatedly register their events as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, the agreements from the federal and state decree from 29 September 2020 will be incorporated into the participant limits stipulated in the Ordinance. This means that as of a 7-day incidence of 35 cases, parties in public spaces can have no more than 50 participants. With an incidence of 50 cases, this limit is reduced to 25 participants. Exceptions to these limits can be permitted on a case-by-case basis, pending adherence to special hygiene and infection protection plans.

In addition, the federal and state governments have declared that fines will be issued in the event of inaccurate contact information on lists that serve to trace personal information, such as in restaurants. In North Rhine-Westphalia guests who make such false statements will face a

statutory fine of 250 euros. A statutory fine of 500 euros will be issued in the event that a party outside of the private sphere, at which at least 50 persons are expected, has not been registered.

New types of ventilation systems in the hygiene and infection protection plans will be given greater consideration in the form of an innovation clause. If technical innovations verifiably, and have been certifiably proven to render other protective measures redundant, exceptions can be made from the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance by the Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs.

*This press text is also available at [www.land.nrw](http://www.land.nrw)*

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