

Answers to frequently asked questions on what changes as of 1 February, in the framework of the strategic lifting of measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic

A. Movement:

1. What are the curfew hours?

Movement continues to be prohibited from 9 in the evening until 5 in the morning of the following day.

2. Under which circumstances is one allowed to move during curfew hours (9 in the evening to 5 in the morning of the next day)?

The movement of persons during curfew hours continues to be permitted for the following reasons:

- **For purposes of moving to and from workplaces, with the presentation of Form A**, completed and signed by the employer, which certifies the necessity for the movement during the aforementioned hours.
- **For urgent purposes**, such as to go to a medical centre or a hospital or a pharmacy or a veterinarian for medical emergencies and to render assistance to people who are unable to care for themselves or who need to self-isolate.

3. How many times per day will movement by exception be permitted?

Movement by exception **will be permitted twice a day by sending a text message to 8998** for the reasons cited in question 5. **Persons over the age of 65 may use Form B** for their movement by exception.

It is clarified that for purposes of moving to and from the workplace for work purposes, no text message is required, but the employee must present Form A, signed by his/her employer.

4. How many categories for movement by exception are there via a text message?

Category 9 is added, for movement by exception via a text message. Category 9 concerns movement in order to visit barbershops, hair salons, and beauty salons.

5. What changes in the remaining categories for movement by exception via a text message, as of 1 February?

According to the decisions, movement to visit a **1st degree or 2nd degree relative is added to Category 5, with a maximum of two (2) persons.** Defined as 1st degree and 2nd degree relatives are parents, children, spouses, father/mother in-law, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, son/ daughter in-law, brother/ sister in-law.

In parallel, **movement for exercise purposes in nature trails, as defined by the Forest Department, is excluded** from Category 6.

All other categories remain the same.

6. Is movement between Districts allowed?

Yes, movement between Districts is permitted provided that the purpose for which the movement takes place falls within the points of use of a text message, which normally does not exceed three (3) hours.

B. Social gatherings:

7. Are social gatherings at residences allowed?

Social gatherings at residences are forbidden, **with the exception of visits of up to two (2) persons provided that they are 1st degree or 2nd degree relatives.** It is understood that no meal/dinner may be held in houses for weddings and christenings.

At the same time, being present at a residence is permitted for the purposes of:

- caring for minors and disabled persons for the period/duration where the physical presence of parents/guardians is necessary in their workplace (e.g., nursery staff, childminders, guardians, caregivers, etc.).
- providing assistance to people who are unable to take care of themselves (medication, care of individuals, food supply, etc.). It is understood that such persons should take all personal protective measures and remain only for a reasonable period of time necessary for the care of the individual, so that they do not endanger him/her.
- work by professionals such as electricians, plumbers, housekeepers, gardeners, painters, etc., as well as health professionals (physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, community nurses, etc) only for the reasonable time needed to carry out their work.

8. Are gatherings allowed in public and private meeting places?

Access to and social gatherings in public and private meeting areas are prohibited, namely squares, parks, dams, excursion sites, marinas, beaches, pedestrian streets, etc.

Access is only allowed to parks, linear parks and beaches, exclusively for physical exercise purposes.

9. Is access to nature trails, as defined by the Forest Department, allowed?

Access to nature trails is **prohibited**, for purposes of personal exercise, as well as for other purposes, with effect from the date of the issuance of the Decree.

C. Sports:

10. In what instances is physical exercise/training allowed?

Physical exercise/training is permitted in areas where access is allowed in accordance with the decree in force. Specifically, **access is allowed to parks, linear parks and beaches only for physical exercise or individual sport purposes.**

Persons are allowed to move for physical exercise or individual sport in parks, linear parks and beaches only, provided that they send an SMS message to 8998 while selecting the option number 6, comply with the maximum time frame allowed (3 hours), and ensure that participants in the training **do not exceed two persons**, excluding underage children.

As regards **parks, linear parks and beaches**, it is noted that **people are allowed to be present there for no other reason besides exercise.**

It is underlined that in areas where people are present in order to work out, **no socialization is allowed among persons who do not reside in the same residence.**

It is noted that with regard to the right to perform physical exercise on the beach, persons are allowed to go to the beaches of the District where they permanently reside (primary residence). Excluded from this are persons who reside in a District without access to the beach, namely the District of Lefkosia, who are allowed to travel to beaches in other Districts in order to work out, within the reasonable time frame of three hours.

It is understood that those persons wishing to leave their house in order to work out, are allowed to do so, provided that they send an SMS message to 8998 while selecting the option number 6 and comply with the maximum time frame allowed (3 hours).

D. Attending religious services:

11. Are sacred temples/places of religious worship permitted to operate?

The Divine Liturgy in sacred temples/religious places of worship **is performed without the presence of congregants. As of 8 February, the presence of congregants in places of religious worship is permitted, with a maximum number of 50 people**, provided that they comply with the health protocols.

It is clarified that **up until 7 February, congregants can go to religious places of worship for individual prayer**, (simultaneous physical presence of up to 10 persons per religious place), provided that the observance of the health protocols (distances, masks, maximum number of persons) will be ensured.

It is clarified that **the presence of congregants in the courtyard of temples/religious places of worship is prohibited.**

E. Business/Services:

12. Which businesses reopen as of 1st February?

As of Monday, 1st February, hair salons, barbershops, beauty salons and driving schools reopen.

13. Who should undergo a mandatory rapid antigen test, according to the Decree?

According to the Decree, all employees in businesses reactivated from 1st February should undergo a rapid antigen test by 31 January.

14. Where can I do a rapid antigen test, if I work in a business that is reactivated?

For the benefit of employees, the Ministry of Health provides free antigen tests in all districts. The locations and hours of operation of the test units will be announced on a daily basis by the Ministry of Health.

15. How long is the rapid test result valid for? Should it be repeated by employees?

The result of the **rapid test is valid for seven (7) days** unless, in the meantime, a person develops symptoms or is classified as a contact and should therefore follow the protocol defined by the Epidemiological Monitoring Unit.

The employer/business has the responsibility of coordinating repeat checks for employees, so that at any time and on a weekly basis they have a rapid test, as defined below:

- Businesses/services employing up to 3 people, all employees should be tested
- Businesses/services employing between 4 and 10 people, tests should be carried out on at least 4 employees.
- Businesses/services employing more than 10 people, tests should be carried out on at least 4 people or 20 % of employees, whichever is larger in number.

16. How will private service businesses operate?

As of 1st February **the physical presence percentage of employees increases from 25% to 50%, with a minimum of 5 employees, if the employer so wishes, and without a limit to the maximum number of employees.**

It is noted that if a business operates in more than one building, **the physical presence is permitted of a maximum of 50% of the employees working in each building.**

For businesses **that are co-located in the same premises, the physical presence is permitted of a maximum of 50% of the employees of each legal entity** (namely, of each business).

The rest of the staff will work through telework at home.

17. How are service businesses affected by the rapid test employee control programme?

Employees who will return to work on 1st February, as a result of the increase in the physical presence percentage from 25% to 50%, must undergo a rapid antigen test by 31 January.

At the same time, the employer should ensure the mandatory weekly check as described in question 16.

18. What are the service hours of food retailers for people over 65 and people with disabilities?

Pharmacies, supermarkets, mini-markets, fruit shops, butcher shops, fish mongers and grocery stores, **from the start of operation until 9 am**, will serve only people over the age of 65 and people with disabilities.

19. What applies to the operation of car wash services?

Car wash services will operate for indoor and outdoor washing of vehicles.

27/01/2021