

Unofficial English translation of the French-language information sheet

Covid-19 information note: rules of entry into Switzerland for persons expected in an official capacity by international organisations and permanent missions

This note complements verbal notes and circular communications sent by the [Swiss Mission](#) concerning the measures taken by the Swiss authorities in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). It summarises the rules currently in force concerning access to Swiss territory arising from [Ordinance 3 on Measures to Combat the Coronavirus \(hereinafter: Ordinance 3 COVID-19\)](#)¹. Additional information on **sanitary measures and border controls (tests, quarantine, and data collection) as well as on the COVID Certificate** are published and regularly updated on the website of [the Swiss Mission](#).

This information is intended in particular for persons who are expected in an official capacity by a permanent mission/representation/delegation or by an international organisation. Those concerned are mainly:

- staff members and persons authorized to accompany them;
- State delegates or other official representatives who are officially invited.

Updates to this notice are made on a regular basis according to changes in the rules. However, the information available on the [State Secretariat for Migration \(SEM\)](#)² and the [Federal Office of Public Health](#) (FOPH) websites prevails.

1. Short-term stays (up to 90 days)

Third country nationals who benefit from the [free movement of persons](#), as well as travellers coming directly from the [Schengen States](#) and the States mentioned in [Annex 1, ch.1 of the ordinance 3 COVID-19](#), have access to Swiss territory without restriction (as long as the usual entry conditions - visa, travel document, etc. - are fulfilled).

Persons who do not meet the above-mentioned conditions are subject to the principle of entry ban. However, in a situation of absolute necessity, they may benefit from an exception in cases of hardship or public interest. They are then authorized to enter Switzerland, provided that the usual entry conditions are met.

These exceptional situations are described in points 1.3 and 1.5 of the [Directive on the implementation of Ordinance 3 COVID-19](#), and include the following exceptions:

A. Vaccination

Persons who have been vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 with a vaccine listed below are not subject to this entry ban, regardless of the purpose of their stay (tourism, business, etc.). This is for a period of 12 months from the date of complete vaccination (art. 4, para. 2, letter a). Children under 18 years of age who enter Switzerland accompanied by adults considered as vaccinated do not need to prove that they are vaccinated (art. 4, para. 2bis).

- Pfizer/BioNTech (BNT162b2 / Comirnaty® / Tozinameran)
- Moderna (mRNA-1273 / Spikevax / COVID-19 vaccine Moderna)
- AstraZeneca (AZD1222 Vaxzevria® / Covishield™)
- Janssen / Johnson & Johnson (Ad26.COV2.S)

¹ Annex 1 and the various sections mentioned in brackets in this notice refer to this Ordinance.

² See in particular the website *Corona: Questions and answers on entry and stay in Switzerland, the exceptions and suspension of visas*: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/aktuell/aktuell/faq-einreiseverweigerung.html>

- Sinopharm / BIBP (SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine (Vero Cell))
- Sinovac (CoronaVac)
- Covaxin (Bharat Biotech International Limited)

Vaccination can be proven by means of the COVID-19 certificate or by any other appropriate document containing the following information: surname, first name(s), date of birth of the person, date of vaccination and vaccine administered.

This exception does not apply to persons who want to enter Switzerland from a [country or region where a variant of the virus is circulating and where the risk of infection or serious disease progression is greater than for the variant of the virus that prevails in the Schengen area](#).

B. Delegates and official visits, private visits

Urgent official visits resulting from Switzerland's international obligations are listed among the above mentioned exceptions.

It is to be mentioned that the travel of delegates from capitals should, as far as possible, be reserved for situations where participation cannot be in virtual mode or delegated to a state representative posted in Switzerland.

In the context of the examination of the visa application, the delegate must credibly establish with supporting documents (mission order, explanatory note verbale) the compelling reason for the professional travel. In particular, he or she will be asked to specify the function performed at the meeting (e.g. board member, panelist, etc.) and to demonstrate the absolute necessity of his or her presence in Geneva.

Persons subject to visa requirements are requested to submit their application according to the usual procedures to the [Swiss representation responsible for their place of residence](#).

Persons in possession of a valid visa as well as persons not subject to visa requirements should inquire about boarding requirements directly with the airline and, if necessary, obtain a Laissez-passer from the Swiss representation responsible for their place of residence. We also strongly recommend that they travel with a **verbal note or a mission order justifying their visit to Switzerland**.

C. Private visits

Private visits are not allowed, except in exceptional cases. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, is responsible for processing applications for private visits.

Exceptions to the refusal of entry according to Art. 1.5 of the [Directive implementing Ordinance 3 COVID-19](#) are examined on a case-by-case basis. For private visits, this directive includes the following exceptions:

- (1) visit to nuclear family ("spouse, registered partner and minor child") domiciled in Switzerland);**
- (2) visit of 1st and 2nd degree relatives (grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter) living in Switzerland, in case of major family reasons (birth, marriage, serious illness).**

Procedure for exceptions for private visits

- Persons who require a visa must apply for one at the [Swiss Embassy or Consulate responsible for their place of residence](#), explaining why they are a case of special necessity.
- For persons who do not require a visa, it is the immigration authorities on arrival in Switzerland who examine whether the conditions for exceptional entry are met and decide, on the basis of the evidence presented, whether the person is authorised to enter Switzerland.

If there is any doubt as to whether the purpose of the trip is compatible with the applicable standards, the Swiss representation responsible for the place of residence should be contacted.

2. Long-term stays (more than 90 days) – taking office/family reunification

Ordinary procedures prior to the covid-19 situation apply to persons subject to visa requirements, who are taking up office or for family reunification purposes.

Persons who are not subject to a visa requirement should inquire about boarding requirements directly with the airline and, if necessary, obtain a Laissez-passer from the [Swiss representation responsible for their place of residence](#). It is also strongly recommended that you travel with a verbal note or a mission order justifying your visit to Switzerland.

3. Transit

It is the traveller's responsibility to check the immigration regulations of that country. For information on crossing the borders of other Schengen countries, the following website can be consulted: <https://reopen.europa.eu/en/>.

Transit through a country or region at risk before entering Switzerland:

In principle, the country from which direct entry into Switzerland is made is decisive. However, if entry by air is via one or more transit airports (without leaving the international transit zone of the airport), the country determining entry is the country of initial departure and not the transit country.

Transit through Switzerland³:

All provisions relating to the ban on entry into Switzerland apply even in the case of transit through Switzerland, however:

- Entry is permitted to continue to a Schengen State in which the person concerned has a residence permit or a national D visa (stay subject to authorisation).
- Transits through the international transit area of the national airports of Zurich and Geneva without entering Switzerland also remain permitted.

³ See also under "Travelling through Switzerland" on the following webpage: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/sem/aktuell/faq-einreiseverweigerung.html>