Measures for Protection and Self-protection of frontline Customs Officers:
Both the German Central Customs Authority and the local customs authorities have set up crisis teams to ensure the overall performance of customs tasks. In order to guarantee personnel availability in the long term, the official tasks of the organizational units, which are in direct contact with those involved (e.g. customs clearance), have been reduced to the necessary core areas. The use of personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks etc. is mandatory for these personnel. In addition, the relevant hygiene measures must be observed. Employees who are not absolutely necessary are put on standby duty. Persons returning from risk areas may not enter the office for 14 days after their return. This applies accordingly to employees who live in the same household as the aforementioned holiday returnees. Employees who belong to the groups of persons who have a higher risk of developing a serious illness (for example with relevant underlying diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, diseases of the respiratory system, liver and kidney as well as cancer) in principle work on a mobile or telework basis. All employees are obliged to check their own status (confirmed infections or officially confirmed ordered and voluntary quarantine) to their superior(s) immediately.

Measures regarding fumigation of containers and parcel consignments:
The German Robert Koch Institute currently estimates an infection with the novel coronavirus via imported goods as unlikely, since contamination would have to have taken place beforehand and the virus would still be active after the long transport route.

Measures to fight illicit trade with counterfeited or stolen medical supply goods:
Customs ensures that the quality standards applicable in the EU are observed for commercially imported drugs. Import is only possible with the necessary documents and permits.

Despite its efforts to facilitate the smooth movement of goods, the customs administration continues to carry out risk-based controls, with a particular focus on protective equipment (Trotz des Bestrebens, den Warenverkehr reibungslos zu ermöglichen führt die Zollverwaltung weiterhin risikoorientierte Kontrollen durch und hat dabei auch einen besonderen Fokus auf Schutzausrüstungen).

Other COVID related best practice:
* Just like the Federal Chemicals Agency at the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the customs administration has already reacted to the crisis in the disinfectant market with exemptions:

Remarks from the International Road Transport Union
05.05.2020
On 4 May, the German Ministry of the Interior extended controls at the borders with Denmark, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland and Austria until 15 May.

Following requests for clarification on the suspension of weekend and holidays traffic bans in Germany, BGL has confirmed that dates of expiration should be read as “until and including”, therefore, the date mentioned on the document is the last day when operators can take advantage of the suspension.

Source: BGL

27.04.2020
The following German Federal States have announced extensions of exemptions to the Sunday and holiday driving ban for vehicles of more than 7.5 t MPW:
- Schleswig-Holstein: extended until 30.06.2020

The German control authority BAG keeps a record of the overview of the situation in the different regions and it can be found here.

Source: BGL

24.04.2020
All German Federal States have introduced legislation making the use of facial masks mandatory in order to prevent further spreading of the COVID-19 virus.

However, due to the federal structure of Germany, there is no unique nationwide provision defining the exact circumstances in which a mask must be worn.

Therefore, to ensure that legal requirements are definitively fulfilled, BGL recommends that drivers wear a facial mask whenever leaving the vehicle’s cabin.

Source: BGL

23.04.2020
On 22 April, the German Federal State of Bavaria has prolonged the general exemption from Sunday and holiday driving bans until 1 June 2020.

The German control authority BAG has provided an overview of the situation in the different regions. Please see here.

Source: BGL

22.04.2020
All persons who already hold a permit for the tax-free use of undenatured alcohol for the production of pharmaceuticals according to § 28 in connection with § 27 Para. 1 No. 1 AlkStG, may also use this permit for the production of disinfectants since 20 March 2020. Accordingly, the improper use of undenatured alcohol, which is actually to be seen therein, is temporarily tolerated. Proof of entitlement is the existing permit. Deliveries must be made in accordance with § 35 AlkStV.

More details, please see: https://www.zoll.de/SharedDocs/Fachmeldungen/AktuelleEinzelmeldungen/2020/uebergreifend_coronavirus.html

Temporary border checks at the land borders with Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg and Denmark (15.03.2020)

The checks will come into force on Monday, 16 March 2020 at 08:00. The cross-border flow of goods will continue to be permitted. Cross-border commuters will also continue to be allowed to enter and leave the country. People travelling for other reasons should expect restrictions on travel both into and out of Germany. Travellers with symptoms that may indicate a coronavirus infection will not be permitted to enter/leave Germany, in coordination with the authorities in the relevant neighbouring country.

Start date: 16.03.2020
End date: not available

Further information: https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2020/03/grenzsc...

Temporary and limited relaxation of the enforcement of driving and rest times for the drivers of vehicles transporting essential goods

Germany has notified a temporary and limited relaxation of the enforcement of driving and rest times for the drivers of vehicles transporting essential goods such as food, medicine, medical protective equipment and fuels. This relaxation is granted pursuant to Article 14(2) of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006.

Start date: 18.03.2020
End date: 17.04.2020

Further information: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/temporary-relaxatio...

By the decree of 21 April 2020, the German federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate has extended the general exemption on the ban on driving on Sundays and public holidays for trucks until 10:00 on 30 August 2020.

Also, the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg has extended the exemptions on the ban on driving on Sundays and public holidays until 30 June 2020. The state of Bremen did so until 1 June 2020.

The overview of the country-specific regulations (in German only) has been updated accordingly on the BAG’s homepage.

Source: DSLV

21.04.2020

The German region of Thuringia/Thüringen has made a decision to prolong the current exemption (expired 19 April 2020) from the Sunday and holiday driving ban until 1 June 2020. New list of exemptions can be found here.

Source: BGL

17.04.2020

The German Federal Administration has temporarily relaxed driving and rest times rules (EU Regulation 561/2006) with a prolongation until 17 May. The measure applies to road transport of goods of daily necessities, including food, medical equipment and fuel. Measures lifted are as follows:

- Possibility to extend driving time to 10 hours five times per week;
- Possibility to take two consecutive reduced weekly rests within a period of four weeks.

These measures apply to professional and privately owned transportation companies. More information here.

Source: BGL

16.04.2020

On 16 April, the German region of Hamburg decided to prolong the application of Sunday and holiday traffic ban exemptions for goods vehicles. Exemptions are applicable up until 24 June.

The most up-to-date list of exemptions, currently in force in Germany, can be consulted here.

Source: BGL

15.04.2020

On 15 April, the Federal Minister of the Interior has decided to extend border controls at the internal borders with Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Denmark, Italy and Spain by a further 20 days until 4 May.

Further details can be found here.

Source: DSLV
On 8 April, the German Federal Ministry of Health issued a regulation banning travellers from entering Germany without a valid reason. The following content replaces the Orders issued by the same Ministry of 2 April.

People entering Germany must proceed directly to their home or to a suitable accommodation and isolate themselves for a period of 14 days after the entry into the country. They are also required to contact their competent public health office without delay and inform them of their entry into the country. People must provide the local health authority with the following information: identity and date of birth, travel itinerary, contact data, address of the domicile. Derogations to this rule may be applied by regulations issued by federal states and only concern people that show no symptoms of COVID-19 infection.

Bus companies and tour operators doing cross-border transport to Germany must comply, within the framework of their operational and technical capabilities, with the following provisions:

- Provide travellers with a barrier-free version of the information on the risks posed by COVID-19 infection and the possibilities for preventing and combating it.
- Keep the data available for up to 30 days after arrival in Germany. This applies in particular to electronically stored data which enable passengers to be identified and located, as well as to passenger lists and seating plans.

There are no restrictions on the cross-border movement of goods, regardless of the nationality of the drivers.

Source: DSLV

09.04.2020

German Federal states' exemptions on driving bans concern both Sunday and Public Holidays driving bans. The relevant exemptions granted in the Federal States are available here.

01.04.2020

The State of Bavaria has extended the relieve of the driving ban on Sundays and public holidays for all goods vehicles until 19 April 2020.

The State of Hesse has extended the relieve of the driving ban on Sundays and public holidays to all goods vehicles. The relieve applies in Hesse until 30 June 2020.

A constantly updated overview of the state regulations can be found here.

Source: BAG, DSLV

24.03.2020

Exemptions from Sunday / holiday driving bans have been updated. The most up to date list can be found here (changes highlighted in italics and in colour).

Source: BGL