

COVID Pandemic: German Federal Law on the Nationwide “Emergency Brake”

Starting on Saturday, April 24, 2021, midnight, the provisions of the new Prevention of Infection Act will apply with the nationwide “emergency brake”, which a majority voted for in Parliament and the Federal Council. On the basis of specific seven-day incidence values per 100,000 residents in a municipality or district the Federal Law stipulates different-level restrictions of public life in order to contain the number of new COVID cases as far as possible. The city council is letting its general decree expire by Sunday, April 25, 2021 at midnight due to the Federal regulation and will not extend it.

The curfew will now apply from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m.

Here is an overview of the most important regulations

The nationwide “emergency brake” of the Prevention of Infection Act (Source: Federal Government/Federal Gazette) stipulates inter alia the following regulations starting from a seven-day incidence of 100 on three consecutive days:

- In the case of private contacts, one household may meet maximum one other person. Breaches of the private contact restrictions will be prosecuted.
- Stores for expanded everyday needs and essential services will remain open. This includes grocery stores including direct sales, drinks cash-and carry stores, health food stores, stores specializing in baby products, pharmacies, health care supply stores, drugstores, opticians, hearing care professionals, service stations, newspaper stands and stores, booksellers, florist’s shops, pet supply stores, animal feed markets, gardening centers and wholesalers. In all stores, the corresponding hygiene programs and the duty to wear a mask (surgical or FFP2 mask) must be complied with.
- In the case of a seven-day incidence below 150 it will be possible to shop at all other stores upon appointment and with a current negative test result. As Ludwigshafen currently has a seven-day incidence value of 254.3 (Source: Robert-Koch-Institute, April 22, 2021) the measures intended by the nationwide “emergency brake” as from a value of 150 will apply to the metropolitan area. Deviating from what was previously stipulated in the Ludwigshafen General Decree, “appointment shopping” in the retail sector is no longer possible where the value of 150 is exceeded. This means that stores offering merchandise that is not classified as expanded everyday needs must close.
- In the service sector everything that is not explicitly prohibited will remain open, such as bicycle and car repair, banks and savings associations, post offices, etc.
- There will be a curfew from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m.; sports, jogging or walks alone are permitted up to midnight. In this period, leaving your house is only permitted for pertinent reasons- for example going to work, seeking medical assistance or walking the dog.
- In schools in which alternate classroom teaching and homeschooling applies as from an incidence of 100, teachers and pupils must be tested for COVID twice a week. As from an incidence exceeding 165 classroom teaching and regular daycare is not permitted. There may be exceptions for graduating classes and special needs schools. In Ludwigshafen homeschooling excluding any sort of classroom teaching

has been mandatory for pupils of secondary and vocational schools as from April 19. This will now also be the case for primary and special needs schools in the city as from April 26. Emergency student support is offered at the schools.

- Services involving close physical contact are only permitted for medical, therapeutic, nursing or spiritual counselling purposes. Exceptions are visits to the hair stylist and appointments with the podiatrist, however, only if the customers can show a negative COVID test for the day of the appointment. Here too, wearing masks continues to be mandatory.
- Restaurants and hotels will remain closed. Takeaway and delivery continue to be possible leisure and cultural institutions also will remain closed with the exception of the outdoor areas of zoos and botanical gardens. Currently, they can be visited with a current negative test.
- Sports may only be practiced alone, together with one other person or only with members of your own household. Outdoors, children up to the age of 14 may practice contact-free sports in a group with up to five other children.
- The duty to work from home is being intensified: employees are now obligated to accept offers to work from home if their private circumstances so allow.

For more information go to the website of the Federal Government at www.bundesregierung.de and in the Federal Gazette at www.bgbl.de. A graphic overview of the most important regulations can be found on the webpages of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate at corona.rlp.de.