Coronavirus: travel in safety with obligatory masks

Face masks must be worn on all services and in all buildings of public transport in Switzerland as of 19 October 2020. This pertains to all stations, including platforms, underpasses, and shops. If you follow the protection measures, you will travel in safety.

Text: SBB/CFF/FFS | Fotos: SBB/CFF/FFS, Keystone

Masks must be worn on public transport services and in associated buildings. The requirement to wear masks does not apply to people who cannot wear face masks for particularly good reasons – in particular medical reasons – or to children aged under 12.
The key points:
- It is important that the Swiss Confederation’s hygiene stipulations and the protective measures for public transport are adhered to. They make safe travel possible.
- Throughout Switzerland, it is compulsory to wear masks when using public transport. Masks must also be worn in stations, on platforms, as well as in waiting rooms, underpasses and shops.
- The requirement to wear masks does not apply to people who cannot wear face masks for particularly good reasons – in particular medical reasons – or to children aged under 12.
- FOPH FAQ on requirement to wear masks (in German)
- Supersaver tickets and Saver Day Passes are available for purchase. The services provided by SBB Rail Catering are also available, as are group reservations and luggage transport.

What protection measures must be followed on public transport?
The protection measures for public transport and the hygiene stipulations of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) must be observed when using public transport. SBB has drawn up a protection plan based on FOPH stipulations. Masks must be worn on all services and in all buildings of public transport. Only children below the age of 12 and people who cannot wear masks for medical reasons are excepted from this rule.

Wear your mask properly – here’s how to do it.

Eating and drinking is still permitted on public-transport services – you can remove your mask to do so. The areas where masks must be worn are signposted. Be considerate towards each other and keep your distance: at stops, counters, ticket machines, when boarding and alighting and, as far as possible, on the vehicles. Staff who come into contact with passengers must make passengers not wearing masks aware that there is a requirement to do so. Protecting customers and staff is a priority for Switzerland’s public transport companies.

Please observe the following protection measures:

Keep your distance at stations
- Keep your distance
- Buy tickets online
- Observe hygiene rules
Keep yourself informed

Wear a mask on trains

Leave seat spaces
How do I use a mask properly?
You can find information on the correct use of masks on the FOPH website. Never keep surgical masks after use. Instead, dispose of them immediately in a bin. Public-transport companies do not issue masks.

- **Please ensure you have your own protective equipment.**

Surgical masks can be bought in many station shops, such as kiosks, pharmacies, supermarkets and convenience stores. The Selecta vending machines at railway stations are also stocked with protective masks. You can find all relevant information on the stations online.
Which trains are now running again?
Since 8 June, customers have once again had access to the full range of both national long-distance and regional services.

Suspension of night-time services
There will be new restrictions to night-time services: As a measure to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, transport companies will suspend night-time networks which are usually operated in the early hours on weekends, starting the night of 6 to 7 November 2020. This relates to the public transport services that operate in many cities or metropolitan areas during the nights of Friday to Saturday and Saturday to Sunday, in addition to regular daily services.

The suspension of night-time services will continue indefinitely until further notice. Resumption of services will be dependent on the Federal Council’s guidelines regarding closing times and night-life.

Regular night-time services are not affected by the measures. Connections that depart after the arrival of the last timetabled trains will be guaranteed. These services are often used by people working a late shift.

The suspension of these services is based on the Federal Council’s directive on 28 October 2020, which mandated that restaurants and bars close at 11pm. As a result, there will be little demand for night-time services.

- Please check the online timetable before every journey; it is always up to date.
- Click here to go to the press release (in German).

International rail travel during the corona period
Services to Italy and France have been reduced

Given the significant decrease in travel, particularly to and from Italy and France, SBB has decided in consultation with partner railways Trenitalia, SNCF and TGV Lyria to reduce its services with immediate effect.
Which services are currently available?
SBB has restarted offering services that could not be provided while the transitional timetable was in operation. Since 8 June, customers can once again order food and drinks in dining cars. The stipulations and protection measures for staff and customers in dining cars are essentially the same as in restaurants and cafés. Groups can also make reservations on trains again. Travel groups are responsible for following all the stipulations of the Federal Office of Public Health. On 8 June, SBB resumed unrestricted provision of luggage transport.

You will find an overview of the different rail catering offers in this article on SBB News.

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Are the trains being cleaned more frequently than before the coronavirus crisis?
SBB has increased the frequency of cleaning in response to the crisis. Surfaces touched by customers such as grab poles, buttons, tables, arm rests and toilets are cleaned and disinfected several times a day. On particularly popular routes, additional cleaning is carried out en route.

What about the air conditioning?
The information currently available shows no evidence that the coronavirus can be transmitted through air conditioning or ventilation systems. The air conditioning in SBB vehicles operates using a mixed-air system. This means that both air from outside and recirculating air are mixed together and processed in the air conditioning units. The amount of fresh air supplied to the passenger areas is secured on a per person basis and varies according to the outside air temperature and the number of people occupying the passenger areas. The volume of air in the passenger areas (train compartments) is fully restored with outside air at an average rate of six to ten times per hour. This significantly reduces the proportion of microorganisms in the air. SBB replaces the air filters every 45-90 days to prevent the accumulation of contaminants in the air conditioning systems.

Our employees also wear masks on the platform area.

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How is hygiene being ensured at stations?
Hand-sanitiser dispensers have also been set up at the entrances to the 34 largest stations. Dispensers are also available at the entry to and exit from travel centres.

To ensure that the FOPH hygiene stipulations are adhered to, lifts may only be used by one person at a time. Queuing zones will also be set up at shops where necessary. Please find out about the opening times of the shop concerned directly at the location.

The waiting rooms in SBB railway stations are open again. Masks must be worn inside the waiting rooms.

What measures apply regarding tickets?
All ticket counters are open. You should still buy tickets online, in apps, or at ticket machines if possible. Contactless payments should be used at ticket counters wherever possible.

Passengers are still required to hold tickets. Passenger attendants will not touch SwissPasses and tickets when checking them until further notice but will instead check them at a distance.

How is SBB protecting its staff?
SBB staff are a key element of the protection plan for public transport. Staff will wear masks. Plexiglass barriers installed at staffed points of sale protect both staff and customers. Train drivers do not wear masks for safety reasons.

Tickets and passes will be checked by means of visual inspection until further notice so that passenger attendants do not have to touch them.

Many thanks to all staff who are keeping Switzerland moving at this time.