Unofficial English translation of the French-language information sheet

Covid-19 information note: rules of entry into Switzerland for persons expected in an official capacity by international organisations and permanent missions

This note complements verbal notes and circular communications sent by the Swiss Mission concerning the measures taken by the Swiss authorities in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). It summarises the rules currently in force concerning access to Swiss territory arising from Ordinance 3 on Measures to Combat the Coronavirus (hereinafter: Ordinance 3 COVID-19). Additional information about the Swiss COVID Certificate is published and regularly updated on the website of the Swiss Mission.

This information is intended in particular for persons who are expected in an official capacity by a permanent mission/representation/delegation or by an international organisation. Those concerned are mainly:

- staff members and persons authorized to accompany them;
- State delegates or other official representatives who are officially invited.

Updates to this notice are made on a regular basis according to changes in the rules. However, the information available on the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) websites prevails.

1. Short-term stays (up to 90 days)

Third country nationals who benefit from the free movement of persons, as well as travellers coming directly from the Schengen States and the States mentioned in Appendix 1, ch.1 of the ordinance 3 COVID-19, have access to Swiss territory without restriction (as long as the usual entry conditions - visa, travel document, etc. - are fulfilled).

Persons who do not meet the above-mentioned conditions are subject to the principle of entry ban. However, in a situation of absolute necessity, they may benefit from an exception in cases of hardship or public interest. They are then authorized to enter Switzerland, provided that the usual conditions of entry are met.

These exceptional situations are described in Sections 1.3 and 1.5 of the Directive on the implementation of Ordinance 3 COVID-19, and include the following exceptions:

A. Vaccination

Persons who are vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 with a vaccine listed below are not subject to this entry ban, regardless of the purpose of the stay (tourism, business, etc.). Vaccinated persons are those who have received all required doses of vaccine (full vaccination) in accordance with the requirements or recommendations of the state in which the vaccination was performed.

This may also include persons who have received only one dose of a vaccine requiring two doses due to proven recovery and are therefore considered fully vaccinated according to the requirements of the country of vaccination.

This provision counts for 270 days from the time of full vaccination or booster vaccination following full vaccination. For the Janssen vaccine, the period is 270 days from the 22nd day after vaccination.

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1 Appendix 1 and the various sections mentioned in brackets in this notice refer to this Ordinance.

2 See in particular the website Corona: Questions and answers on entry and stay in Switzerland, the exceptions and suspension of visas: https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/aktuell/aktuell/faq-einreiseverweigerung.html
Children under the age of 18 do not need to prove that they are vaccinated and are therefore not subject to the principle of refusal of entry.

Vaccination can be proven by means of the COVID-19 certificate or a recognized foreign certificate as defined in Appendix 5 of the COVID-19 certificate ordinance.

Proof may also be provided in a manner other than the above. It must correspond to a currently customary form. In addition to the surname, first name and date of birth of the person concerned, it must contain the following information: the date of the vaccine, the vaccine administered.

- Pfizer/BioNTech (BNT162b2 / Comirnaty® / Tozinameran)
- Moderna (mRNA-1273 / Spikevax / COVID-19 vaccine Moderna)
- AstraZeneca (AZD1222 Vaxzevria®/ Covishield™)
- Janssen / Johnson & Johnson (Ad26.COV2.S) 
- Sinopharm / BIBP (SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine (Vero Cell))
- Sinovac (CoronaVac)
- Covaxin (Bharat Biotech International Limited)
- Nuvaxovid® / NVX-CoV2373 (Novavax)

This exception does not apply to persons who want to enter Switzerland from a country or region where a variant of the virus is circulating and where the risk of infection or serious disease progression is greater than for the variant of the virus that prevails in the Schengen area.

B. Cure

A person is considered cured if he or she can demonstrate the cure by means of a COVID-19 certificate, a recognized foreign certificate as defined in Appendix 5 of the COVID-19 certificate ordinance, or in another way that corresponds to a currently customary form. In addition to the surname, first name and date of birth of the person concerned, it must contain one of the following items of information: the certificate of infection, including the name and address of the service that issued the certificate (place of testing, doctor, pharmacy, hospital), the certificate of release from isolation or the medical certificate of recovery. This can be the case for example with a positive test (PCR, antigen or serological) or a medical certificate.

This exception does not apply to persons who want to enter Switzerland from a country or region where a variant of the virus is circulating and where the risk of infection or serious disease progression is greater than for the variant of the virus that prevails in the Schengen area.

C. Delegates and official visits

Urgent official visits resulting from Switzerland's international obligations are among the exceptions provided for in the above-mentioned Directive. It is specified in this respect that the visit of delegates concerned by the principle of refusal of entry, as far as possible, should be reserved for situations where participation cannot be carried out in virtual mode or be delegated to a representative of the State in office in Switzerland.

During the examination of the request, the delegate will have to establish in a credible manner, with supporting documents (mission order, explanatory verbal note), the compelling reason for his or her business trip. In particular, he/she will be asked to specify the function performed within the meeting (e.g. board member, panelist, etc.) and to demonstrate the absolute necessity of his/her presence in Geneva.

Persons subject to visa requirements are requested to submit their application according to the usual procedures to the Swiss Embassy or Consulate responsible for their place of residence.

Persons in possession of a valid visa as well as persons not subject to visa requirements should inquire about boarding requirements directly with the airline and, if necessary, obtain a Laissez-passer from the Swiss Embassy or Consulate responsible for their place of residence. We also strongly recommend that they travel with a verbal note or a mission order justifying their visit to Switzerland.

3 Pour le vaccin Janssen, la durée de validité de la vaccination est de 270 jours à compter du 22e jour qui suit la vaccination complète.
D. Private visits

Private visits are not allowed, except in exceptional cases. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) is responsible for processing applications for private visits.

Exceptions to the refusal of entry according to Art. 1.5 of the Directive implementing Ordinance 3 COVID-19 are examined on a case-by-case basis. For private visits, this directive includes the following exceptions:

1. Visit to the nuclear family (spouse, registered partner and minor child) residing in Switzerland;
2. Visit of 1st and 2nd degree relatives (grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter) residing in Switzerland, in case of major family reasons (birth, marriage, serious illness).

Procedure for exceptions for private visits

- Persons who require a visa must apply for one at the Swiss Embassy or Consulate responsible for their place of residence, explaining why they are a case of absolute necessity.
- For persons who do not require a visa, it is the immigration authorities on arrival in Switzerland who examine whether the conditions for exceptional entry are met and decide, on the basis of the evidence presented, whether the person is authorised to enter Switzerland.

If there is any doubt as to whether the purpose of the trip is compatible with the applicable standards, the Swiss representation responsible for the place of residence should be contacted.

2. Long-term stays (more than 90 days) – taking up duties/family reunification

Ordinary procedures prior to the COVID-19 situation apply to persons subject to visa requirements, who are taking up their duties or for family reunification purposes.

Persons who are not subject to a visa requirement should inquire about boarding requirements directly with the airline and, if necessary, obtain a Laissez-passer from the Swiss Embassy or Consulate responsible for their place of residence. It is also strongly recommended that you travel with a verbal note or a mission order justifying your visit to Switzerland.

3. Transit

It is the traveler’s responsibility to check the immigration regulations of the transit country. For information on crossing the borders of other Schengen countries, the following website can be consulted: [https://reopen.europa.eu/en/](https://reopen.europa.eu/en/).

Transit through a country or region at risk before entering Switzerland:

In principle, the country from which direct entry into Switzerland is made is decisive. However, if entry by air is via one or more transit airports (without leaving the international transit zone of the airport), the country determining entry is the country of initial departure and not the transit country.

Transit through Switzerland:

All provisions relating to the ban on entry into Switzerland apply even in the case of transit through Switzerland, however:

- Entry is permitted to continue to a Schengen State in which the person concerned has a residence permit or a national D visa (stay subject to authorisation).
- Transits through the international transit area of the national airports of Zurich and Geneva without entering Switzerland also remain permitted.

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4 See also under “Travelling through Switzerland” on the following webpage: [https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/sem/aktuell/faq-einreiseverweigerung.html](https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/sem/aktuell/faq-einreiseverweigerung.html)