Coronavirus: severe restrictions to Swiss rail travel

Due to reduced demand and in preparation for coming staff shortages, the offer on Swiss public transport has been greatly reduced in agreement with the Federal Office of Transport. A basic service remains in place. Here you will find answers to the most pressing questions.
Key facts at a glance:

- Please continue to avoid excursions by public transport at Easter and stay at home if possible. This will allow people reliant on public transport to follow the social distancing rules.

- If you cannot avoid travelling by public transport, please consult the online timetable shortly before starting your journey, as there may be cancellations, delays and missed connections during the period of the transitional timetable.

- International services have been suspended. Some cross-border regional connections are still running.

- Please purchase your tickets digitally (via the SBB website or in the SBB Mobile app) and protect yourself and SBB staff in doing so.

- SBB is being as accommodating as possible with regards to refunds: www.sbb.ch/en/refund

- There are new minimum opening hours for shops offering basic provisions in railway stations: 9am to 6pm.

- Follow the FOPH's behaviour and hygiene recommendations when travelling with public transport.

Which timetable are the trains currently running to?

SBB and other transport companies are currently running to transitional timetables. For SBB, the transitional timetable is valid until at least 26 April.

Basic public transport services and access to essential locations such as hospitals and food shops will be guaranteed for the duration of this period. During the first few days of the new timetable in particular, connections may be missed as Swiss public transport has to adapt to the reduced frequency. The basic public transport service allows for the implementation of the Confederation’s social distancing recommendations. Please find out about your connection immediately before the start of your journey on the online timetable or in the SBB Mobile app.

Please buy your tickets digitally (via the SBB website or the SBB Mobile App) and protect yourself and SBB staff.
What does this timetable change mean for SBB and rail passengers?
These measures constitute the largest timetable change that has ever been implemented in such a short time frame. Switzerland’s transport companies would like to apologise to all passengers affected. If passengers miss a connection, their tickets will remain valid with no restrictions. The online timetable will be updated daily as soon as the timetable changes have been entered into the systems.

Which connections have been cancelled?
Early-morning and late-night connections are not affected by the restrictions since these connections are important for people who works shifts and therefore for the economies of Switzerland and its regions. Many connections in the middle of the night have however been cancelled. Additional night-time connections on weekends have also been cancelled. Despite these service reductions, basic public transport services and access to essential locations such as hospitals and food shops will be guaranteed during this difficult time.
So there’s a reduced timetable. Which trains and which lines are affected?

The reduction of the timetable is being spread over the following four phases.

**Step 1: from Thursday 19 March**

- Additional peak time trains on long-distance services will be suspended
- Night trains no longer run, stations will be closed at night on weekends as well

**Step 2: from Monday 23 March**

- IC2 Zürich HB–Zug–Lugano: partially suspended
- IC4 Zürich HB–Schaffhausen: suspended
- IR36 Basel SBB–Brugg AG–Zürich HB(–Zürich Flughafen): partially suspended
- IR75 Luzern–Zürich HB–Konstanz: Zürich HB–Konstanz suspended
- IR90 Genève-Aéroport–Lausanne–Brig: partially suspended
- RE Annemasse–Genève–Lausanne–Vevey/St-Maurice: suspended between Annemasse and Genève
- S Léman Express: partially suspended
- S Tilo: partially suspended

**Step 3: from Thursday 26 March**

- IC1 Genève Aéroport–Bern–Zürich HB–St. Gallen: suspended between Zürich and St. Gallen
- IC3 Basel SBB–Zürich–Chur: partially suspended
- IR16 Bern–Olten–Brugg AG–Zürich HB: suspended between Bern and Olten
- IR17 Bern–Burgdorf–Olten(–Zürich HB): suspended
- IR75 Luzern–Zürich HB–Konstanz: additional peak-time trains suspended
- RE Olten–Luzern: suspended

**Step 4: from Thursday, 2 April**

- IC1 Genève Aéroport–Bern–Zürich HB–St. Gallen: suspended between Genève Aéroport and Fribourg
- IR 70 Zürich–Luzern: suspended
- RE Olten–Wettingen: suspended (from 30 March)
Can I still travel abroad?

International services have been suspended. Some cross-border regional connections are still running, for example regional services from Switzerland to Konstanz and regional services between Brig and Domodossola. Please check the online timetable before starting any journey. Due to the different situations in the individual countries, we cannot currently provide any indication as to when it will be possible to run individual lines again.

What if I had already bought a ticket at an earlier date?

All tickets already purchased will retain their validity. If you have bought a supersaver ticket for a connection that is no longer running because of the reduced timetable, the supersaver ticket can be used for the next connection. The sale of supersaver tickets and Saver Day Passes has been temporarily suspended. The suspension of sale will last for the duration of the reduced timetable.
What about refunds?
For refunds, see the site www.sbb.ch/en/refund. SBB customer service staff are fully committed to responding to all queries. SBB asks you to appreciate that response times will be longer than usual in light of the current situation.

Can I deposit my travelcard or should I cancel it?
Switzerland’s public transport companies are currently working with the industry organisation Alliance SwissPass to find an urgent solution (uniform across Switzerland as far as possible) for customers who cannot use their travelcards because of the current situation affecting public transport. This concerns GA Travelcards, Regional Travelcards, Point-to-point Travelcards and annual Modular Travelcards. No compensation will be provided for holders of the Half Fare Travelcard as it is a discount card which normally pays for itself over a short time period and a small number of journeys. You will be able to read about the solutions offered by Alliance SwissPass on this channel in due course.

What about shops in stations? Can I still do my shopping?
The following opening hours apply to food shops, pharmacies and kiosks in order to ensure the supply of basic provisions: Monday to Sunday, 9am to 6pm.

There is an exception for kiosks: They can remain closed on Saturday and Sunday since no significant travel activity is expected then. Longer opening hours are voluntary, and at the discretion of the tenant. Notices on shop fronts will give current opening hours. These modifications are temporary, enter into force immediately and until further notice, and will be amended immediately if the authorities responsible issue new instructions, which will always take precedence and be binding.

So travel by public transport should be avoided. However, if I have to take the train in an exceptional circumstance, what do I need to take into account?
Maintain distance to other people on public transport as far as possible. SBB supports the recommendations of the FOPH and expects personal responsibility from customers and flexibility from employers. All public transport operators in Switzerland are trying to maintain social distancing as far as possible. However, we can only achieve this if passengers continue to avoid making unnecessary journeys and use trains with low occupancy as far as possible. This way, people who have to use public transport keep the necessary distance to other passengers. Be even more considerate of other people than usual.

Many employees are working day in, day out in direct contact with customers. What is SBB doing to protect them?
Smaller travel centres will be closed temporarily due to reduced demand. The opening hours of some other travel centres and points of sale will be adapted. The list providing the most up-to-date information is available under “downloads”. The Travel Centres that remain open are equipped with plexiglass screens to protect staff and customers.

- There will be no catering services on board trains (dining car and seat service).
- Long-distance services will continue to be run with train crew on board. Ticket checks will be reduced significantly with immediate effect. Passengers are still required to have tickets.
Avoid unnecessary journeys with public transport.

Follow the FOPH's behaviour and hygiene recommendations when travelling with public transport.
SBB customer service staff are fully committed to responding to all queries online.