



City of Amsterdam

Amsterdam's response to Covid-19

Summary of city measures

Date Friday 29 May 2020
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Website amsterdam.nl/en/coronavirus/overview

Current situation

Since 11 May the first restrictions have been eased by the national government.

- Contact-based roles are allowed to perform their jobs (f.e. driving instructors and hair and beauty professionals). They should see clients by appointment only and assess possible health risks beforehand together with the client.
- Primary schools and day care opened partially
- Outdoor sports are allowed as long as people can stay 1.5 metres apart. Matches and competitions are not allowed, nor is the use of shared changing rooms. Showers may only be taken at home.
- Libraries reopened for limited services (lending and youth activities) and take measures based on sector protocols to ensure that library users can stay 1.5 meters apart
- Frequency of public transport increased gradually
- It is still recommended to only use public transport if there is no alternative.

01 June

- Secondary schools will reopen.
- All citizens with symptoms are able to be tested.
- It is compulsory to wear a non-medical face mask in public transport.
- Cafés and restaurants may reopen outdoor seating areas if people can stay 1.5 metres apart.
- Cinemas, restaurants, cafés and cultural institutions (such as concert venues and theatres) will reopen, subject to certain conditions and sector protocols:
 - A maximum of 30 people (including staff/performers). People must be able to stay 1.5 metres apart;
 - Visitors must reserve tables or tickets beforehand;
 - The owner will discuss with customers beforehand whether their visit entails risks;
- Museums and heritage sites will reopen. Visitors must buy tickets beforehand, to ensure people can stay 1.5 metres apart, subject to certain conditions and sector protocols:
Since public transport will probably become busier around 1 June, it will be more difficult to stay 1.5 metres apart. That is why everyone travelling by public transport will be required to wear a non-medical face mask.

15 June (expected)

If we keep the virus under control, secondary vocational education (MBO) schools can reopen for exams and practical training. Plans are being drawn up for reopening MBO schools, institutions for higher professional education (HBO) and universities more fully at some point in the future.

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1 July (expected)

If we keep the virus under control, shared toilets and shower blocks at campsites and holiday parks can reopen on 1 July. The maximum number of visitors to cinemas, restaurants, cafés and cultural institutions is aimed to be increased to 100. This increase would also apply to the maximum number of participants at organized gatherings, such as church services, weddings, rehearsals and funerals.

1 September (expected)

If the virus remains under control, gyms, saunas, health spas, club canteens, cannabis cafés, casinos and sex establishments will reopen. People of all ages will be allowed to take part in contact sports and indoor sports. Sports events, including professional football matches, can take place without spectators.

Find more information [here](#).

Measures by the City of Amsterdam

Social affairs

- The initiative '[Everybody connected](#)' makes 1,000 refurbished laptops and 1350 internet connections available to elderly people and citizens with a low budget who lack these facilities. These laptops are checked and cleaned when necessary by social enterprises such as [Cybersoek](#) who work (safely) with volunteers with a distance to the labour market
- The platform [wijamsterdam.nl](#) connects community initiatives (300+)
- The platform [voorelkaarinamsterdam.nl](#) connects citizens who need help with citizens who are willing to help. Find more [here](#).
- A campaign on the prevention of domestic violence and child abuse had been released with a [special website](#). Moreover citizens will be able to reach out to their pharmacy safely in case of an unsafe home situation by using a special word. This process is developed together with the national government and pharmacies. Until now there is no effect of the crisis visible in the amount of notifications.
- There is special help for sex workers with their application to receive government support to their income.
- Housing corporations, social support organizations and the City of Amsterdam intensify their cooperation in order to prevent that the crisis leads to high financial problems among tenants of housing corporations. Extra help is offered and there is special attention towards communication between the stakeholders. [Read more](#).
- The City of Amsterdam works to support its citizens and mental health. In its public mental health campaign, Amsterdam uses the [Thrive approach](#), a growing social movement that aims to improve the mental health and resilience of citizens.

Support to homeless people

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- There are daytime and night shelters at different locations available for homeless people to ensure that people do not spend much together in one room
- Following the security measures there is a reduction of the amount of people per location, 400 beds to 3 rooms with 50 beds. Alternative locations are assigned
- Daytime shelters available for 100 people
- Vulnerable families are moved to hotel and hostel rooms

Education

- Amsterdam has provided schools and nurseries with a toolkit that enables them to indicate the 1.5 meter measures in and around their buildings. The toolkit consists of measuring tape, posters, paint and templated to indicate the 1.5 meter distance.
- Since the primary schools have reopened schools are measuring how many children are not attending school. Until now about 60% of the schools in Amsterdam have taken part in a survey showing that appr. 13% of pupils are still absent. 7% is probably absent out of fear of corona. 34 out of 157 schools mention absence of higher than 20%. The city and partner organisations try to support schools in their communication with parents. When children have someone in their family with a high health risk, agreements can be made with the school to continue home schooling.
- The City of Amsterdam provides 6300 chrome books and 800 wifi-hotspots, which were distributed among schools. Students can borrow these devices as long as the schools are closed. There is one laptop available for each family. Find information more here
- As primary schools have reopened, the city takes measures to support the schools and teachers to work under safe conditions

Work and income

- The city set in place a measure to support local entrepreneurs, among which freelances, with income support and company credit so that they can better continue their company. (Financial help is provided by the national government)
- The amount of inhabitants demanding social benefits has increased to 40,115.
- A taskforce has been set up to support social firms, enterprises and organizations because they are widely affected by the measures taken. These organizations and companies offer workplaces to inhabitants who favor extra support in their job.

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Technology Office

- The city contributed to the [statement](#) on digital rights by the cities coalition on digital rights.
- Action plan is developed for watchdog role on Coronavirus Surveillance in Amsterdam to protect Digital Rights.
- Start of R&D for Unlock Amsterdam, to analyze which tech can be used to ease the lockdown-process.
- To support the crisis team the Corona data exchange started with data-gathering and analyses to measure the impact of measures.
- The city monitors on the stability and resilience of the internet in Amsterdam
- The city maps the risks in supply chain's, ie. The supply chain for public safety
- The impact cyber/digital safety is monitored (increased because of rapidly education, work, etc. moved to online)
- The technology office explores how to support the move from the arts and creative industry to online.
- Start of Startup in Residence program for the recovery-phase on smart mobility, circular economy and digital city.
- The City of Amst Amsterdam has installed sensors to monitor traffic and to be able to steer and control traffic.

Economic measures

- The city has announced a 50 million euro emergency fund to take the necessary measures during the Corona crisis. This has been distributed following this table:

Emergency fund	€ 50,000,000
6,000 chromebooks and internet connections*	PM
Suspension of collection of commercial waste	€ 780,000
Reduction of interest fees on tax collection	€200,000
Waiver of advertisement taxes 2020	€ 9,900,000
Waiver of taxes on terraces until 01 July 2020	€ 1,800,000
Waiver of fees for markets until 01 June	€ 800,000
Distribution of 3,500 refurbished laptops + 1,350 internet connections	€ 810,000
Supporting measures for cultural institutions	€ 17,000,000
Rent indexation allowance municipal property in 2020	€1,100,000
Risk reservation for granted deferred payments **	PM
Balance of Emergency fund	€ 17,610,000

* Unclear if these costs will come from the emergency fund

** Part of the emergency fund will be allocated to the risk that postponing the collection of taxes will lead to not being able to collect the taxes at all.

- The ban on gatherings does not apply to public markets as these play a crucial role in bringing food to consumers in some parts of the country. Municipalities and market superintendents will examine ways that a good distance between members of the public can be maintained.

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- The city has decided to not ask fees to entrepreneurs at local markets. Because of security measures, not all entrepreneurs can continue their fixed spots at the local market and thus fees are suspended.
- The city will not send reminders or debt collection agencies for unpaid rent to entrepreneurs who are renting municipality property.
- The City of Amsterdam will [continue to pay the salaries](#) of its temporary workers until the guidelines for working from home due to corona expire.
- The City of Amsterdam researches at which places and areas extra space can be used by businesses and cultural institutions, for example to enlarge terraces oriented at the neighbourhood.
- The City of Amsterdam works with shops and businesses to make public space in busy shopping streets a safe area with enough space for people to walk around and to do their shopping.

Mobility

- Traffic lights have been adjusted in order to stay 'green' longer for bicycle drivers and pedestrians. By doing this it is easier to keep the 1.5 metre distance.
- As primary school and more shops are allowed to open their doors to the public, frequency of public transport in Amsterdam will increase to accommodate the citizens in Amsterdam.
- To ensure pedestrians and cyclists have enough space and can keep 1.5 m distance, measures will be taken to increase their space. The City of Amsterdam is currently doing research into the possibility of
 - Decreasing maximum speed from 50km/h to 30km/h within the city center. This will make it easier for cyclists to move from the cyclepath to the road,
 - Changing streets in one way streets,
 - Changing car parking places into cycling parking places,
 - Adjusting traffic lights to ensure a smooth traffic flow.Find more information about the decisions of the Amsterdam City Council [here](#)
- Citizens of Amsterdam are requested to stay in their own neighbourhood as much as possible to prevent pressure on traffic.
- The City of Amsterdam provides [free parking space for health care workers](#) who are fulfilling crucial work during the corona crisis. Almost 4700 parking licenses have been granted.
- Infrastructural projects can still take place during the corona crisis. However, some projects are faced with less available employees. There is also a risk of decreased deliverance of materials and availability of foreign workers.
- Trams and metro's are cleaned multiple times a day
- To counteract loneliness a phone line has been set up for citizens to call and talk to staff members of the municipal public transport company)
- Support to taxi drivers (appr. 3200)
 - Suspension of the costs of licenses
 - Suspension of the costs of taxi parking spaces at Amsterdam Central Station
 - Taxi drivers are allowed to park their car for free in the Municipal garage for at least three months. By doing this taxi drivers are not obliged to pay the high insurance costs to use the public space

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Arts and Culture

- 13 March: all events/gatherings are forbidden, meaning all cultural venues must be closed. These orders are in place until May 20. All outdoor events that are required to be licensed are forbidden until September 1
- National government has presented a 25 billion Economic Relief Plan including support to workers and businesses in the art and culture sector. In addition to this, on 15 April the national government announced a 300 million euros relieve Plan for the Dutch cultural sector
- A large scale economic impact analysis of the city's arts and cultural sector has been delivered by the City's department for Arts and Culture. The current economic damage to Amsterdam's cultural sector is estimated on 173 million euros until October 1 2020.
- Amsterdam is part of a national taskforce, led by the Minister of Culture, to explore additional measures that are needed
- A key focus is on communications, guiding the cultural sector as effectively as possible to the relief packages that are offered. A special emphasis is put on self-employed artists and professionals
- April 14: A fast track fund has been launched at the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts for art projects that respond to the Corona crisis. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to citizens (digitally) and reflect on the current crisis. The amount differs from 1,500 – 5,000 euros.
- April 15: The national government has released a arts and culture relieve package of 300 million euros focused on short term relieve funding for the nationally funded arts and culture sector.
- May 8: The City of Amsterdam has released an arts and culture relieve package of 17 million euros focused on short term relieve funding for the cultural organisations that are funded through the City's Plan for the Arts. Additional measures for project funding and creative hubs (Broedplaatsen) are being developed and released as soon as possible.

Communication towards multilingual groups

- The city tries to reach out as much as possible to groups that do not speak Dutch in their mother tongue
- The city stays in close contact with main contact persons of civil society groups and for example religious organizations
- Corona related information has been translated into several languages

Sports

- The city developed a package of measures to support the sports sector. Organizations can apply to make use of this funding with among others no costs of rent in the past months and with special attention to organize sports for more vulnerable groups.
- The City of Amsterdam has informed owners of accommodations that they do not have to pay the rent for a period of three weeks. The national government has announced a support package. Through the national government sport clubs can apply for a one time subsidy of EUR 4,000.
- An online platform will be set up to promote sports for the people of Amsterdam during the crisis.

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Waste

The city faces decreased capacity. There is a focus on:

- Making sure our employees can work safely and effectively outdoors. Labor conditions are monitored and we communicate our appreciation for their work.
- Making use of capacity effectively. In some places waste is decreasing, while it is increasing in other places. In some places there is more need for law enforcement than others. We are investigating whether new plans and projects can start off quicker than planned, like reconstruction efforts in places that usually are very busy.
- Limiting external hiring and expenditure. We call upon citizens to keep big waste (like furniture) indoors, to not put waste on the streets (instead of container) and not to visit recycling organizations or secondhand markets in order to avoid large crowds.
- Citizens are asked to keep clothing at home and not bring this to collecting services

Public areas

- The city will start a campaign to ensure a safe path to loosening restrictions in Amsterdam, that will inform its residents on what the city has to offer in terms of arts and culture, catering industry, shops and parks. The city hopes to limit crowds by promoting all areas in the city. Simultaneously, citizens are asked to prepare their visits. The campaign is strictly informative and is not aimed at attracting visitors from outside the city.
- The Delft University of Technology and the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS institute) developed a [Social Distancing Dashboard](#) that creates city maps that show on a street and neighbourhood level if social distance rules can be respected when moving in public space.