

The requirement to wear a mask: frequently asked questions from customers

Why do I have to wear a mask?

Due to the special circumstances, the Confederation issued a COVID-19 ordinance that requires the wearing of protective masks. This ordinance states that a face mask must be worn by all passengers on public transport vehicles, such as trains, trams, buses, boats, aircraft and cableways. Excluded from this requirement are:

- children younger than 12 years old.
- people who can prove that they cannot wear a mask due to specific (mostly medical) reasons. This includes: facial injuries, acute shortness of breath, anxiety when wearing a mask and disabilities that make wearing a mask unreasonable or impossible. If a passenger does not wear a mask for any of these reasons, they must carry an official medical certificate signed by a doctor with them.

Do I need to show the medical certificate exempting me from wearing a mask to the customer attendants or the SBB Police?

Customer attendants have the right to ask passengers for their medical certificate and inspect it. The SBB Police have the right to inspect medical certificates. It is the task of the security services and the SBB Police to ensure observance of the conditions of carriage on and use on public transport. They may stop, check and send away people who do not follow the regulations.

What happens if I don't want to show my medical certificate to the customer attendant or the SBB Police or if I don't have a medical certificate?

Passengers who refuse to show their medical certificate will be handled in the same way as passengers without medical certificates. Passengers without a medical certificate who refuse to wear a mask can be barred from travelling. The customer attendant can demand that the person leaves the train. The SBB Police are trained to escort passengers off the train. If passengers refuse to leave the train, the customer attendant may call on the SBB Police for this purpose. As a further step, the person who refuses to leave the train may be reported to the relevant public prosecutor and fined.

If I have a valid ticket, doesn't SBB have to transport me regardless of whether I wear a mask or not?

The staff responsible for checking tickets can demand that people without masks get off the train at the next stop – even if they have a valid ticket. The security services and the SBB Police have powers that go further than this. Among other things, it is their responsibility to ensure observance of the conditions of carriage and use on public transport. They may stop, check and send away people who do not follow the regulations. Anyone refusing to follow the orders of these people will be punished with a fine.

Can I continue to eat and drink on the train and take my mask off to do so?

Masks can be removed for eating and drinking. However, this applies only while consuming the food or drink. If possible, we ask our passengers to refrain from eating and drinking on the train. On long-distance services, our dining car is available to cater for you.

If I forget my mask, can I place a scarf over my mouth and nose?

According to FOPH provisions, a scarf is not an appropriate replacement for a mask: a scarf or a cloth does not provide sufficient protection against infection and has only a marginal effect in protecting others. Therefore you cannot use a scarf or a cloth instead of a mask.

Can I wear a face shield instead of a mask?

According to FOPH provisions, a face shield is not an appropriate replacement for a mask: visors cannot be used as a replacement for a mask either. They protect the eyes from a potential infection through droplets, however infection via the mouth and nose is still possible. Visors serve only as an additional protective measure in addition to a mask.

For any further questions that are not answered here, please click [here for the link to the FOPH](#).