

17 March 2020 - UPDATE

Important - Addition to Alert / "EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION" in Switzerland / Coronavirus COVID-19

Dear Customer,

Please find below the last update further to our previous emails regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19), the extraordinary situation in Switzerland and the impact on Swiss Immigration.

Current daily life in Switzerland:

Concerning the current daily life in Switzerland, please find below the link of the Federal Office of Public Health regarding the current measures taken by the Swiss Federal government:

<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/massnahmen-des-bundes.html>

Most of the establishments open to public are closed: Shops and market, restaurant establishments, bars, discotheques, night clubs, erotic establishment, entertainment and leisure establishment (e.g. museum, casino, theaters, swimming pools, sport and fitness centers, zoos,...) and establishments with personal services involving physical contact (e.g. hairdressers, barbers, cosmetic studios). Only the necessary stores remain at the moment open like, groceries stores, some take-away establishments and meal delivery services, pharmacies and drug stores, banks and post offices, train and gas stations, hotels, public administration, medical practices and hospitals. Public and private events are currently also prohibited. All public transport in Switzerland will be reduced significantly.

Travelling to and from Switzerland:

Entry into Switzerland:

As of 17 March 2020, presumably till 19 April 2020, there is currently no general ban but all Swiss borders are controlled. However, at present, Italy, Germany, Austria and France are designated high-risk countries. People from high-risk countries and areas will be refused entry into Switzerland. Exceptions are possible, for example for people who live or work in Switzerland such as:

- Swiss nationals
- Persons holding a Swiss residence permit (L, B, C or Ci permits)
- Persons holding a cross-border permit (G permit)
- Persons holding a visa issued by Switzerland or an assurance of a residence permit
- Persons who have to enter Switzerland for work-related reasons and have a document to prove it
- Persons who are transporting goods for commercial purposes and have a delivery order for their merchandise
- Persons who are simply travelling directly through Switzerland in order to reach another country
- Persons who wish to enter Switzerland because of a serious emergency.

Please note that because of the new development, new restrictions of foreign countries or company related travel policies may apply and some individuals who planned to travel to Switzerland for work purposes can, for the time being, not travel anymore.

Kindly note that once a Swiss entry visa has been issued and is stamped in the passport, it can in principle not be extended. Therefore, the Swiss entry visa should be collected only shortly before travel is confirmed.

Exit/Leaving Switzerland:

As most of the European countries have declared bans, travel activities have become almost impossible. In case a Swiss work and residence permit or Swiss visa is expiring and it is not possible to return to the home country, please note that an application for a "grace period" has in principle to be filed from the today's perspective.

Before exiting Switzerland, the dedicated coronavirus homepage of the transit / destination country should be consulted, as more and more countries are restricting the crossing of their borders.

Please also find below the travel recommendations from the Federal Office of Public Health:

<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/empfehlungen-fuer-reisende.html>

Kind regards,
Your Suter Howald Immigration Team

Disclaimer: The content of this email does not represent legal advice and may not be used as such. Furthermore, the above mentioned links to the official websites may currently not represent the situation as it has been on 17 March 2020 anymore.

suterhowald

Suter Howald Rechtsanwälte - Attorneys at Law

www.suterhowald.ch

Stampfenbachstrasse 52 | P.O. Box | 8021 Zurich | Switzerland

Tel. +41 44 630 48 11 | Dir. +41 44 630 48 28 | Fax +41 44 630 48 15

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