



Press release

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Coronavirus: Switzerland adapts its entry requirements for transit air travel

As of 31 August, it will no longer be possible to enter Switzerland from a high-risk country on a transit flight via a non-high-risk country. However, passengers travelling from a non-high-risk country will be able to enter Switzerland even if they have a stopover in a high-risk country, provided they do not leave the transit area of the airport. Until now, it has been possible to circumvent the entry restrictions by travelling via airports in countries not on the high-risk list.

Despite the coronavirus, Swiss and EU/EFTA nationals can currently enter Switzerland from any country in the world. However, depending on the country they are travelling from, they may be required to go into quarantine as ordered by the Federal Office of Public Health FOPH.

There are no longer any entry restrictions for travellers within the Schengen Area and from EU member states. Switzerland gradually relaxed the entry restrictions from mid-May onwards.

Most countries outside the Schengen Area remain on the list of high-risk countries. It is still not possible to enter Switzerland from these countries in the vast majority cases.

Country of departure now counts, not stopover country

Until now, the decisive factor for air travellers from high-risk countries was the country of departure of the flight carrying a person into Switzerland. The country of departure of any previous connecting flights was immaterial. For example, a third-country national was able to fly to Switzerland from a high-risk country such as the USA via Canada – still respecting the quarantine requirements – because Canada is not listed in the COVID-19 Ordinance 3 as a high-risk country. Because the USA is considered a high-risk country, it was not possible to enter Switzerland on a direct flight from Washington or Chicago.

Under the new rules, which apply from 31 August, the country of departure, not the stopover country, determines whether travellers may enter Switzerland. For example, it is no longer

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possible for third-country nationals to fly to Switzerland from the USA via Toronto. This new regulation aims to prevent people circumventing the entry requirements by travelling in transit via countries not on the high-risk list.

Conversely, air passengers from third countries on the list of exceptions in the COVID-19 Ordinance 3, such as Japan, Australia or New Zealand, may enter Switzerland even if they have to change planes in a country on the high-risk list, such as Turkey, because no direct flights are available. The only condition is that they do not leave the international transit area in the airport in which they stop over – i.e. they do not actually enter the high-risk country.

Detailed information can be found online at:

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/aktuell/aktuell/faq-einreiseverweigerung.html>

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