

Austrian lockdown extended through Dec 11 as planned

December 1 2021



Due to the lockdown, restaurants are closed and seats are blocked off in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner

Austria's lockdown has officially been extended until Dec. 11 as planned amid signs that the measures are helping to bring down a sky-high

coronavirus infection rate.

A parliamentary committee signed off Tuesday on the extension of the country's fourth national lockdown of the pandemic, which started on Nov. 22, the Austria Press Agency reported. That was necessary because some lockdown measures can only be ordered for 10 days at a time.

There is one significant change: essential shops that so far were allowed to open until 9 p.m. will have to close by 7 p.m. starting Thursday. And the rules now allow explicitly for the sale of Christmas trees.

The government imposed lockdown as COVID-19 deaths rose and hospitals in hard-hit regions warned that intensive care units were reaching capacity. Austria also pledged to be the first European country to mandate vaccines beginning Feb. 1.

Under the lockdown, people can leave their homes only for specific reasons, including buying groceries, going to the doctor or exercising. Day care centers and schools remained open for those who need them, but parents were asked to keep children at home if possible.

What happens after Dec. 11 will depend on the situation then, but officials say lockdown restrictions will remain for the unvaccinated. Austria has a relatively low vaccination rate for Western Europe, with just under 67% of the population fully vaccinated.



Public spaces are empty due to the lockdown in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner



Due to the lockdown, shops and restaurants are all closed and a person does 'Window Shopping' in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner



Due to the lockdown, there are no people at the campus of the University of Vienna in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner



Two people walk by closed Christmas markets and shops due to the lockdown in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner



Empty gondola cabins move up and down during a test run in the ski resort of Fulpmes near Innsbruck, Austria, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. Credit: Photo/Michael Probst

The country's seven-day infection rate has begun to decline. It stood at 894.2 cases per 100,000 residents on Tuesday, down from more than 1,100 on the day the lockdown started.

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