Due to the urgent need to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Finland and the related need to maintain the core functions of the society, the Finnish Government has issued a nationwide emergency legislation to be implemented starting from the 18th of March.

As it currently stands, the emergency procedures will be in place until the 13th of April, unless otherwise decided.

In practice this means that the critical sectors of the society will be upheld – including, but not limited to, border authorities, security authorities, hospitals and other emergency authorities. Schools will be closed, apart from certain exceptions. Public gatherings are limited to the maximum of ten people.

All civil servants with the possibility of working from home are ordered to work from home henceforth, with the exception of those who work for the critical functions and sectors. Passenger traffic to Finland will be halted, with the exception of Finnish citizens and residents returning home. Necessary commute over the northern and western borders can still be allowed. Goods traffic will continue in a normal manner.

In Finnish customs all personnel except for those working in critical functions have been instructed to work from home from the 18th of March onwards. The critical functions include:
- Customs control officers;
- Crime prevention officers (incl. risk analysis officers);
- National contact point;
- Customs operational centre;
- Customs clearance personnel;
- IT managers (especially those responsible for troubleshooting);
- Key personnel for Customs Statistics unit;
- Guarantee management;
- IT Infrastructure maintenance and management personnel, including subcontractors;
- Critical administrative functions (HR, premises, procurement, security, translation, communications);
- Customs Laboratory;
- Product safety officers;
- Officers working for development projects that have a legal obligation to be completed according to schedules (e.g. those working for the VAT eCommerce Package).

Remarks from the International Road Transport Union
23.04.2020

On 23 April, the Finnish government extended the ban of large gatherings of more than 500 people until 31 July 2020, at least.

It also set out temporary relaxations on driving and rest time rules, which apply from 26 April until 31 May and are as follows:
- Maximum daily driving time of 11 hours
- Maximum weekly driving time of 60 hours
- Maximum fortnightly driving time of 120 hours
- Minimum daily rest period of 9 hours
- Minimum weekly rest period of 24 hours, every other week, without compensation
- 45 minutes rest period every 5,5 hours of driving time, which may be split into a 30 minutes before and 15 minutes after
- Regular weekly rest in the cabin allowed, as long as the vehicle is stationary and it has suitable sleeping facilities.

Source: SKAL

16.04.2020

On 16 April, the Finnish Government issued new decrees that bring into force special agreements on the transport of dangerous goods. The decrees enter into force on 17 April.

With the special agreements (M326, M327 and RID 4/2020), the periodic inspections of pressure receptacles, UN tanks and UN-MEG containers, that would expire during the coronavirus situation, will exceptionally remain in force with special arrangements in Finland and other signatory countries of the agreement.

The special agreements may be applied to transport by road and rail that are mostly used for the carriage of dangerous goods. The agreements will be available on the website of the Transport and Communications Agency - Traficom. The Agency will provide information in Finnish and Swedish.

For additional information, members can consult the following webpages: UNECE and OTIF.

Source: SKAL

15.04.2020

On 15 April, the Finnish Government lifted the temporary restrictions on movement to and from the Uusimaa region which were enforced on 28 March. This will enter into force immediately following the Government's plenary session, which is scheduled for 13:00 local time.

All other measures, including those on external borders, social distancing, restaurants and schools, etc. remain applicable.

Source: SKAL

07.04.2020
Finnish border traffic to be restricted as of 19 March 2020

Restrictions on Finnish border traffic will come into force at midnight on Thursday 19 March in accordance with the Government order. Passenger traffic will be restricted at the eastern border and at the internal borders. The Border Guard's measures relating to cross-border traffic will be carried out on the basis of the Schengen Borders Code and the Border Guard Act. The Finnish Government has ruled that Finnish citizens should not travel abroad. Furthermore, anyone returning to Finland from abroad should remain in conditions equivalent to quarantine for 14 days. This applies to transport by road, sea and air.

Start date: 19.03.2020

End date: not available

Further information: https://www.raja.fi/facts/news_from_the_border_guard/1/0/finnish_border_...

On 7 April, the Finnish Government decided to prolong the validity of the temporary reintroduction of border controls at the borders and the restrictions on traffic; border controls will be performed until 13 May 2020. Related decrees will be issued to Parliament for approval tomorrow (8 April) and are expected to be approved during this week.

Controls aim at further reducing movement at the main commuting border crossing points with Sweden, Norway and Estonia; only work travel that is strictly necessary will be permitted, and employees must carry an employer’s certificate stating that the work is essential.

Maritime passenger transport is prohibited: companies operating from Sweden, Estonia and Germany to Finland are requested to suspend the sale of tickets for ships departing on or after 11 April 2020. The provision does not apply to goods and freight transport operations.

Regarding the Åland Islands, air passenger transport is permitted only on scheduled flights from Stockholm, Helsinki and Turku to Mariehamn. Passengers travelling from Åland with the destination of mainland Finland are also permitted to travel.

People entering Finland are obliged to remain under quarantine-like conditions for 14 days. Such requirements do not apply to essential border crossings of emergency medical services and rescue service personnel or to freight transport.

Regarding traffic between Finland and non-Schengen countries (i.e. Russia), Finnish Border Guard officials allow the entry/exit of the following:

- Return to Finland: Finnish nationals and their family members; nationals of other EU and Schengen countries and their family members who are residing in Finland; third country nationals residing in Finland with residence permit.

- Returning transit traffic to other EU or Schengen countries or via them: nationals of EU and Schengen countries and their family members, third country nationals residing in another EU or Schengen country with residence permit.

- Exit of third country nationals.

- Necessary traffic, which is:
  
a) Healthcare and rescue service professionals/personnel, health researchers, and elderly care professionals.

  b) Transport personnel and other transport staff to the extent necessary. Companies should be aware that, despite additional controls the borders remain open and functional; previous restrictions are still in place.

  c) Diplomats, staff of international organisations, military personnel and humanitarian aid workers carrying out their work.

  d) Necessary transit and return trips.

  e) Passengers travelling for imperative family reasons.

  f) Persons in need of international protection or for other humanitarian reasons.

  g) Other necessary and justified traffic (e.g. maintenance works that require a specific maintenance team or person arriving from another country and whose work cannot be postponed).

The restrictions set by Russia on the Finland-Russia border apply until 1 May 2020.

Source: FinMobility

03.04.2020
The Finnish Parliament have approved the extension of the deadline of the measures currently in force. These measures will remain applicable until 13 May 2020.

The Finnish Government is restricting traffic at external borders. Inbound passenger transport operations have been suspended, with the exception of citizens and residents returning to Finland. In this case, people returning to Finland from another country are required to quarantine for 14 days. Finnish citizens and residents are strongly advised not to travel abroad.

Preparations are currently underway to restrict the flow of traffic across the northern and western borders. Border surveillance has been increased and all passenger sea transport is now extremely limited. Freight transport is however exempt from restriction measures at Finnish ports.

All current restrictions in the Uusimaa region remain applicable and in force until 19 April 2020.

Detailed information on the current situation in Finland is available on our consolidated document on IRU Flash Info webpage.

Source: SKAL

02.04.2020

On 2 April, the Finnish Government issued a decree with the aim to ensure continuity of dangerous goods transport operations.

Current exceptional circumstances may make it impossible to provide training and tests related to professional qualifications in the transport of dangerous goods, or scheduled and interim inspections of tanks, or vehicle inspections for the carriage of dangerous goods. Therefore, the validity of licences, approvals and certificates which will expire in the near future can, on an exceptional basis, be further extended in 2020.

Source: FinMobility

28.03.2020

From 28 March (00:00), the Finnish government has closed the Uusimaa region (Greater Helsinki Capital region). Thus, in practice, a temporary internal border has been established to separate Uusimaa from the rest of the country.

The restrictions apply to movements to and from the Uusimaa region, and will remain in force until 19 April 2020. The purpose of this new restrictions is to prevent coronavirus (COVID-19) infections and to slow the spread of the epidemic from Uusimaa to other parts of Finland. Indeed, one third of the Finnish population lives in this region, and the vast majority of COVID-19 cases in Finland has been registered there.

- Goods and freight transport services should continue as usual, but delays are expected due to the restrictions on movements. There are some 30 crossing points to and from Uusimaa, but no Green Lanes for trucks have been put in place yet.

- Public transport services will not stop. However, the use of the services has already decreased and will continue due to the restrictions on movements.

- Restrictions on people’s movements do not apply if movements are necessary for:
  (a) official activities;
  (b) travel for work, whether as an employee or as an entrepreneur or self-employed person, for studies or in connection with a societal position of trust;
(c) the performance of military service or any other statutory obligation;
(d) the need for care, risk of death or death of a family member, the right of access to a child, or for any other similar compelling personal reason.

The police will monitor compliance with the movement restrictions. If requested by the police, people must provide an account of the reason of their journey.

More information can be found on the following links:
- Information released by Finnish Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- Q & A on the restrictions by Police of Finland.
- Information released by Finnish Ministry of Transport.

Source: FinMobility

26.03.2020

On 26 March 2020, the Government issued a decree on extending the driving times and shortening the rest periods of drivers of buses and heavy goods vehicles due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The exemption would be applied to road transport from 27 March to 25 April 2020, allowing a shortening of the daily rest period of drivers to 9 hours and weekly rest period to 24 hours. The Government also proposes that the required minimum rest period of 45 minutes be allowed to be more freely split into periods of 15 and 30 minutes within a period of four and a half hours.

The full press release can be found here.

Source: Ministry of Transport and Communications

The Finnish Government is restricting traffic at borders from 19 March 2020, 00:00. People returning to Finland will be subject to 14 days quarantine.

Inbound passenger transport operations are suspended, except for citizens and residents returning to Finland. Finnish citizens and residents must not travel abroad.

Necessary travel for work and to access other necessary services will be permitted across the northern and western borders. Freight and goods traffic will continue as usual. Updated situation at borders:

- Helsinki–Vantaa, Mariehamn and Turku airports will be kept open for goods and return traffic. Border guards may allow travel for work if there is a necessary and justified reason. Other airports will be closed to international traffic.
- At the international border crossing points of the eastern border, traffic and opening hours will be restricted.
- Passenger traffic via the Vainikkala border crossing point will be suspended.
- Road and rail transport:
Imatra, Kuusamo, Niirala, Nuijamaa, Rajajooseppi, Salla, Vaalimaa and Vartius border crossing points are only for goods transport, and returning home to/from/via Finland for Finnish and other EU citizens as well as citizens of the Russian Federation.

Inari, Parikkala and Vainikkala border crossing points are only for goods transport.

At the border between Finland and Norway, Kilpisjärvi, Karigasniemi, Kivilompolo, Nuorgam, Näätämö and Utsjoki will be kept open for goods and return traffic. In addition, necessary travel for work and other necessary traffic may be permitted. Crossing the border is not permitted elsewhere.

At the Finnish–Swedish border, Karesuvanto, Kolari, Muonio, Pello, Tornio and Ylitornio will be kept open for goods and return traffic. In addition, necessary travel for work and other necessary traffic may be permitted. Crossing the border is not permitted elsewhere.

Although cross border commuting is not prevented, the reduction in air and sea traffic will make it significantly more difficult for foreign workers to enter Finland from abroad. In the case of EU citizens and people with a permanent residence permit in another EU country who are returning to their home country via Finland, such travel will be allowed, taking into account the person's state of health.

Detailed measures are available here.

Source: FinMobility