



# GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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## Finland – COVID-19: Updated Government Recommendations for Face Masks and Remote Work

On 13 August 2020, the Finnish government issued new resolutions on recommendations regarding wearing face masks, remote work, and COVID-19 testing and possible quarantine for those arriving from high-risk countries, to support efforts to control the spread of COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>

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### WHY THIS MATTERS

The updated recommendations mean individuals in Finland should acquire their own face coverings and face masks to use them on public transport and in other situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. Employers may wish to consider covering mask costs if they send their employees out on a work-related trips on public transport.

In areas where COVID-19 cases are growing regionally, despite preventative measures, employers should prepare for shifting employees, whose duties allow, to remote working as much as possible.

Additionally, employers are encouraged to closely follow the list of countries approved for travel to and from Finland, which is reviewed at regular intervals.

Due to possible quarantine measures, employers should also note that local registrations for any newly arriving employees, which require the employee's physical presence, should not be arranged for immediately after their arrival in Finland.

## Face Coverings and Face Masks

Effective immediately, the Finnish government recommends the wearing of face coverings and face masks on public transport and where social distancing cannot be maintained. Individuals are responsible for acquiring their own face covering and face masks, however municipalities will ensure that face coverings and masks are available free of charge for individuals in the most vulnerable groups of society.

## Remote Working

The government also recommended that where COVID-19 cases are growing regionally in Finland, workplaces in the affected region should shift to remote work when possible. In addition, employers should promote work arrangements that reduce close contact and other risk factors in the workplace.

## COVID-19 Testing and Possible Quarantine Measures for those Arriving from High-Risk Countries

The Finnish government also noted that COVID-19 tests (health checks) are to be performed on travelers at border crossing points. Tests are generally voluntary; however, a regional state administrative agency may order mandatory testing. This is possible, for example, if there are symptomatic passengers on board a flight.

If there is reason to suspect that a person has been exposed to coronavirus, authorities may issue a personal 14-day quarantine order to a person arriving from a high-risk area. The decision to quarantine a person is made by the physician responsible for infectious diseases in the municipality or hospital district.

High-risk areas are countries that are subject to border control due to the coronavirus situation. People arriving from these countries are instructed to self-isolate. The limit set by Finland is 8 new cases per 100,000 inhabitants during the previous 14 days. The list of countries approved for travel to and from Finland is reviewed at regular intervals; and employers are encouraged to closely follow authority sources.

The government will also introduce in the future a traffic light model that will communicate to citizens, businesses and others what measures are likely to be taken when people arrive to Finland from different countries.

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### KPMG NOTE

It is important to note that the authorities update the list of countries based on developments in each countries' epidemic situations. The Finnish government will review the rules on border restrictions in two weeks' time. Based on the information shared by the government, the next changes in border traffic are scheduled to enter into force on 24 August. Restrictions may also be re-introduced if the epidemic situation in a given country significantly deteriorates.

The KPMG International member firm in Finland continues to monitor these matters closely, and further instructions can be expected from the authorities in the forthcoming days to clarify the newly introduced measures.

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## FOOTNOTE:

1 Government [news release](#): *Government resolutions on recommendations for wearing face coverings and face masks and for remote work*, 13 August 2020 (in English).

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## Contact us

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*\* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not offer immigration services or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

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