

# Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM)

Public health and social measures are actions taken by individuals, institutions, communities, local and national governments, and international bodies, to suppress or stop the spread of COVID-19. In response to COVID-19, countries are implementing a package of measures, calibrated to the local context and epidemiology of the disease. These include individual, environmental, surveillance and response, physical distancing, movement and travel measures.

For more information, WHO has produced the following [overview of public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19](#).

## PHSM Severity Index

The PHSM Severity Index captures the severity and timing of selected PHSM implemented by a country. Six types of PHSM are scored as indicators based on an ordinal scale corresponding with the response policy's degree of intensity (see indicators below) and the scope of the measure. Scope considers whether the measure is implemented across the entire country or if applied on a sub-national level or group of people, and reduces the overall severity of the measure if it applies only to a select group or location as opposed to the whole country or general population. These factors are combined and rescaled according to the maximum indicator value and placed on a scale between 0 and 100. The average of these six indicators forms the composite PHSM Severity Index score for each country.

## Indicators

Indicator	Ordinal Scale
<b>Wearing of Masks</b>	0 - No mask policy 1 - Recommended wearing masks in any setting 2 - Require wearing masks on a risk-based approach (in settings where physical distancing is not possible, e.g. public transport, retail, refugee camps) 3 - Require wearing masks universally (in any setting in the community and in any transmission scenario)
<b>Closing of schools</b>	0 - No measures 1 - Recommend/Require adapting in-person teaching (physical distancing, hand hygiene, staggered arrival, separate entrances, etc.) 2 - Recommend/Require suspension of in-person teaching (transition to online or distance learning) 3 - Require suspension of in-person teaching on some levels or categories (e.g. just secondary schools) 4 - Require suspension of in-person teaching on all levels
<b>Closing of offices, businesses, institutions and operations</b>	0 - No measures 1 - Recommend closing (or work from home) and/or recommend/require adapting (e.g., implementing sanitary measures) 2 - Require closing (or work from home) for some sectors or categories of workers 3 - Require closing (or work from home) for all-but-essential services (e.g. grocery stores, pharmacies, and doctors)
<b>Restrictions on gatherings</b>	0 - No restrictions 1 - Restrictions on very large gatherings (the limit is above 1000 people) 2 - Restrictions on gatherings between 101-1000 people 3 - Restrictions on gatherings between 11-100 people or restrictions on certain types of gatherings (e.g. religious, sporting, cultural, or national events) 4 - Restrictions on gatherings of 10 people or less or ban on all types of gatherings
<b>Restrictions on domestic movement</b>	0 - No measures 1 - Recommend not leaving house and/or recommend limiting domestic movement 2 - Restriction on domestic movement (e.g. ban on travelling between or into certain regions or outside a certain radius from place of residence) 3 - Requirement not to leave house with exceptions for the following: essential activities (grocery shopping and 'essential' trips), daily exercise, limited social interactions (visiting family or friends), or travel to other places of residence 4 - Requirement not to leave house with exception only for essential activities (grocery shopping, pharmacy or 'essential' trips) 5 - Requirement not to leave house with exceptions for essential activities (grocery shopping or 'essential' trips) allowed only under certain conditions (e.g. allowed to leave house only once a week, during designated timeslot or only one household member can leave at a time)

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### Limitations to international travel

#### Entry ban and/or visa restriction

E0 - entry ban and visa restriction for **no** countries

E1 - entry bans and/or visa restrictions for **select** countries (entry ban/visa restriction for at least one country but open to more than 100 countries)

E2 - entry bans and/or visa restrictions for **some** countries (open to 10 - 100 countries)

E3 - entry bans and/or visa restrictions for **majority** of countries (open to less than 10 countries)

E4 - entry bans and/or visa restrictions for **all** countries

#### Quarantine and/or COVID-19 test

Q0 – Quarantine and negative COVID-19 test for **no** countries

Q1 – Quarantine and/or negative COVID-19 test for **one or more** countries

Q2 – Quarantine and/or negative COVID-19 test for **all** countries








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## Visualization

Data on PHSM Severity is displayed on timelines as a Country Analysis or a Regional Overview Analysis. Indicators and PHSM Severity Index are assigned a color. The shading of that color is based on the severity score. The darkest shade represents the most severe measure/s (value of 100) and a lack of color represents no measure (value of 0).



In the Country Analysis, a country's individual indicators and composite PHSM Severity Index are displayed on a timeline. Each indicator and the composite PHSM Severity Index are assigned designated colors:

-  Wearing masks
-  Closing of schools
-  Closing of offices, businesses, institutions and operations
-  Restrictions on gatherings
-  Restrictions on domestic movement
-  Limitations to international travel
-  Composite PHSM Severity Index

In the Regional Overview Analysis, the PHSM Severity Indexes of multiple countries are compared on a timeline. The specific color of each country's PHSM Severity Index timeline is randomly assigned and does not correspond with indicator or composite PHSM Severity Index colors. Similar to the Single-Country Analysis, the darkest shade represents the most severe measure/s (value of 100) and a lack of color represents no measure (value of 0).



The PHSM Severity Index will continue to evolve over the course of the current emergency, as the indicators and methodology will be further refined, improved and adapted to new developments in the countries' responses to COVID-19.

## Sources

PHSM for each country are systematically captured through four main streams (in order of preference given):

1) government websites, 2) WHO Country Office and Sub- regional hub communication, 3) media sources and 4) thematic webpages and PHSM publicly available databases. Around 65% of data come from government websites, whereas media and WHO communication channels provide the remaining 35%.

Indicator Rationale: [Overview of Public Health and Social Measures in the Context of COVID-19](#).

For full methodology of the PHSM Severity Index, please contact [euroihr@who.int](mailto:euroihr@who.int)

The World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe acknowledges the work of the team at the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford, whose COVID-19 Government Response Tracker ([OxCGRT](#)) has served as the basis and inspiration for the development of the WHO PHSM Severity Index.