New regulations for home quarantine

Act Determining Interim Measures for Mitigation and Remedy the Consequences of the COVID-19 brings new regulations for home quarantine, which come into force with October 24, 2020. In the stage of the epidemic that places a heavy burden on healthcare and requires measures that affect not only the individual but also the economy, we are setting up regulations that will nevertheless ensure that as many of those who have been in close contact with the infected person are informed, and will, if nothing else, stay at home in home quarantine and receive income compensation for that time.

The changed epidemiological situation requires adaptation in all areas concerning the epidemic. In these tightened conditions, epidemiologists can only contact newly confirmed infected persons. They explain to these infected persons how to act and how to inform those with whom they have been in contact. Epidemiologists therefore no longer call these contacts and they do not inform the Ministry of Health to issue a decision on home quarantine.

Following the instructions of the epidemiologist, anyone who has been confirmed to be infected with the coronavirus will inform anyone with whom he/she has been in close contact. If he/she has the #OstaniZdrav application installed on their smartphone, he/she will enter the code according to the epidemiologist’s instructions, thus enabling everyone with installed active #OstaniZdrav application to be informed about the risky contact via this application.

All those who have been informed that they have been in close contact with an infected person directly or through an application should stay at home and act as if they are in home quarantine.

- **Employed people** inform their employer that they have been in close contact with an infect person. The employer will decide, in cooperation with occupational physician, whether the person in question can work from home, whether the work can be organized in such a way that the possible infection can not be transmitted to other employees during work and during arrival to and leaving from work, or whether the person should remain in home quarantine. In case that a person remains in home quarantine, the employer, in cooperation with occupational physician, will provide this information to National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ) together with the employee’s address or e-mail address with his/her consent. **NIJZ will provide the method of communication as soon as possible.** NIJZ will send a certificate of referral home quarantine to this person at this address within 72 hours. Employee will use this certificate to claim the compensation from the employer.

- **Self-employed, partners and farmers** who cannot arrange their work in such a way as not to endanger others, inform their personal physician that they have been in close contact. As in the previous case, the latter will intervene with the NIJZ to send them a certificate of referral to home quarantine. The same applies to employees of smaller employers who have not yet been able to establish a cooperation with occupational and sports medicine specialists.

NIJZ has also prepared Guidelines for the management of educational institutions (VIZ) in the event of a confirmed case of SARS-CoV-2 infection in their institution, which serve to assist the VIZ management in appropriate action (https://www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/usmeritve_vodstvu_vzgojno-izobrazenih_zavodov_ob_potrjenem_primernem_odzivu_na_potrjeno_sars-cov-2_v_nihovem_zavodu_final.pdf). VIZ submits to NIJZ a list of children whose parents need a certificate to claim compensation for absence from work.
We are aware that due to the nature of their work, some employees have stayed home in agreement with their employer even during this interim period, when no quarantine decisions and certificates have been issued. For those who are at home and cannot work from home or use hours or leave, the employer will be able to obtain a certificate for this period as well. However, for those who have so far been informed by an epidemiologist that they must be in home quarantine, a decision of the Ministry of Health is still required to claim compensation.

Those who will be referred to home quarantine by the border police will still be able to claim compensation with a certificate issued by the police.

The new regulation does not provide for state control. At the Ministry of Health, we emphasise that by respecting all professional instructions and recommendations, we will overcome this demanding phase of the epidemic as soon as possible. This will protect everyone from infection, especially the most vulnerable. At the same time, we will enable healthcare to operate to the fullest extent possible.