

CURRENT MEASURES FROM THE CZECH GOVERNMENT AND MINISTRY OF HEALTH CONCERNING BUSINESS OPERATIONS

We have prepared a summary of the most important current measures from the Czech government and Ministry of Health for preventing infection and spread of COVID-19, which are in effect as of October 14, 2020 concerning business operations.

Congregating in groups

The Czech government has decided that between October 14, 2020 and November 3, 2020 group events with more than six people are prohibited, whether indoors or outdoors. This ban does not apply to members of the same household or employees working for the same employer, however, if their work must be performed with a larger number of people. Another exception to this ban applies to people performing an activity they are required by law to perform if the activity must be performed with a larger number of people. In our opinion, this category includes the activities of corporate bodies (such as the Board of Directors for a limited company), provided that they are performing their legal obligations (such as commercial management of the company). In any case, people taking part in such a group event are always required to maintain a distance of at least two meters from people not taking part.

According to the government resolution, people can enter (and remain in) shopping centres, shops and service establishments in groups of no more than two and must maintain a distance of at least two meters from other groups. An exception to this rule is made for children under 15 accompanying an adult from the same household.

Restrictions especially on food establishments and shopping centres

The government resolution prohibits operators of food establishments from permitting members of the public to enter their premises between October 14, 2020 and November 3, 2020, whether indoor or outdoor. These establishments are permitted only to sell food as takeaway (to go) as long as the customer does not enter the establishment, and only between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm. If customers consume this food once purchased in the immediate area of the establishment, they must maintain a distance of at least two meters. Please also note that the government resolution prohibits any alcohol consumption in public places.

This ban on providing food services does not apply to establishments that do not serve the public (such as company canteens) and establishments in accommodations facilities, provided that they only provide food to registered guests (e.g. hotels). Even in these cases food services may only be provided between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm and customers must maintain a distance of 1.5 meters if not sitting at the same table. No more than four customers can sit at one table at one time (other than members of the same household). Long tables can seat more than one group (each of no more than four people, again with the exception of members of the same household), provided that the distance between them is at least two meters. Operators of these facilities are also required to keep written records of the total number of seats for customers at any given time and not to admit more customers to the facility than there are seats available.

All operators of food establishments are still required to not permit public Wi-Fi access and not provide live music and dancing.

The government resolution also restricts the activities of shopping centres with sales area of more than 5,000 m². These centres must (i) restrict the places available for resting (e.g. chairs in passages) so that people cannot congregate there, (ii) ensure that reminders to maintain a distance of two meters are displayed visibly in the publicly accessible areas of the shopping centre, and (iii) restrict gatherings of people. These centres also may not permit public Wi-Fi access. Shopping centres must also inform customers of the instructions given above, and at least one person must supervise adherence to those instructions.

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According to the measures from the Czech Ministry of Health, until further notice all establishment operators must post signs instructing their customers to maintain a distance of two meters and to use contactless payment methods when possible. Said operators must also place disinfectant by frequently touched objects and inform clients that the disinfectant is available for use. Some operators (e.g. hotels) are also required to regularly disinfect various surfaces. Establishments selling unpackaged bakery items must ensure that people do not congregate near the collection point for the bakery items and that personal hygiene items are available for use. Retail grocery operators with self-service must also provide customers with single-use gloves or similar protective gear for the hands free of charge. Clothing and shoe retailers must ensure that customers try on clothing and shoes only after using hand sanitizer and items being returned are held for 24 hours separate from other goods before offering them for purchase again.

Prohibited operations and activities

The government resolution currently prohibits until November 3, 2020 all concerts and other artistic performances, conferences and other educational events, trade fairs, operation and use of indoor sports centres and the indoor portions of outdoor sports centres, gyms and fitness centres, operation and use of swimming pools, wellness facilities including sauna, solarium and salt caves, except for healthcare services provided by a healthcare provider, as well as visits and tours of museums, galleries, castles and chateaus.

Obligation to wear protective respiratory equipment

On the basis of the measures from the Czech Ministry of Health, until further notice all individuals must wear protective respiratory equipment to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets when indoors other than in a private residence or accommodations (e.g. hotel room). However, employees (or those in a similar position) are not required to wear protective respiratory equipment while working in one place as long as they are at least two meters from another person. The obligation to wear protective equipment also does not apply to customers of establishments that serve food while consuming food and drinks seated at a table.

Since these government and ministry measures are amended and updated on an ongoing basis as the COVID-19 situation develops, we recommend keeping careful tabs on the situation and thoroughly reviewing measures as they are put into place.

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