

Information on agreements/measures in response to the Covid-19 crisis - DENMARK

On February 27, the first case of covid-19 was detected in Denmark. The number rapidly increased and Wednesday 11th March the number was 517 and it led to the following announcement from the Danish Government (link to the numbers and monitoring of the outbreak [here](#)):

- Students in all public youth and higher education are sent home as soon as possible and no later than by Friday. Private educational institutions are encouraged to do the same. Provisional two weeks from Friday, March 13, 2020.
- All schools and daycare facilities will be closed from Monday, March 16, 2020 and for a fortnight. Municipalities establish emergency care.
- All public servants who do not perform critical functions will be sent home from work on Friday, March 13, 2020 and for the next two weeks. They should work from home as far as possible. All public servants are paid. Critical functions include health personnel, the elderly and care sector, police and emergency services.
- All indoor public cultural institutions, libraries, leisure facilities and the like are now closing. Private offers of the same nature are encouraged to do the same. Provisional two weeks from Friday, March 13, 2020. Public service providers are exempt from news and emergency preparedness.
- Employees in the private labor market are encouraged to work from home, walk or vacation, as far as possible.
- Limit use of public transport
- Visits to nursing homes and hospitals should be limited with immediate effect.
- The government proposes urgent legislation that allows for especially necessary measures - such as closing schools and daycare centers.
- Assemblies for over 100 are prohibited once the emergency legislation is passed, indoor gatherings of over 100 people are banned.

Then followed several other initiatives:

- A national level tri-partite agreement is set to mitigate imminent financial and labour market consequences. The government pledged to cover 75 percent of a full-time employee's monthly salary, up to a limit of 23,000 DKK (3,100 Euros) per month, with the remaining 25 percent paid by the company, when employees are in risk of being laid off. For short-term/ temporary workers, the government offers to cover up to 90 percent of the salary for hourly paid people, up to a limit of 26,000 DKK (3,500 Euros) per month. So far, the agreement covers private businesses that otherwise would have to lay off at least

30 percent or more than 50 employees. The new wage compensation scheme will be valid until June 9 2020 with effect from March 9 2020. (March 15) Read more [here](#) (Danish)

- At a press conference on March 17, our Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen came up with several other restrictions to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Cafes, restaurants, bars and discos must now also remain closed. In the future, the Danes may not gather in groups of more than 10 people - neither outside nor inside. In addition, all companies with close body contact as with the hairdresser, masseur, tattoo artist, sports center and fitness center must stay closed - for the period up to 30 March.
- An agreement in the hospitality sector has been now complimented by a commitment of the government to cover up till 90 percent of employees' salary in the hotel- and restaurant sector for workers who are laid off (March 17).
- The compensation for self-employed was addressed as part of new government measures that were welcomed by unions as this was not covered by the tripartite agreement. The new measures will offer compensation to self-employed who loses 30 percent or more of their turnover. The government will offer a 75 percent compensation with a max of 3,100 Euros per month (extended to 4,660 euros if the spouse is co-worker). (March 18)
- At a press conference on March 23, our Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen announced that the lock down of Danish society in line with the announcement on March 11th and March 17th will be extended to 13 April. In this way, the current lock down of large sections of society continues with, among other things, closed schools, day care centers, libraries, restaurants and much more. It also means that the restrictions on not meeting more than 10 people continue, which has led to stripes of cancellation of events.
- As a follow-up to the national level tri-partite agreement (March 15) it was agreed to raise the amount companies can receive from Government up to a limit of DKK 30,000 (4,000 Euros) monthly per full-time employee, with the remaining 25 percent paid by the company, when employees are in risk of being laid off. (March 31)
- The Parliament, with a broad majority, passed Tuesday evening, the Government proposed emergency legislation that will allow the assembly of down to two people to be banned. Legislation does not mean that it is already illegal to assemble three or more people, but it does allow the government to restrict the freedom of assembly, should it become necessary (March 31).
- A new emergency law on harsher penalties for 'corona crime' aproved. The parliament used the new emergency act to double the penalty for masking bans and to double the penalty for disrupting public order. The new law also points out that a foreigner, regardless of his residence and regardless of how long he or she has been in the country, can be expelled if he or she is sentenced to an unconditional custodial sentence for corona-related crime. That is, e.g. twice has stolen a bottle of hand liquor. (April 2)

- It was decided on Monday 6 April to reopen a small part of the society slowly and carefully. In principle all school classes up to 5 grade and daycare facilities will be reopened as from 15 April. The responsibility and pace of reopening of the institutions lies with the individual municipalities. Public employees in these sectors will therefore start working and the new agreement (Mach 19) that allows some public sector employees to be moved to a different job than they normally have may become relevant as now, e.g. greater demands are made for hygiene.
- On Friday morning (17 April) all parties of the Parliament agreed to a further reopening of Danish society. The agreement means that several companies that have been closed over the past month can reopen on Monday 20 April. This applies to e.g. hairdressers, driving schools and "certain liberal professions", but also the courts, the Prison and Probation Service and research laboratories.
- On Saturday (18 April), the Danish Parliament agreed to extend the relief packages from 31 march so that the business community can now receive salary compensation up to and including July 8, 2020. Freelancers assistance is also extended. At the same time, an additional 100 billion kroner has been given to the effort. Importantly as a part of the agreement Danish companies that are registered in tax havens won't be eligible for government aid intended to mitigate economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic.
- The government has decided today (21 April) that a ban on major events should be prohibited over the summer and until September 1, 2020. The limit for large events has now been set so that events with more than 500 people must not be held. The previous decision to only meet up to 10 people is still valid until May 10, after which new precautions will be announced.
- "It is important that it is crystal clear that a coronavirus can be recognized as a work injury if the disease is caused by the work. For example, if you work in an intensive care unit in a hospital, there is a high risk of getting infected," Danish Minister of Employment Mr. Hummelgaard (22 April).The National Labor Inspectorate is therefore now issuing a new guide on the right to work injury compensation for corona infection.

Latest figures from Denmark as of 21 April

Tested: 146.915

Infected: 8.575

In hospitals: 285

In intensive care: 70

Deaths: 422

More specifically within the Public Sector, the following is worth mentioning:

- As a kind of follow-up to the private sector national level tri-partite agreement announced on March 15 talks are now taking place between the government and the public trade unions representing public employees in the State sector including central administration, authorities and higher education in order to reach an agreement regarding work related issues during the Corona crisis.
- An agreement was reached between the Danish Government and the public sector social partners Friday 27 March on the settlement of vacation days etc. during the Corona crisis for public employees who do not perform critical functions in, for example, hospitals. The agreement means that all public servants who do not perform critical functions must stay free/home up to five days during the current Corona crisis. The purpose is that not too many days should be settled when employees return to work after the crisis. The agreement covers municipal, regional and state/central administration employees and is applicable from 13 March to 13 April 2020.
- The new emergency law on harsher penalties for 'corona crime' - was moderated a bit on one point. In the case where an employee of the health service takes home liquor, the penalty does not become a prison, but a fine of DKK 1000 (133 Euros). The same shall apply to theft of hand liquor in a shop (April 2).

New agreement between Public Employers and Public employees (Municipalities):

KL (Local Government) and Forhandlingsfællesskabet (T. U. Negotiation Community) - which negotiates general agreements for workers in municipalities and regions have discussed how to best use the resources. This has led to a new agreement (March 19) that allows some public sector employees to be moved to a different job than they normally have. These may be home-educated kindergarten educators who may be asked, for example, to care for children at night or mentally ill children in residences. The goal is to ensure staffing for the most critical functions during the corona crisis.

Common manifestation between Public Employer and Public Employees (Regions):

The Danish Regions and Forhandlingsfællesskabet (T. U. Negotiation Community) has declared a common manifestation, that ongoing dialogue and adaptation of solutions is a necessity for the healthcare system to handle the efforts in relation to COVID-19. The Employees' frameworks and conditions for performing the work will be affected, but the consideration of employees and patients must at the same time be secured as best as possible.

Update: New agreement between Public Employers and Public employees (Municipalities):

On Friday April 3, an agreement was reached between the T.U Negotiating Community and Local and regional Government on a framework for lending staff from regions to municipalities and vice versa for Covid-19 emergency preparedness. This is a fixed-term agreement that expires at the

end of May 2020. There is no expectation that the agreement will apply to many public employees, but there may be groups that will be relevant. The agreement only covers employees who are covered by an agreement or a working time agreement that covers 24-hour service. It should be emphasized that for an individual employee, it is completely voluntary if one wishes to enter into such a lending scheme and the loan can be terminated at day's notice. It was not possible to reach a similar agreement for employees in the state/Central Government.

Read agreement in Danish [here](#):

It was not possible to reach a similar agreement for employees in the state/Central Government. Instead, the employer can engage in dialogue with the employee and allow lending on voluntary basis by giving leave with or without pay. The Employment and Competence Authority calls for the leave to be given in as flexible terms as possible, and for example that the leave should be implemented in such a way that the employee can re-enter his position at days' notice.

More specifically within the Health Sector, the following is worth mentioning:

Safety for the employees – lack in supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Danish Medicines Agency has a coordinating role to ensure the supply of PPE to the health system. The Danish Regions, Local Government Denmark (KL) and the Danish Medicines Agency have established a new logistics center to strengthen the overview of critical medical equipment and protective equipment in municipalities and regions and the logistic center will redistribute as needed. Read [here](#)

Several employees in the health sector have experienced a lack of PPE. The trade unions have called for immediately action – “We need to take care of the Health Professionals, if they shall take care of the patients”. The authorities have acknowledged that there, unfortunately, is a challenge with the supply of PPE in some parts of the Health System. They have declared different initiatives and actions.

Trade unions in continuing dialogue with the health authorities questioning; why is it ok for HCW and patients to have close contact within 2 meters without proper PPE - When the recommendation for everyone else is 2 meters social distancing?

On April 8; new guidelines from The Danish Health Authority for work-related close contact (less than 2 meter) between asymptomatic persons. The recommendation says, that use of facial visor can be used in situations where close contact is necessary

Ensuring a sufficient work force - Regional job banks

The regions have set up job banks so that unemployed or retired nurses, doctors and other health professionals and nursing students, medical students and educators can sign up. The purpose is to ensure a sufficient work force. The trade unions support but underline that we must not compromise when it comes to safety and guidelines must be drawn up. Almost 8.000 have signed up for the regional job banks.

Testing of COVID-19 in Denmark (safety of employees and a sufficient work force):

On March 12, Denmark switched to testing only patients requiring hospitalization. It has received criticism from the WHO. Furthermore, the trade unions have been fighting for increased opportunity for testing of the health professionals.

On March 22, the authorities have acknowledged that test capacity must be increased. Testing of health professionals is important for safety reasons but also to ensure sufficient work force.

On April 21; new guidelines for testing – increasing testing capacity up to 42.000 per day

(Population in Denmark is 5,7 mio) New criteria is now also including:

- All with symptoms of COVID-19 – also if only minor symptoms
- All patients to be hospitalized for more than 24 hours
- residents and staff at institutions where COVID-19 is detected (eg nursing home)
- Close relatives to a person confirmed with COVID-19

Infected and death among HCW

In Denmark we don't have official data regarding the percentage of infected health care workers validated by the authorities. A Danish study testing 20.000 health care workers and 20.000 in a control group for COVID-19 anti-bodies cannot show a clear difference in the level of infection. However, we do know of few deaths among HCW in Denmark – like a 36-year-old Health Care Assistant working with COVID-19 patients in a hospital setting. The international data is concerning, and the trade unions are calling for the authorities to register and share data e.g with WHO.

New agreements - Critical functions must remain in the healthcare system under COVID-19

Danish Health Authority has described critical functions in the health care system. There are many critical functions in the health care system and shutdown of these should only be done in an urgent need. New agreements are made to minimize the consequences for sick and vulnerable citizens. An example is patients with chronic diseases. Instead of physical consultations at the General Practitioner or Nurse, they can now have tele- or video consultations. Read [here](#) (Danish)

Plan for restructuring and gradually increasing activity in the Health Service

13th April agreement for re-opening the Health Care System.

March 13, Majority of health care services were temporarily reduced due to covid-19. The new agreement of April 13th describes a gradual increase in activities in both hospitals and municipalities.

The agreement is based on an expectation that we in Denmark will see a longer, but more controlled epidemic than previously expected. The healthcare system will still require a specific COVID-19 preparedness and thus other staffing procedures and working conditions. In Danish [here](#)