

SÜDWESTRUNDFUNK, 18 May 2020

- <https://www.swr.de/swraktuell/rheinland-pfalz/hotels-nach-shutdown-100.html>

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## VACATION DURING CORONA CRISIS

### Hotels in Rhineland-Palatinate open again for Tourists

**After public houses have already opened, hotels in Rhineland-Palatinate may reopen eight weeks after shutdown. What will tourists have to observe?**

Operation is only allowed under restrictions. Use of indoor pools and saunas is still not allowed. Outdoor pools and fitness rooms may soon be used again. And there are many vacant rooms left for summer vacation within the ten tourist regions of the state said Dehoga [German Association of hotels and public houses K.B.] State Chairman Gereon Haumann.

### What is the legal basis?

Effective today hotels in Rhineland-Palatinate are authorized to have tourists as guests; this is one of the provisions of the State Administration's 6<sup>th</sup> Corona Abatement Ordinance. Details are given in an assistance guide for the gastronomy edited by the State Ministries of Economy and of Health and Dehoga Rhineland-Palatinate as well as by the Chambers of Industry and Commerce. So far less than a handful of hotels were open for business travelers.

### **Will all Hotels open?**

Every enterprise will have to decide at what time opening will be profitable said Haumann. Many of the approximately 4,000 enterprises will not open at once but on Wednesday or on Thursday or on occasion of the Ascension Day weekend. Others will wait another week longer until Pentecost.

### **May Wellness Areas be used?**

Outdoor pools in hotels are authorized to reopen May 27; saunas and indoor pools however, must be closed until June 10. Dehoga requests to at least antedate the opening date for indoor pools, otherwise many tourists could detour to Austria. Massages are authorized. Effective May 27 fitness studios will be allowed to reopen under restrictions; accordingly, fitness machines in hotels may be used again.

### **Who is allowed to stay in Hotel rooms together?**

Contact restrictions generally have no bearing on booking of rooms as loosening of restrictions authorized people to have public contacts with persons from two households. A three-bed room with three persons from different households, however, is not allowed. In Rhineland-Palatinate no hotel rooms must remain empty, and there are no buffer times between two bookings of the same room.

### **How are Chains of Infections traced?**

In order to assure tracing in case of an infection with corona virus hotels must – similar to gastronomy businesses – register contact data of all guests with reservation or with checking in, i.e. name, given name, address and phone number. These data have to be kept for one month, but must not be used for other purposes, says the guidance. According to Dehoga State Chairman Haumann, this does not constitute any additional work for hotels as they must keep contact data of guests anyway for tax purposes.

### **How do Hotels prepare for that?**

Statement by hotel "Jan van Werth" in the City of Koblenz: "The breakfast is most complicated", says owner Brian Auersbach. Buffets are not authorized; for that reason pre-prepared platters according to guests' wishes will be served at the table [in the restaurant K.B.]. The restaurant of the small hotel with 14 rooms has only set up four tables, and there are firm breakfast dates for the guests. Distancing and hygiene rules have already been implemented weeks ago. Many guests canceled their summer vacation, and there are hardly any new bookings.

Hotel "Heinz" in the City of Hoehr-Grenzhausen [north-east Palatinate, Koblenz/Westerwald Forest area K.B.]: owner Christina Heinz reports several cancellations of bookings for the months of May and June. The sauna area is closed; employees giving facial cosmetic treatments to customers have to doubly protect themselves and their customers with a FFP-2 face mask and a visor. Prior to checking in rooms are basically cleaned for 60 minutes. Such basic cleaning is normally done once per month", says Heinz.

### **What are the Provisions for Hygiene?**

Guests must disinfect their hands before entering the hotel as well as at the entrance of the restaurant. While moving inside the hotel – hallways, lobby and restaurant – covering of mouth and nose is required. "Guests' walkways may intersect", says Haumann explaining this requirement. The face coverings may be taken off at the table and, of course, inside the hotel rooms.

Breakfast and other meals will not be served in the hotel rooms but in the restaurant. Hotel employees who have contacts with guests will also wear respective protective coverings; the same applies to cleaning personnel in the rooms. "While checking in contact between employees and guests and the haptic contact of necessary items will be restricted to the absolute necessary", reads the guidance.

Markers for physical distancing and separations are to assure orderly and safe movement of guests. Items inside hotel rooms which are used by multiple guests like pens, newspapers, bed covers and pillows are to be reduced to the minimum or are to be cleaned or exchanged after every use.

### **Gastronomy Businesses log significant Reductions in Turnover**

Turnovers of the hotel branch increased by 0.3% compared to the year before. Last year there were almost ten million hotel guests between Westerwald Forest [in the north of the state K.B.] and the Palatinate [extending to the southern border of the state K.B.]; the number of overnight stays slightly increased to approximately 26 million. Gastronomy businesses including restaurants and cafes – employ 47,719 persons. With reference to turnover in corona year 2020 Dehoga State Chairman Gereon Haumann talks about a deficit for the branch between the mid of March and the mid of May amounting to two billion euro. The almost four billion euro of turnover from the second half of 2019 will by far not be reached. "We have to log significant economic decreases."

As of May 18, 6.28 a.m.