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COVID-19 Info Sheet France

Compiled by:
APUAF COVID-19 Committee
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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 world health crisis has significantly upset operations in the field of International Education. As we look forward, many universities and organizations are currently putting in place plans to re-open and find solutions to allow international student mobility. In an effort to provide information to its members and their partners concerning the current situation, APUAF proposes this compilation of COVID-19 protocols and guidelines as established by French authorities relevant to the field of International Education in France.

The committee in charge of the research, translation and scope of this document seeks simply to provide a short-cut summary of information that is widely accessible, yet often only published in French, on various different official government websites and through communiqués provided by:

- The French government and the ensemble of its Ministries
- French Consular offices
- The *Préfectures*
- Local government resources & announcements
- Protocols established by French Federations

We encourage readers to access the links to the original sources provided in each category of information in this report. **The APUAF COVID-19 Committee will update this compilation periodically, at least once a month, for the coming months.** The situation evolves quickly and continually, and as such, APUAF recommends that all readers verify the information provided below before making definitive decisions. This Info Sheet does not intend to interpret information provided by the French authorities, nor does it seek to advise readers. Its simple purpose is to compile information from official sources to provide a convenient resource in English for APUAF members and their partners.



Much of the information in this report concerns the general state of affairs in France. We have not provided detailed information for each city or region, though that detailed information is available on both national and local websites. In some cases, we have provided detailed information concerning guidelines in Paris.

SECTION 1: INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

Entering France & Schengen from the United States

French Embassies in the U.S. have published the following communiqué concerning entering France and Schengen from the U.S. (Aug 12, 2020):

- Travelers aged 11 or older from the United States **must provide the results of a PCR test taken less than 72 hours before departure** indicating a negative result for COVID-19. In certain exceptional and documented cases where it is not possible to get a test within the required time frame and there is a compelling reason to travel on the scheduled date, you can request a certificate of exemption from your nearest consulate. The consulate underscores the obligation to actively look for a PCR test before departure in order to avoid having to be tested at the airport on arrival and the resulting wait times.

- **If you are not able to provide evidence of this test or a certificate of exemption, boarding will be denied.**

It should also be noted that, in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic, **the external borders of the European Union and the Schengen Area have been closed to travelers from the United States** since March 17 and that, in this context, only those persons who fall within one of the categories mentioned in the [exempted international movement certificate for travel from abroad to mainland France](#) (document available in English and French) are authorized to enter France:

- French nationals, accompanied by their spouse and children
- European Union nationals and nationals from Andorra, United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and the Holy See, having their primary residence in France or transiting through France to reach their country of origin or where they have their primary residence, accompanied by their spouse and children
- Third country nationals, who are holders of a French or European residence permit or valid long-stay visa, having their primary residence in France or transiting through France to reach their residence in a country of the European Union or assimilated
- Third country nationals, transiting less than 24 hours in an international area
- Diplomatic mission staff, or international organisations staff working in headquarters or offices located in France, accompanied by their spouse and children
- Foreign healthcare workers supporting the fight against Covid-19
- Flight and cargo personnel as part of a crew or travelling to their departure base as passengers
- Foreign nationals ensuring international carriage of goods
- Driver or crew members of a passenger train or bus
- Crew members or personnel working on a merchant or fishing vessel
- **Students with long-term visa (VLS), short-term visa (VCS) in order to study or to do an internship (“student-in-competition” short-stay visa not included), or coming for less than 90 days from a country exempted from VCS, with a proof of address in France**
- Teacher or researcher employed or invited by a French educational institution or research lab, travelling for teaching or research purposes
- Third country national with a « *Passeport Talent* » long-term visa (VLS)



Student Visas

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, **France is accepting all international students starting Fall 2020 semester**, for all students from all countries of origin, and for all types of programs including short and long term, study, internship, or research programs.

- French Consulates started delivering visas to international students as of August 18, 2020
- A communiqué has been published on the Campus France website: [Advice for Students Coming to France](#)
- A guide that summarizes the steps to follow has been published on the Campus France website: [France Welcomes You Guide](#)

Here is a summary of the steps students travelling from the U.S. must take. Information concerning all other countries is available through the above links.

Students Coming to France from the United States

All travelers must carry :

- **The exceptional international travel certificate** for Metropolitan France which can be downloaded (in English or in French) on the [Ministry of the Interior's website](#). You must present this certificate to travel companies before using your travel ticket, as well as to border control authorities (for travel by air, sea and land, including by rail).
- **A sworn statement that you do not have COVID-19 symptoms** (included in the same document)
- **A “contact” sheet** providing your residence address in France
- Students and researchers must show a **negative COVID test** from under 72 hours before boarding
- **Quarantine is not currently necessary** for anyone showing a negative test.

Mobility restrictions

Students residing in France must adhere to French regulations concerning mobility. The current situation allows and requires the following:

- Free movement throughout all of France
- Free movement throughout the European Union
- Free movement to and from the following additional countries: Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Saint-Marin, Switzerland, and the Vatican
- Outside of the European Union, restrictions may apply and upon return to France, travelers may be required to be tested and/or quarantined.

Details concerning mobility in and out of France can be found at this government site: [International Mobility Information](#)

SECTION 2: HEALTH SERVICE ACCESS & CAPACITY

Access to protective equipment (masks, gloves, gel)

All pharmacies and most grocery chains in France currently have low priced equipment available.

- **Disposable surgical masks** are available at approximately 20 to 30 cents each.
- Certified 'Grand Public' **re-usable masks** cost about 2 euros each and come in 2 different categories: Category 1 masks filter approximately 90% of particles and Category 2 masks filter 70%. Annex 3 of the National Protocol for Staying Healthy & Safe at Work describes each kind of mask available in France. [How to Stay Healthy and Safe at Work](#)
- **Disinfectant gel** costs about 10-12 euros per liter. There are also public gel dispensers (free) in some cities in France, and almost all places of business have gel dispensers available for customer use.
- France currently has sufficient **protective gloves** available for the general public.



Access to testing

Two kinds of COVID tests are currently available in France:

- **The (RT-PCR) test** to determine if the patient has COVID at the time of the test.
 - Results are available within 24 – 36 hours.
 - France currently can perform approximately 700 000 tests per week.
 - These tests are 100% covered by Social Security and do not require prescription. Otherwise, out of pocket costs are approximately 30 euros per test.
 - They are administered in testing centers, medical facilities and labs but also by nurses, medical students, paramedics, firemen, etc. There are currently 3300 testing centers across France. [COVID Testing Sites in France](#)
- **The Immunity Test** to determine if the patient has developed immunity to COVID. These tests are administered mostly in labs and do not require a prescription. They are 100% covered by Social Security and otherwise out of pocket costs are approximately 20 euros per test.

New saliva tests are being developed at this time and will be deployed as soon as the medical authorities validate their accuracy.

Who can be tested (RT-PCR)?

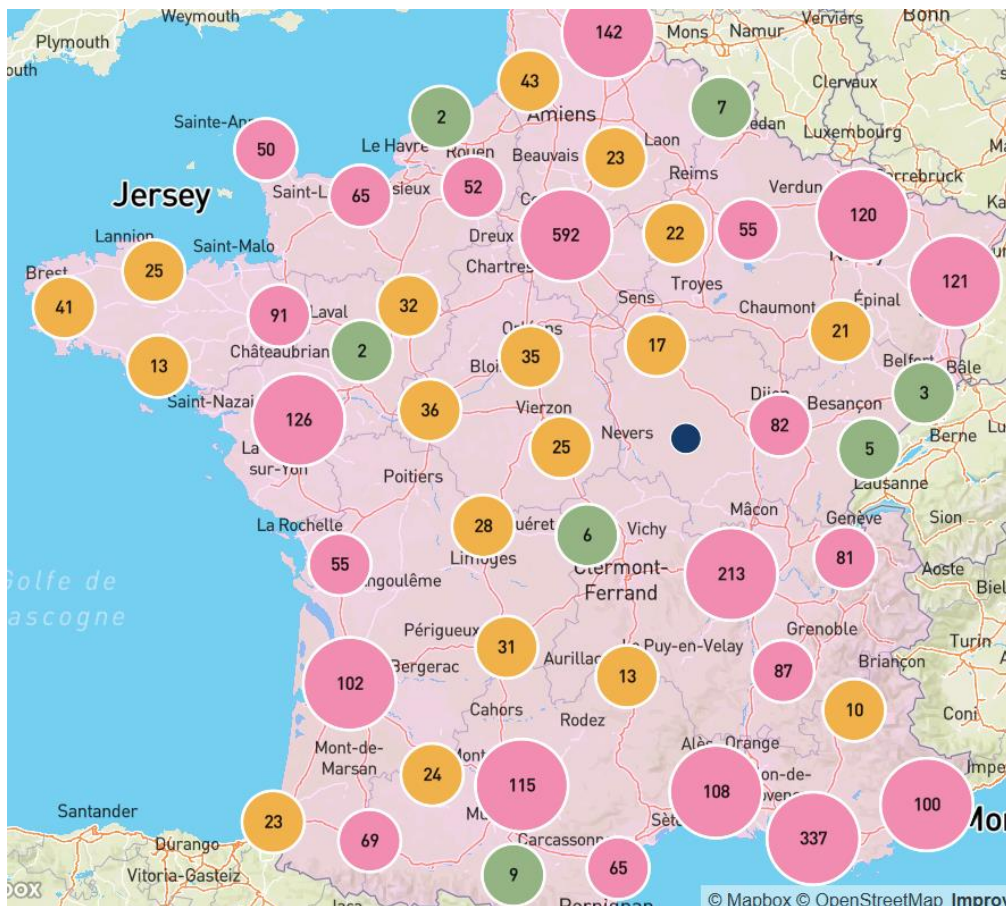
- Anyone can benefit from a test. There is no prescription needed, and no need to even show symptoms. The test is covered by French Social Security and these conditions apply even for people who are not covered by French Social Security.
- The health authorities could contact individuals to request mandatory testing if they have been established as having been in contact with someone who has tested positive.
- The health authorities could request testing of certain groups in the context of testing campaigns (fragile groups, residents of a certain zone or in a certain group accommodation, works in a certain area, etc)

Steps to take for testing

Precise procedures have been put in place for different case scenarios. Details can be found and downloaded here for anyone in these groups: [Steps to Take to be Tested](#)

- I don't present any symptoms and I would like to be tested (Free test, no prescription needed, results within approximately 24h.)
- I have symptoms (specific protocol for testing to avoid contact with others during testing and until results are in. Free test, no prescription needed, results within approximately 24h)
- I have been in contact with a person who has tested positive

[Interactive Map of Testing Sites in France](#)



Tracking

All COVID patients must provide a local doctor with the list of people with whom they have been in touch within 48 hours of the first symptoms. Medical authorities will contact every person on that list and require testing (see above).

Anyone who has been in contact with someone who has tested positive must follow a specific protocol [Steps to Take to be Tested](#):

- Wear a certified mask at all times when in contact with others
- Contact a testing center to make an appointment. Immediate testing if one lives with the COVID patient, 7 days after last contact with the person if one doesn't live with the COVID patient.
- Visit the testing center with a form of ID and proof of insurance
- Return home and stay in quarantine until the test results (usually 24h)

The French government has developed an app called STOP COVID that uses Bluetooth technology to inform users if they are in close contact with a COVID patient. The app does not collect personal identification information and use of the app for everyone, including COVID patients, is voluntary. [STOP COVID Tracking App](#)



Access to health care & hospitalization

- Web-based platforms and apps such as “Doctolib” allow students to book medical appointments across the country with ease.
- Virtual consultations and in-person appointments with general practitioners are readily available with little wait time.
- Same day house-calls are also available in most French cities (through services such as *SOS Médecins* or UMP).
- Students have access to all French public hospitals where there is a dedicated space for COVID patients.
- France Hospitals are currently at 7-8% capacity for intensive care/*reanimation* beds. Statistics can be tracked here: [France COVID Dashboard](#)
- The Health Minister announced Aug 27, 2020 that France can swell the capacity to 12 000 resuscitation beds when needed. The full press conference can be viewed here in French: [Aug 27 Government Press Conference](#)

SECTION 3: GOVERNMENT MANDATED PROTOCOLS & LAWS

Enclosed Public Spaces



Anyone over the age of 11 must wear a mask in any enclosed, public space, in addition to respecting social distancing and other preventative measures. (July 22, 2020) Flyer in French on [How to Wear a Mask](#) .

« Closed public spaces » include the following : places of worship, cinemas, restaurants (when circulating within the restaurant & not while eating or drinking), hotels, libraries, museums, stores, banks, public administrations, etc. as well as all public transportation (subway, trams, buses), taxis, trains & train stations, airports, etc. A complete list can be found here on the website of the French Government's Ministry of Solidarity and Health: [Closed Spaces Where Masks are Obligatory](#)

Masks are compulsory in the workplace, a rule applicable to all enclosed and shared spaces, including open workplaces, but not in individual, i.e., private, offices. (Sept 1, 2020) The Ministry of Labor had previously outlined in June a protocol (only in French) for re-opening businesses which was last updated on August 31st, 2020: [Protocol for Opening Businesses](#)

These guidelines include, among others:

- **Working remotely**, whenever possible, especially in high risk (« red ») zones, in order to avoid large numbers of people in workplaces, as well as easing crowding on public transport during rush hour in large cities
- **Physical distancing** (at least 1 meter between individuals and/or workstations)
- **Obligatory mask wearing** and the responsibility of the employer to provide masks **
- The promotion of regular, thorough **handwashing**
- **Regular mechanical or manual ventilation** of the premises
- **Routine disinfecting** at least once a day of all surfaces and objects
- **Management of the flow of people** (indicating the circulation paths with signage, for example) to avoid excessive crowding and crossing of individuals

** The government announced (Aug 31, 2020) an exception to this rule: if you work in a low risk (« green ») zone, you can replace the mask with a face shield or even be exempted from wearing anything if your workspace is sufficiently ventilated.

Employees are instructed to stay at home should they develop Coronavirus symptoms or if they have recently been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. **Obligatory temperature checks or PCR tests at the workplace are not authorized.**

Info in English (and numerous other languages) here on [How to Stay Healthy and Safe at Work](#) can be found on the Ministry of Labor's website.

Outdoor Public Spaces

Wearing a mask in certain outdoor public spaces is mandatory in some French cities and départements since early August: Biarritz, Lyon, Marseille, Nice, Orléans, Paris*, Strasbourg, Toulouse, etc.

The **government has not made any national rule on mask-wearing outside**, but the French Government's Ministry of Solidarity and Health has urged the French to wear masks in any open-air areas where keeping a 1-meter distance is difficult. The government has given local representatives the authority to impose face coverings in outdoor public areas (open air markets, parks, the streets, etc.).

*In Paris and the first zone of suburbs (*petite couronne*), this measure applies to all pedestrians but not currently to joggers or cyclists. It will remain in place until further notice. (Aug 28, 2020)



For group gatherings

No more than 10 people may gather in any public space at present, without prior authorization from the *préfecture*. Events for **up to 5,000 people are permitted** in open-air spaces, and in covered spaces if current government mandated sanitary measures are strictly respected. **Major outdoor festivals, sporting events and gatherings of over 5,000 people are suspended** until at least October 30 2020.

Associated fines for not adhering to protocols

A **fine of 135 euros** may be applied in the event of non-compliance with wearing a mask in the places concerned.

SECTION 4: SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT MANDATED PROTOCOLS FOR UNIVERSITY & SCHOOL SETTINGS

Concerning the 2020-21 academic year:

- Primary & Secondary schools start September 1, 2020
- Most Higher Education institutions start by the end September

The French government has issued guidelines and recommendations to prevent and fight against the spread of Coronavirus. French primary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education may/should reopen provide they take the necessary precautions and respect the following health instructions:

- **Maintaining whenever possible a physical distance of 1 meter (or 3 feet) between individuals'** side by side, face to face, or with an empty seat between individuals in enclosed spaces, especially in physical learning spaces (this distance is not applicable when individuals are behind each other) and in libraries
- **Mandatory mask wearing** (while sitting or circulating)
- **Systematic use of hydroalcoholic gel by everyone** (over the age of 11 and all adults)

The Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research also recommend

- **Mechanical or manual ventilation of the premises** with 10 to 15 minutes of ventilation at least twice a day
- **Routine cleaning** at least once a day, in the absence of students and in accordance with the specific sanitary instructions applicable
- **Management of the flow of people** to avoid excessive crowding and crossing of individuals

Both ministries also advise each school/institution **to anticipate and be prepared to ensure pedagogical continuity**, using digital tools in the event of a resurgence of the epidemic this fall.

For detailed information (in French) on the back to school/COVID-19 protocol for primary and secondary schools: [Back to School Primary & Secondary Protocol](#)

For back to school higher education guidelines, please see the following August 6th administrative memorandum (in French): [Back to School Higher Education Protocol](#)

SECTION 5: STUDENT LIFE

Transportation

Taxis & car services

Taxis & car services are functioning with strict sanitary protocols in place. Passengers & drivers must wear masks in all vehicles. Passengers are not allowed in the front seat but rather must all fit in the back seat.

Paris Public Transportation

The [RATP](#) is the network of public transportation (metro, bus, RER, suburban trains) in Paris and the surrounding areas. Public transportation is running as normal with reinforced health and safety protocols related to COVID-19.

- Masks are mandatory in stations, on platforms, and when riding all forms of transportation, for passengers and personnel.
- [Cleaning](#) of buildings and transportation is reinforced.
- Every bus, tramway, RER, and metro is [disinfected twice a day](#).
- Social distancing space is indicated with tape on floors in stations. Stickers encouraging passengers to use every other seat are being phased out starting Aug. 28th.
- An application [MobilisésEnsemble](#) indicates the traffic and level of use by passengers in real time through crowd sourcing so you can plan your trips.
- Alternate forms of transportation (bicycles, electric bikes, scooters, moto scooters) are also available and listed [here](#).

National Train Service

Travel on trains has resumed throughout the country since May 11, 2020. The sanitary protocols put in place by the national train service, the SNCF, are described [here](#) in English.

- Masks are mandatory in stations, on platforms, and when travelling by train, for passengers and personnel.
- Crowd flow measures and modified boarding, social distancing, and foot traffic [procedures](#) have been put in place.
- Information on air quality and air conditioning on trains is available [here](#).

Passengers travelling to or from Italy must complete online and download an affidavit before their journey stating they have no symptoms of Covid-19, as required under measures adopted by the Italian government to fight the pandemic.

Restaurants, Bars & Parties

Restaurants, bars & cafés

- Restaurants, bars & cafés are **currently open** as long as the establishment and its customers follow strict sanitary protocols.
- The French Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and the Union of Hospitality Industries have outlined protocols for restaurants, cafés, and bars, which have been able to progressively resume business since June 2, 2020. [Sanitary Protocols for Hospitality Industries](#).
- In Paris and in some other French cities, outside terrace seating at restaurants and cafés has been extended to larger spaces in order to favor outside seating and provide proper social distancing.
- All employees of restaurants, bars & cafés must wear masks at all times. **Customers must wear masks** at all times inside and outside of the facility except when they are seated and/or eating & drinking.
- Billiard halls, bowling alleys, & other game rooms are authorized to open.
- **Nightclubs are currently closed** and not authorized to open.

Gatherings & Parties

- Groups of **more than 10 people are not allowed** to gather in public, inside or outside, without receiving prior authorization from authorities from the *préfecture*.

- Gatherings of more than 10 people in private spaces (homes, private yards) are discouraged but not forbidden. The government encourages everyone to be responsible and act with caution when gathering in a group.

Cultural: Cinemas, Museums, Monuments, Libraries, Churches, etc

The Ministry of Culture published [guidelines for reopening](#), by business sector (bookstores, libraries, conservatories, festivals, cinemas etc.) and lists opening status [here](#).

Cinemas

The guidelines for **cinemas** (important industry in France, having welcomed more than 213 million spectators in 2019), authorized to reopen as of June 22, include the following:

- Encourage the purchase/payment online of tickets, in advance, so as to limit contact with customers
- Obligatory mask-wearing (from anyone of the age of 11 and up)
- Social distancing (1-meter distance between customers) in lines and seating, leaving an empty seat between spectators unless several individuals or family members come as a group, in which case they leave empty seats on either side of their group
- Supplying of hand gel to customers
- Staggered screening to limit excessive crossing of individuals
- Regular cleaning and ventilation of all space accessed by the public.



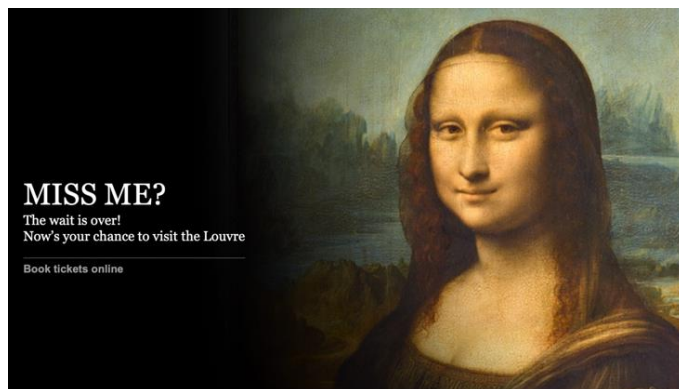
For more detailed information on the reopening of cinemas (and the conditions), in France, please see the [Fédération nationale des cinémas français' website](#)

Museums & Monuments

While authorization to reopen certain **museums and monuments** was announced by the French government for May 11, most only reopened as of June 2. The Ministry of Culture's website includes a [map of all cultural sites that have reopened](#).

Conditions: Masks & social distancing are compulsory and many only accept visitors with tickets purchased online and in advance for a certain date and time, in order to better manage the flow of people.

For example, the Louvre in Paris, pleased to be able to welcome visitors again, has posted a [YouTube video](#), with English subtitles, outlining their COVID health and safety measures.



Similarly, the Caen Memorial Museum has published their [sanitary protocol](#), in English on their website.

The Medieval château of Carcassonne (a classified UNESCO heritage site) has also reopened and [reassures their guests that they can visit in « total security »](#) because they are limiting the number of visitors per time slot, have adapted their visitors' circuit, enforce social distancing measures and require visitors to use hand sanitizer before the start of the visit, etc.

Other Venues

- **Libraries and media libraries:** open, but visitors must wear masks inside the facility
- **Shopping:** all business, markets, shopping malls and beauty/hair parlors are authorized to open with specific sanitary regulations in place and all visitors must wear masks
- **Zoos, leisure parks and amusement parks:** open, but visitors must wear masks

- **Theatres and concert halls:** open to up to 5000 visitors with specific sanitary regulations in place
- **Places of worship:** open with specific sanitary regulations in place
- **Events with more than 5000 people:** closed until at least October 30, unless special authorization is validated by the *prefecture*
- **Nightclubs:** currently closed
- **Trade fairs and conferences:** currently closed

Athletics

As of July 11, 2020, The French Minister of National Education, Youth, and Sports [authorizes](#) all physical and athletic activities for individual practice, in all areas of metropolitan France as long as social distancing protocols as defined above by the French government are followed: [General Protocols for Sports](#)

- At least 1-meter (3 feet) space between two people
- All present must wear masks
- Frequent hand washing with soap or hydroalcoholic gel
- Coughing or sneezing in elbows, using paper tissue once and disposed of correctly immediately.

This applies to every aspect of athletics: games, matches, visitor reception, travel, etc. Social distancing is not mandatory when the activity itself does not permit it (such as martial arts for amateurs.) Locker rooms and showers can be opened as of August 15, 2020 and may be used as long as social distancing is respected (masks need not be worn in showers) and they are regularly disinfected. Masks need not be worn while practicing the sports activity itself. If the event is open to the public and will bring together more than 10 people, the *préfecture* must be notified.

Athletic and recreation facilities

- Facilities must be cleaned regularly.
- Outdoor activities are to be favored for school children and athletic activities in gyms and pools are authorized as long as social distancing protocols are in place (masks mandatory for children over 11 but not possible while practicing the sports activity itself) and regular daily cleaning is in place.
- Pools, gyms, stadiums, parks, lakes, etc. are open for use as of June 2020 as long as certain conditions are met.
- Pools can fill to 80% of full capacity in the facility.
- Private gyms are open. Each gym is encouraged to follow the government's recommended protocols : respect social distancing, 2 meters between active participants in classes such as yoga and fitness, 10 meters distance when running or biking, 5 meters distance for moderately intense activities. Here is a link to the [FAQ](#) on coronavirus protocols at *Cercles de la Forme*, a popular chain of gyms in Paris.
- Sports events in closed and open spaces that are admitting the public are limited to 5000 people maximum, and seating is arranged so that at least one seat is left open between two spectators.

Protocols specific to each sport

Each sport has its own French federation; each federation has incorporated the government health regulations into its specific activity and made recommendations for carrying out the activity under safe conditions. Information in French can be found online by searching "Fédération française de (name of sport in French) COVID". The links below are a few examples of pages or guides of sports federations' adaptation to coronavirus protocol to their sport: [Fédération française de tennis](#), [Fédération française de natation](#), [Fédération française de football](#)

Temporary Accommodations

Hotels, resorts, camp sites, hostels and other collective accommodations are authorized to open with certain required sanitary protocols in place, including wearing masks in common areas inside and outside the hotel. Travelers should seek detailed information from the specific facilities.

Travelers are permitted to stay with friends, family, in vacation homes or in vacation rentals. Most vacation rentals follow a specific sanitary protocol between tenants. Online rental services are accepting reservations and have clear policies concerning cancellations and sanitary protocols in place. [Information Concerning Accommodations](#)

ADDITIONAL LINKS & GENERAL RESOURCES

For current information, including health recommendations and measures, from the French government on the COVID-19 situation in France, see the following website: [Main COVID-19 Government Website](#)

Access to daily communiqués with daily statistics and key messages: [Daily Communiqués by French Government](#)