

[Home](#) > [News](#)

News

New guidance issued for the festive period

Published: 19 December 2020 19:02

Part of: [Health and social care](#), [Public safety and emergencies](#), [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Scotland](#)

Restrictions tightened due to spread of new variant of COVID-19.

Scotland will significantly tighten protections against Coronavirus (COVID-19) to prevent the spread of the new, highly contagious strain of the virus.

Following confirmation that the new variant of COVID-19 spreads substantially more quickly, the First Minister announced that Scotland needs to act now.

To keep people safe, the First Minister announced:

- the planned easing of restrictions around Christmas will be limited to Christmas Day itself, and not the previous 5 day window that was planned
- legal household limits will still apply - a maximum of 8 people from 3 households - however advice is to minimise the numbers. Where possible, people should celebrate the festive period at home in their own household and meet with others outdoors
- other than for specific exemptions, travel between Scotland and the rest of the UK will not be legal
- travel within Scotland will be allowed on Christmas Day
- from Boxing Day, all of Scotland will have Level 4 restrictions applied, including the closure of non-essential retail and hospitality. The only exceptions will be Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, and the other island communities where restrictions have been reduced in recent weeks, who will be placed in Level 3
- from Boxing Day, in line with existing law, travel across local authority boundaries between areas in Level 3 or 4 will not be legal other than for specific exempt purposes

The First Minister also set out new plans for the return of schools in the New Year. Teachers will return to work as planned and children of key workers and the most vulnerable children, will