

15 March 2020

# **State government decrees further measures to inhibit coronavirus pandemic**

**Laschet: As much as the restrictions constitute a sacrifice, it is just as important that we calmly and resolutely slow down our lives.**

Suspension of nearly all recreational, athletic, entertainment and extracurricular educational activities / closure of "leisure facilities" and requirements for shopping centres

The state government declares:

During a cabinet meeting on Sunday, 15 March 2020, the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia has enacted further measures to inhibit the coronavirus pandemic.

By decree of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, nearly all recreational, athletic, entertainment and educational services in the state will be suspended on Sunday. As of Monday, all "leisure facilities" such as bars, clubs, discos, casinos, theatres, cinemas and museums will be closed as well. This regulation also applies to prostitution establishments.

As of Tuesday, the operation of fitness studios, swimming pools and saunas will be prohibited. Meetings at sporting clubs and other athletic and recreation facilities, as well as the usage of services in technical colleges, music schools and other public and private educational facilities for extracurricular purposes, will also no longer be permitted as of Tuesday.

Access to furniture stores and shopping centres, shopping malls or factory outlets shall only be permitted to attend to urgent matters, and is subject to strict regulations. This is primarily to prevent large groups of students from congregating in these areas following school closures on Monday.

The closures and regulations shall apply regardless of the respective sponsorship or ownership of the facility.

Banks, retail stores (especially for groceries and foodstuffs), pharmacies and chemists will remain open to ensure the provision of foods, cash, clothing, medication and daily needs. Libraries, restaurants, inns and hotels shall be subject to strict regulations that prevent the spread of the coronavirus while in operation.

"At this serious juncture, we must ensure the complete provision of necessities. But all recreational activities and non-mandatory social contacts must be avoided immediately. As much as this constitutes a sacrifice and a restriction for many people, it is just as important that we calmly, yet resolutely, slow down our lives for the time being," explains Minister-President Armin Laschet.

The regulations are initially set to last until 19 April 2020, analogous to the school and child day-care closures decreed on Friday. The next steps will then be decided on the basis of a status assessment by the Robert Koch Institute.