



HM Government
of Gibraltar

COVID-19 MEASURES

GUIDANCE NOTE

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT 2007

RESTRICTIONS ON GATHERINGS

Introduction.

In Gibraltar, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This is why laws have recently been made which are intended to promote self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing so as to lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in Gibraltar.

Our advice continues to be to stay at home, particularly for those who are 70 and over. This is because despite the very low numbers of infection detected in our community, we must be prudent.

Regulations restricting freedom of movement.

The laws restricting the freedom of movement of individuals expire today at midnight. Visiting friends and relatives will therefore now be permitted.

However, in order to control the numbers in gatherings so as to reduce or avoid the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, the Government has today published the Civil Contingencies Emergency (Coronavirus) (Restrictions on Gatherings) Regulations 2020 (the “Regulations”).

These Regulations prohibit the gathering of more than 12 persons in a public place or in a private residence subject to certain exceptions set out below.

Is the “social bubble” part of the law?

Gatherings of 12 or fewer people are permitted under the Regulations. It is recommended that you try to gather with the same persons for your own protection and the protection of others so as to limit the number of people you interact with. However, this “social bubble” it is not a requirement of the law.

What is a public place?

A public place is a road, open space or square, public garden, beach, theatre, cinema or place of public entertainment or any other place to which the public have access, whether on payment or otherwise. It does not include a place to which the public do not normally have access such as a school or an office.

What is a gathering?

A gathering is an assembly or meeting of people for a specific purpose. It is where you meet up with persons whether or not previously arranged for social or other reasons. There could be more than one gathering at a public place such as a beach or a park but as long as each gathering consists of no more than 12 people and there is social distancing between each group, you would not be in breach of the law.

Even though in gatherings of 12 people or fewer social distancing is not a legal requirement it is recommended wherever possible.

A queue outside a supermarket for example shall not constitute a gathering provided that social distancing is maintained.

What are the exceptions?

There are exceptions to the prohibition of a gathering of more 12 persons which are as follows-

- (a) where the gathering is essential for work purposes;
- (b) where the gathering is necessary to carry out the work of the Civil Contingencies Committee or under the instructions of the Civil Contingencies Coordinator or the Director of Public Health;
- (c) where reasonably necessary to participate in legal proceedings or fulfil a legal obligation or statutory duty.
- (d) at a medical or care facility, including a veterinary clinic, where it is necessary for the normal business of the facilities;
- (e) at an airport where it is necessary for the normal business of the airport;
- (f) at the Gibraltar Parliament;
- (g) at a retail shop, supermarket, grocery store, bakery, confectionery, butcher, fishmonger, health shop or pharmacy, where it is necessary for the normal business of those premises;
- (h) where it is necessary for the purposes of law enforcement or the provision of emergency services or under the instructions of law enforcement or the emergency services;
- (i) at a gymnasium provided that it is in compliance with the conditions of a permit issued by the Director of Public Health;
- (j) at a club provided it is with the prior approval of the Office of the Civil Contingencies Co-ordinator and subject to such conditions as may be specified.

What about in residential premises?

The Regulations also prohibit a gathering of more than 12 persons in residential premises. This includes any communal areas.

However there are exceptions as follows-

- (a) for the purposes of law enforcement or the provision of emergency services;
- (b) for the purposes of carrying out urgent or necessary repairs to the premises;
- (c) in any other emergency situation.

Enforcement.

A police officer may direct a gathering that is in breach of the Regulations to disperse. Failure to comply with the Regulations or with a direction of a police officer is an offence punishable with a fine up to £10,000.