Germany

Source: European Union/Re-open EU
26.08.2020

Travelling to Germany
Travelling from EU countries is allowed without restrictions, as long as a country or an area is not defined as "high-risk" by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). Travelling from Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein as well as the United Kingdom is also allowed at the same conditions.

Currently, the following countries or areas are classified as "high-risk":
- Belgium: Province of Antwerp (since 5/8/20), Region of Brussels (since 21/8/20)
- Bulgaria: Districts ("oblasts") of Blagoevgrad, Dobrich (since 7/8/20)
- France: French Guyana (since 21/8/20)
- Romania: Districts of Arge, Bihor, Buzau, Neamț - Districts of Bacău, Brela, Brașov, Dămbovița, Galați, Gorj, Ilfov, Prahova, Vaslui, Vrancea and the metropolitan region of the capital Bucharest (since 12/8/20)
- Croatia: Counties of Šibensko-kninska and Splitsko-Dalmatinska (since 20/8/20)
- Spain: Mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands (since 14/8/20)

Travelling from Germany or returning to Germany
Anyone who enters Germany having spent time in a risk area up to 14 days before their arrival is obliged to proceed directly to their own home or another suitable accommodation and self-isolate there for 14 days. This does not apply if the person only travelled through a risk area without spending time there.

According to the Federal Ministry of Health's Testing Obligation Ordinance, anyone having spent time in a risk area up to 14 days before their entry into Germany, if requested by the competent health office or a different authority designated, must either provide proof of having tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 or get tested within 14 days of their entry into Germany.

The test must be carried out in a Member State of the European Union or a country that is listed by the Robert Koch Institute. If, when entering Germany, you already carry with you a test result, to be valid the test may not have been conducted more than 48 hours prior to entry. The test certificate must be written in German or English.

People returning from risk areas and non-risk areas can receive a free test. Since 1 August, the costs incurred are covered if the test is performed within 72 hours of entering the country. The costs incurred for one repeat test per person are also covered.

Rules and Exceptions
The entry rule is based on the country from which the traveller is coming from, and not on nationality.

A country or an area is defined as "high-risk" when there are more than 50 new infections per 100,000 people over the last period of seven days.

Mandatory Travel Documentation
No special documentation is required.

Find out more:
Federal Foreign Office
Federal Ministry of Health
Latest information (in German)

Documents you need to travel in Europe

Remarks from the International Road Transport Union
11.08.2020

Compulsory testing for persons entering Germany from areas of heightened risk and exemptions for drivers.

On 8 August 2020, Germany introduced compulsory testing for the COVID-19 virus for persons entering the country from "areas of heightened risk". At land border crossings, authorities will perform spot checks for the relevant certificates.

However, § 4 of the relevant ordinance (see attachment in German and English) establishes an exemption from compulsory testing for persons who are exempted from the 14 days’ quarantine under regional COVID-19 regulations. The quarantine regulations in all regions of Germany establish such exemptions for persons who are professionally transporting passengers or goods by road, rail, ship or plane. As a result, drivers of international goods transport or passenger vehicles are not subject to compulsory COVID-19 testing.

Lists of heightened risk of COVID-19 infection are being posted and regularly updated by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) and may be found at the following link: https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Transport/BMG_Merkblatt_Reisende_Tab.html (click the link named "Informationen zur Ausweisung internationaler Risikogebiete durch das Auswärtige Amt, BMG und BMF")

Source: BGL

12.06.2020

As of 16 June, temporary border controls, introduced in March 2020 at the German borders with Austria, France, Switzerland and Denmark, will be abandoned. Entry into Germany of travellers from EU member states and EU associated states, will no longer be subject to show proof and justification of the urgent need to travel. Restrictions may still be reintroduced again subject to the pandemic’s further development.

Source: BGL

10.06.2020

On 10 June, the state of Schleswig-Holstein informed that a general exemption from the ban on driving on Sundays and public holidays pursuant to § 30 (3) and (4) StVO continues to apply until 31 August 2020 in accordance with § 46 (2) StVO. This also applies to empty runs.

In addition, the state of Schleswig-Holstein grants a general exemption from the driving ban in accordance with § 1 paragraph 1 of the holiday travel regulation on Saturdays in the period from 1 July to 31 August 2020.

Source: DSLV

08.06.2020

In addition to the news shared last week, the German Bus and Coach Operators’ Association BDO prepared the following clarification on quarantine measures in Germany:
Risk areas are those with a 7-day incidence greater than 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants cumulatively in the last seven days, travel warnings are issued.

Rules and Exceptions
The entry rule is based on the country from which the traveller is coming from, and not on nationality. Regardless of the possibility to enter the country, Germany has a quarantine requirement in place in all federal states on the basis of the Protection against Infection Act (Infektionsschutzgesetz) for those returning to and entering Germany from regions designated by the Robert Koch Institute as risk areas. Risk areas are those with a 7-day incidence greater than 50 cases/100,000 inhabitants. This measure can only be dispensed with if travellers have a medical certificate that confirms that there is no evidence of an infection with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. The medical certificate must come from a member state of the European Union or another state published by the Robert Koch Institute and must not be older than 48 hours upon arrival. Proof must be provided when entering Germany. The quarantine requirement also applies (with the exception of transit passengers) to travellers with an important reason for travel.

Mandatory Travel Documentation
No special documentation is required.

Specific measures for German residents exiting or returning to Germany
Individual countries can continue to restrict entry or ask for quarantine upon entry on their territory. Germany has a quarantine requirement in place in all federal states on the basis of the Protection against Infection Act (Infektionsschutzgesetz) for those returning to and entering Germany from regions designated by the Robert Koch Institute as risk areas. The quarantine requirement also applies (with the exception of transit passengers) for travellers with an important reason for travel.

Links to national sources
Federal Foreign Office
Latest information (in German)

Source: https://reopen.europa.eu/en/map/DEU
On 30 June 2020, in view of the improved global epidemiological situation in some regions, the Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation on relaxing the entry restrictions on the basis of a draft drawn up by the Commission. Germany will implement this recommendation from 2 July 2020 as follows:

Third countries without travel restrictions

From 2 July 2020, unrestricted travel to Germany is once again possible from the following third countries with low rates of infection:

- Australia
- Georgia
- Canada
- Montenegro
- New Zealand
- Thailand
- Tunisia
- Uruguay

For China, Japan and South Korea a lifting of entry restrictions is subject to confirmation of reciprocity.

This list of countries is to be regularly updated. The question of whether travel to Germany is permitted depends on where the person travelling has previously been staying, not on their nationality.

Options for travellers to Germany from all third countries

Travel to Germany is also possible from third countries not included in the above list if there are important grounds for doing so. On this basis, travel to Germany is possible for the following groups or travel purposes:

- German nationals and nationals from other EU countries, countries associated with Schengen (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland) and the United Kingdom;
- Third-country nationals with a valid residence permit for Germany;
- Family members of third-country nationals travelling to Germany for the purposes of family reunification or for visits for urgent family reasons;
- Healthcare professionals, health researchers and elderly care professionals;
- Foreign experts and highly qualified personnel whose work is necessary from an economic point of view and which cannot be postponed or carried out abroad;
- Transport personnel engaged in haulage of goods and other transport staff;
- Seasonal workers in agriculture;
- Sailors;
- Foreign students whose studies cannot be continued entirely from outside Germany;
- Persons in need of international protection or seeking protection for other humanitarian reasons;
- Diplomats, staff of international organisations, military personnel and humanitarian aid workers in the exercise of their functions;
- Late repatriates;
- Passengers in Transit.

Travel within the EU or the Schengen area

On 19 May, the German Federal Ministry of Transport recommended that regional governments suspend the additional German summer restrictions concerning special sections of motorways on Saturdays between 1 July and 31 August from 07:00 to 20:00. However, for the time being, implementation of this recommendation is still pending implementation by the regional governments. The states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony-Anhalt have already granted such an exemption.

Detailed information on the progress of the implementation is expected to be published in the BAG information (in German only) in due course.

Source: BGL and DSLV

On 13 May, the German Minister of the Interior announced the following measures, which come into effect from 16 May:

- all border crossings at the borders with Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg and Denmark will be operative again.
- controls at the borders with Austria, Switzerland, France and Denmark will be reduced to sample checks.
- controls at the border with Luxembourg will be completely abandoned.

Companies should be aware that controls at the border with Denmark will be abandoned as soon as possible, however, the relevant date is still to be agreed. Controls at the borders with Austria, Switzerland and France are scheduled to cease on 16 June, subject to the COVID-19 pandemic’s further development.

Source: BGL

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

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
The temporary entry restrictions for travellers from other EU countries, states associated with Schengen (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland) and the United Kingdom have been removed entirely since 21 June 2020. Travel to Germany from other EU states, the Schengen area and the United Kingdom has been possible without restriction since then.

Start date: 02.07.2020

Further information: https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/-/2320738

More info: https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/coronavirus/ausbreitung--...

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/home_en

WCO/Central Customs Authority

01.04.2020

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.

https://www.zoll.de/SharedDocs/Fachmeldungen/AktuelleEinzelmeldungen/2020/uebergreifend_coronavirus.html?nn=280764#doc368868bodyText1

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

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 5612006) 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
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:

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

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

08.04.2020
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.

Source: BGL
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/grenzscp...

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...

The State of Hesse has extended the relief 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