



# RÍKISLÖGREGLUSTJÓRINN

ALMANNAVARNADEILD



Applies to: Media, Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management, administration and Chief Epidemiologist.

## STÖÐUSKÝRSLA

Date: 30.01.2020

Time: 13:00

Location: Coordination center /Directorate of Health /Chief Epidemiologist

### Uncertainty phase due to the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

#### Event description

At the end of December 2019, reports of severe lung infections came from the city of Wuhan, China. Subsequently, it was confirmed that an unknown coronavirus variant was the cause, now called 2019-nCoV. It is now confirmed that the virus is transmitted between humans and can cause serious illness. The epidemic is spreading rapidly, but so far most of the confirmed cases are in China. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) carry out risk assessments on a daily basis and disseminate findings to health authorities on communicable diseases. No infection has been confirmed in Iceland.

In light of this information, the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police declared an uncertainty phase on 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 in consultation with the Chief Epidemiologist and the Directorate of Health.

Work is being carried out according to the response plan of the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management, CBRNE - Public Health Plan and other existing response plans, such as international aviation security. Meetings to coordinate action are held daily by the Chief Epidemiologist.

#### Samantekt

- National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police / Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management
- Directorate of Health / Chief Epidemiologist. [Information page](#)
- Landspítali – department of infectious diseases
- Primary Health Care of the Capital Area
- Heilsuvera
- Red Cross
- Health care institutions
- Laeknavaktin – doctors on call service
- Keflavik airport
- Members of the tourism industry Utanríkisráðuneytið
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Status

### Coronavirus – spread abroad

Today, on January 30<sup>th</sup> 2020, cases of the 2019-nCoV has been confirmed in 7,824 individuals and about 170 individuals are deceased (2.2%). In addition, there are information on serious illnesses in a large number of individuals.

The cases reported are from China (7,734), Taiwan (8), Thailand (14), Australia (7), Malaysia (7), Singapore (10), France (4), Japan (11), South Korea (4), United States (5), Vietnam (2), Canada (3), Nepal (1), Sri Lanka (1), Cambodia (1), India (1), the United Arab Emirates (4), Germany (1) and Finland (1) . The vast majority of cases originate in China.

The Chief Epidemiologist recommends that travelers avoid unnecessary trips to areas where the 2019-nCoV is underway, especially China. [More](#).  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Embassy of Iceland in Beijing informs Icelanders in China if information is required. The Embassy has posted on social media (see [Facebook](#)) and on their website where Icelanders are advised to register with the civil service at help@mfa.is. In this way, the embassy will increase the number of Icelanders that they can easily reach if needed.

## Iceland

No individual has yet been diagnosed in Iceland.

The Chief Epidemiologist assumes that the virus will reach Iceland and it is therefore important to take measures to curb its spread as much as possible. However, no action will ensure that the virus does not reach the country.

During a meeting with the Chief Epidemiologist and the Minister of Health yesterday, the possibility of closing Keflavik International Airport and other international airports in Iceland was discussed. The Minister agreed with the Chief Epidemiologist that such measures would not be considered, since the closing would have to stand for several and would have widespread and serious consequences for Icelandic society. The Minister also expressed her approval of the current action.

During a meeting of the Chief Epidemiologist and the Civil Protection Department this morning, responses were discussed regarding a possible or confirmed case being diagnosed in Iceland. Information sharing and updating of guidelines for health care professionals, the public and the tourism industry are in continuous process. Information is translated and published on the Directorate of Health's [website](#).

Coordination of all responses is extremely important.

An ongoing analysis of the isolation facilities for tourists is well underway.

The Chinese Embassy helps to translate information to the Chinese speaking public.

If individuals that believe they have caught the virus are encouraged to call 1700 (for foreign phone numbers the number is +354 544-4113) for more information and on how to access the health care system.

These individuals are specifically asked not to go to the hospital or any other health care facility without consulting the health care system by phone. Individuals with suspected or confirmed infection will be placed in isolation according to detailed instructions. Asymptomatic individuals that have been in contact with individuals with confirmed or probable infection will be quarantined. More information about the 2019-nCoV can be found on the Directorate of Health's [website](#).

The Chief Epidemiologist encourages travelers, especially those in China to:

- Practice good personal hygiene, especially thorough hand washing.
- Avoid close contact with people with common cold symptoms or cough.
- Avoid contact with live or dead animals and their waste.
- Use a cloth to cover the face when sneezing or coughing and wash your hands regularly.
- Inform health care professionals about your travels if they need to access the health care system.



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<b>Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management</b>
Coordinates responses in collaboration with the Directorate of Health / the Chief Epidemiologist
<b>The Directorate of Health/ The Chief Epidemiologist</b>
Coordinates actions and guidelines and content for the general public, healthcare professionals, the tourism industry and others. Translation of information to Chinese is in progress.
<b>Landspítali – The National University Hospital of Iceland</b>
Attends daily coordination meetings. Works according to conventional steps of the hospital.
<b>Primary Health Care of the Capital Area</b>
Regional and district epidemiologist of the capital area attends daily consultation meetings. Works on increasing information sharing, including preparedness if patients need to be cared for and monitoring of home-based quarantine
<b>Keflavik airport, international airports Akureyri, Egilsstaðir og Reykjavík.</b>
Information meeting was held on January 29th with airport staff regarding infection control, response and flow of information. Information/flyers have been distributed in English and Icelandic to tourists. (Chinese version in progress).
<b>The tourism industry</b>
The Icelandic Tourist Board is ready to disseminate information through its databases to the tourism industry.
<b>Healthcare facilities in regional Iceland</b>
Attended coordination meeting on 30 <sup>th</sup> of January.
<b>Læknavaktin – doctors on call service</b>
Telephone service 1700 has started. For foreign phone numbers +354 544-4113. Shares information and ensures 24/7 response. Consults with the Primary Health Care of the Capital Area to ensure 24/7 on call doctor. The ER in Fossvogur has received such requests.
<b>Red Cross</b>
Assists with assessment of isolation facilities for tourists in each region of Iceland.