

# Social distancing mandatory as Dutch COVID infections spike

November 23 2021, by Mike Corder

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In this image taken from video, demonstrators protest against government restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, Friday, Nov. 19, 2021, in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Police fired warning shots, injuring an unknown number of people, as riots broke out Friday night in downtown Rotterdam at a demonstration against plans by the government to restrict access for unvaccinated people to some venues. Credit: Media TV Rotterdam via AP

Dutch coronavirus infection numbers hit a new weekly record Tuesday, climbing 39% while hospital and intensive care unit admissions also rose

sharply, prompting the government to make social distancing mandatory again for all adults.

The latest report by the country's public health institute on a surge in COVID-19 cases came a day after the Dutch government introduced legislation that would clear the way to restrict access for unvaccinated people to indoor venues such as bars, restaurants and museums if infections keep rising.

The legislation would limit the country's COVID-19 pass system to people who are fully vaccinated or have recovered from a coronavirus infection. People could no longer get the health pass with negative tests. The bill is expected to be debated by lawmakers next week.

The policy "protects unvaccinated people against infection, illness and hospital admission in high-risk locations," the government said.

But the government did not wait that long to bring back mandatory social distancing, which takes effect Wednesday for everybody 18 and over. The government already strongly advised people to stay 1.5 meters (5 feet) from one another; making it mandatory means businesses will have to enforce the measure and law enforcement can issue fines if people do not comply.



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A woman and two children commute in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021. The government urged people to stick better to basic coronavirus prevention rules such as social distancing, mask wearing and working from home whenever possible. Weekly numbers showed that the most new infections last week were among children. Credit: AP Photo/Peter Dejong



Thousands take part in a demonstration against COVID-19 restrictions in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Peter Dejong



A protestor wears a sign reading "Freedom" during a demonstration against COVID-19 restrictions in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Peter Dejong



People take part in a demonstration against COVID-19 restrictions in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Peter Dejong

According to the new government figures, hospital admissions rose 19% over the last week while admissions to intensive care units climbed 26%. The health institute said 265 people died of COVID-19 last week, raising the confirmed pandemic death toll in the Netherlands above 19,000.

Children under 12 had the highest proportion of positive tests in the week up to Tuesday. The European Union's drug regulator is expected to issue a decision later this week on a request by Pfizer and BioNTech to approve their COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11.



A panel of experts that advises the Dutch government urged people this week to improve basic virus-fighting measures such as social distancing and mask wearing, saying that many people are not adhering to a partial lockdown introduced more than a week ago.

A protest Friday against the COVID-19 pass system in Rotterdam degenerated into violence that led to police officers opening fire on rioters.

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