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Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI
Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG
Abteilung Kommunikation und Kampagnen

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FAQ New coronavirus

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Masks compulsory on public transport

Following the easing of measures to protect the population against the coronavirus more people are now moving around in public. The Federal Council continues to rely on members of the public to behave responsibly. The rules on hygiene and social distancing, as well as the sets of precautionary measures, are still key and should help to prevent new infections and thus a significant spike in the number of new cases. Precautionary measures must be in place in all publicly accessible establishments and businesses, as well as at events.

There is a significant risk of infection if a distance of 1.5 metres cannot be respected. This can be the case at any time, particularly when using public transport. In view of the increasing numbers of journeys being undertaken, and the fact that cases of infection have been rising since mid-June, the Federal Council is reinforcing its protective measures and has decided to make the wearing of face masks compulsory in all forms of public transport.

1. **Where exactly do masks have to be worn?**

Masks are compulsory in all forms of public transport, i.e. in trains, trams and busses, but also in cable cars and on lake and river boats. There is an exception for ski lifts and chair lifts.

2. **Are there exceptions for young children and any other groups?**

Children under the age of 12 are exempt. Individuals who are unable to wear a mask for a particular reason, especially medical reasons, are also exempt.

3. **Do I still have to wear a mask if the train or bus I am travelling in is half empty?**

The wearing of masks is compulsory regardless of how many people are travelling. You never know how many people are going to be getting on board. Given the increasing number of commuters and leisure travel during the holidays, passenger numbers are generally likely to be high.

4. **What type of mask is recommended? Can I use a homemade mask?**

When using public transport you can use face masks (surgical or operating theatre mask) or industrially manufactured fabric face coverings. There are norms and standards for face masks and industrially manufactured fabric face coverings (www.empa.ch/web/remask und

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www.testex.com/de/communitymask). Fabric face coverings can be washed repeatedly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Homemade masks are not recommended.

5.   If I don't have a mask with me, can I pull a scarf over my mouth and nose, or use a towel?

No, scarves and towels do not satisfy the requirement to wear a mask. A scarf does not provide sufficient protection against infection and is of only limited use in protecting others. You should wear a face mask or industrially manufactured fabric face covering.

6.   How do I dispose of a used mask correctly?

When taking off the mask, try to take hold of the ties behind your ears and remove it from your mouth and nose. Place it directly in a waste bin.
Do not touch masks that you find lying around with your bare hands.
Wash or disinfect your hands before and after touching a used mask.

7.   Where can I put my mask when I get off the train if you want to use it again later?

Single-use masks should not be reused. Fabric face coverings should be put in a paper bag or an envelope. You should try to ensure that the inside of the covering does not contaminate the outside, and that it does not come into contact with clothing or other objects (mobile phone, etc.).

8.   Can you use fabric face coverings more than once?

Yes, you can wear face coverings for up to a day, e.g. when travelling to and from work in the morning and evening. It should then be washed.

9.   Why isn't a contact list being used instead of making everyone wear a mask?

Contact lists for bus and train users are simply not feasible or sensible given the numbers of passengers getting on and off at each stop.

10.   Who will be checking to see whether passengers are wearing a mask?

Checks will be carried out and enforced by train staff and the railway police or security staff.

11. What if I refuse to wear a mask?

Anyone refusing to wear a mask, will be asked to get off at the next stop. If that person refuses the requests of security staff and does not get off, they can be fined for disobedience (under the normal fines procedure, not a fixed penalty).

12. Why are masks not being made compulsory in all public spaces?

On public transport, people are close together for longer periods of time which increases the risk of infection. Furthermore, it is not possible to gather the contact details of those present, which makes contact tracing impossible if someone contracts COVID-19.

13. For a long time, the message from the FOPH was that masks did not protect healthy people in public spaces. So why are they now being made compulsory?

Anyone wearing a mask protects others. A person who is infected can be contagious two days before experiencing symptoms without even being aware. If everyone wears a mask in confined spaces, everyone is protected from each other. Even if there is no 100% guarantee of protection, the spread of the virus can be slowed.