

Norway tightens entry rules, urges dropping handshake

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Norwegian officials said Friday the country is introducing stricter

controls at border crossings, requiring everyone to register before entering the country, in a bid to tackle the rise in COVID cases.

Norwegian Justice Minister Emilie Enger Mehl said the move that enters into force Nov. 26, is "to get a better grip on who comes in." Norway has, like other European countries, seen a recent rise in COVID-19 cases with more hospitalizations.

All people aged 16 and over, both Norwegian nationals and foreigners, are supposed to register on a government website at least three days before entering the country. There, they will get a confirmation that authorities can ask for at border checkpoints. People without it can be refused entry.

Health Minister Ingvild Kjerkol also urged people to stop shaking hands and greet others by giving elbow bumps, nods, smiles or a hand on the heart.

"I will now encourage everyone to drop the handshake and return to the infection-free way to greet," Kjerkol told a press conference. On Sept. 25, Norway lifted most national coronavirus restrictions and then-Health Minister Bent Høeie said "handshakes will again be allowed."

On Wednesday, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health said it expected an increase in the number of cases and hospitalizations among unvaccinated adults and the elderly toward Christmas.

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