

23.10.2020

## The valid recommendations in South Karelia on 23 October 2020

The regional COVID-19 situation assessment workgroup of South Karelia stated at its meeting on 23 October 2020 that the epidemic is at the baseline level in South Karelia. The three stages of an epidemic are the baseline, acceleration, and spreading phases.

No new recommendations or restrictions were issued this week. Instead, the situation assessment workgroup decided to maintain in force the recommendations and restrictions issued on 8 October 2020.

The workgroup hopes that the residents will follow the instructions provided on the prevention of the coronavirus epidemic carefully in South Karelia. The workgroup reminds the population of the region to maintain a safe distance from others, wash their hands with care and sufficiently often, and use a hand sanitiser where required. The mask recommendation is valid in the region in accordance with the baseline level. In addition, the mask recommendation will be valid in the South Karelia at events and public meetings until the end of 2020.

### The situation assessment workgroup has decided to keep in force the following recommendations:

- A general recommendation for working communities to favour remote working and remote meetings, as well as to avoid work and business trips and contact teaching.
- The baseline level mask recommendation in accordance with the instructions of the National Institute for Health and Welfare of Finland (THL). It is recommended that masks be used in public transport and in public premises, if a 1.5 metre safe distance cannot be maintained. In addition, it is recommended that a mask be used on the trip to and from a coronavirus test and when returning from a high-risk country.
- The recommendation to wear a face mask at public meetings, events, and tournament type sports events. The recommendation will be valid until the end of 2020.
- The organisation of tournament type sports events will be permitted in the region for the time being. However, sports services are advised to be in contact with sport clubs.
- The organisation of events will be permitted for the time being in accordance with the valid instructions of the Regional State Administrative Agency. The organisation of tournament type sports events will be permitted in the region for the time being but, based on the current recommendation, teams must not be in contact with each other outside the game. It is recommended that event organisers pay attention to safe distances, the use of masks, and general hygiene instructions. There is a valid face mask recommendation that applies to events. Event organisers are responsible for the event they have organised and for planning and implementing its public health security. Further information for event organisers on the Regional State Administrative Agency's website: <http://www.avi.fi/web/avi/usein-kysytyt-kysymykset>  
Instructions for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in connection to public meetings and assembly, and in public premises: [http://www.avi.fi/documents/10191/17217812/OKM-THL\\_Ohje+yleis%C3%B6tilaisuksiin+yleisiin+kokoontumisiin+ja+julkisten+tilojen+k%C3%A4yt%C3%B6ss%C3%A4\\_FI.pdf/6562b3bd-1698-4c24-9223-77b8afd0b81e](http://www.avi.fi/documents/10191/17217812/OKM-THL_Ohje+yleis%C3%B6tilaisuksiin+yleisiin+kokoontumisiin+ja+julkisten+tilojen+k%C3%A4yt%C3%B6ss%C3%A4_FI.pdf/6562b3bd-1698-4c24-9223-77b8afd0b81e)
- Customer service points must be equipped with plexiglass shields. Employers must provide masks or protective face shields for customer service workers who work less than 1.5 metres from other people.

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In Imatra, minor changes are planned to be made after the autumn break to the activities organised at schools in the evenings. People are increasingly encouraged to wear face masks in public transport in Lappeenranta, and also the steering group of the City of Lappeenranta is planning its own campaign.

The situation assessment workgroup also addresses matters related to employment and business life. An unprecedented wave of bankruptcies is expected to hit Finland once the protection period established due to the pandemic ends at the end of February 2021.

### **The residents are encouraged to wear face masks, as they are still relatively rare in the region**

Attention must be paid to the use of face masks especially when moving in shops and shopping centres, in connection to indoor activities and other leisure time activities, on public transport, and at private celebrations. Private celebrations include, e.g. weddings, large birthday gatherings, and graduations. – It is highly advisable to wear a mask in all situations where a safe distance from others cannot be maintained, says the Chair of the workgroup **Tuula Karhula**.

The situation in the rest of Finland and the valid restrictions and recommendations of other hospital districts can be found on the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare website under Regional situation. The page can also be accessed through the link found on the Eksote website at [www.eksote.fi/koronavirus](http://www.eksote.fi/koronavirus)

The current stage of the epidemic in South Karelia is specified by the infectious disease authorities, together with the regional COVID-19 situation assessment workgroup. The South Karelian COVID-19 situation assessment workgroup includes representatives of the South Karelia Social and Health Care District, the municipalities, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, the Regional State Administrative Agency, and the local ELY Centre. In addition to the number of and the increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, the stage of the epidemic depends e.g. on the traceability of infection chains and whether the virus was acquired within or from outside the region. The epidemic situation can change rapidly locally or regionally, even when the national situation is stable. The local COVID-19 situation assessment workgroup meets once a week, unless more frequent meetings are required.

### **Additional information for the media:**

Tuula Karhula, Chair of the situation assessment workgroup, Director of the Health and Elderly Services, Eksote, tel. +358 40 194 4936, [tuula.karhula@eksote.fi](mailto:tuula.karhula@eksote.fi)

Kristiina Kapulainen, Secretary of the situation assessment workgroup, Communications Specialist, Eksote, tel. +358 40 651 1791, [kristiina.kapulainen@eksote.fi](mailto:kristiina.kapulainen@eksote.fi)