

Cyprus announces uniform 8-hour virus curfew, ends local lockdowns

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Cyprus on Friday announced it would lift lockdowns in two key coastal cities but impose a nationwide eight-hour night-time curfew among other uniform restrictions to tackle rising coronavirus cases.

A nationwide curfew will apply between the hours of 9:00 pm and 05:00

am (1900 GMT to 0300 GMT) from November 30 until December 13, Health Minister Constantinos Ioannou said.

This brings to an end a two-tier curfew system, which had seen the capital Nicosia and other towns under curfew for only six hours each night from 11:00 pm.

Limassol and Paphos—both areas where caseloads have been high— will have their lockdowns lifted at the end of November, after a near-total prohibition on movements in and out of those coastal resort cities and their wider districts.

Ioannou said the Republic of Cyprus was moving away from local lockdowns to introduce uniform nationwide restrictions leading up to the [festive season](#), in the hope of easing the measures over the holidays.

"This year's holidays will be unprecedented, but we must protect our public health system and the ones we love," Ioannou told reporters Friday.

Bars, restaurants, pubs, cafes and other hospitality venues must shut nationwide at 7:00 pm, after previously being allowed to remain open until 10:30 pm outside Limassol and Paphos districts. Only food delivery is allowed after 7:00 pm.

Schools can return to normal in [lockdown](#) areas, but gyms everywhere will have to close.

Shops, [shopping malls](#), hair salons, cinemas, theatres and museums will operate under tightened social distancing rules.

Half of the 48 coronavirus deaths recorded nationwide since the outbreak of the virus in March have come in November, the health

minister noted.

His ministry registered 220 new virus cases on Thursday, taking the [total number](#) of recorded infections to 9,673.

Ioannou said there would be relaxations for the Christmas holidays if the situation improves, including a loosening of the curfew—and later closing times for hospitality—between December 14 and January 7.

But he also warned that policies could become tighter if the [coronavirus](#) caseload worsens.

Cyprus had largely kept a lid on the pandemic by introducing an early lockdown in March that was gradually eased from early May.

Health authorities blame the spike on Cypriots flouting hygiene rules, including on mask-wearing and social distancing.

Face masks are mandatory indoors and outdoors, except at home, while household gatherings are limited to 10 people, as are weddings and funerals.

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