

Alcohol related regulations during the corona pandemic in the Netherlands

The first wave:

15 March 2020: First lockdown. Closure of restaurants, bars and pubs. On-premise alcohol sales were forbidden, except in restaurants and bars in hotels. Take away and delivery of alcohol by restaurants, bars and pubs was allowed.

During the first lockdown alcohol availability was regulated in local emergency ordinances.

1 June 2020: Restaurants, bars and pubs reopened (with several restrictions). Except: nightclubs, discotheques and sport canteens.

The second wave:

20 September 2020: The second Covid-19 wave began. Bars and pubs in the Western Part of the Netherlands had to close earlier, one week later (29 September) all bars and pubs in the whole country. Take-aways are prohibited to sell alcoholic drinks from 10 PM.

14 October 2020: The second lockdown started, with again closure of restaurants, bars and pubs. On-premise alcohol sales were forbidden, except in restaurants and bars in hotels. Take away and delivery of alcohol by restaurants, bars and pubs during day time (before 8 PM) was allowed.

Also no off-premise alcohol sales after 8 PM. Besides that no possession and consumption of alcoholic drinks in public after 8 PM.

23 October 2020: On-premise alcohol sales in hotels after 8 PM were forbidden.

1 December 2020: A national law for all Covid-19 restrictions came into force.

14 December 2020: All on-premise sales in hotels are forbidden (even room service). Closure of non-essential shops (liquor shops were declared essential!).

28 April 2021: Outdoor seating areas at restaurants and cafes may be open from 12 AM to 6 PM, under certain conditions. Outdoor seatings of sport canteens must remain closed. Re-opening of non-essential shops.

19 May 2021: Outdoor seating areas of all catering venues (also sport canteens) may be open from 6 AM to 8 PM.

5 June 2021: Catering venues may open from 6 AM to 10 PM and admit a maximum of 50 guests per room, but with reservations, a health check, fixed seats and a maximum of 4 people at one table, 1.5 meters away. Nightclubs and discotheques remain closed.

Restaurants and eateries can serve dinner in a maximum of two sittings per table per evening. Self-service is not allowed. Entertainment such as live performances or television screens showing sporting events are also not permitted.

An exception applies for large venues with 1,000 permanent seats or more. These may admit up to 250 visitors, 1.5 metres apart.

Venues serving food and drink, cultural venues and organisers of professional sporting competitions can choose to make use of the “corona entry pass system”. If they opt to use the system, they can host as many people as they can accommodate as long as people are 1.5 metres from one another while seated.

The ban on on- and off alcohol sales moved up to 10 PM. That means no alcohol sales, no serving of alcohol and no home deliveries of alcohol after 10 PM. In addition, no one is allowed to consume alcohol or have it ready for consumption in the public area after 10 PM.

26 June 2021: Catering venues are allowed to be open regularly, but under conditions. The conditions are that guests must make a reservation, are subject of a health check and must be offered fixed seats, whereby the 1.5 meters must be observed. If there are cough screens between the tables in the outdoor seating areas, the distance between guests can be smaller than 1.5 meters.

Nightclubs and discos are also allowed to open again, but the guests must be in possession of a “corona entry pass”.

The ban on on- and off alcohol sales after 10 PM is lifted, just as the ban on consuming alcohol in the public area after 10 PM.

The third wave:

10 July 2021: Only two weeks after the reopening of all catering venues Dutch government decided to tighten the rules again. Restaurants and cafes must be closed from midnight until 6 AM. Entertainment is prohibited.

Discos and nightclubs must be completely locked again.

The “coronavirus entry pass” scheme, which granted an exemption from the 1.5 metre distancing rule, is suspended for the catering sector.

25 September 2021: The 1.5 metre distancing rule is lifted. Entertainment is allowed. Guests of all catering venues must be in possession of a “corona entry pass”. There is one exception: guests of outdoor seating areas do not need a “corona entry pass”.

All catering venues (also discos and nightclubs) must be closed from midnight until 6 AM.

The fourth wave

6 November 2021: Dutch government decided that guests of outdoor seating areas need a “corona entry pass”. The existing exception will be dropped.

13 November 2021: A partial lockdown starts that will last at least three weeks. For catering venues this means a closing time of 8 PM. In catering venues everyone must show his or her “corona-entry pass” and will be given a fixed seat. Take away and delivery is allowed. There are exceptions for roadside restaurants.

Essential shops, such as supermarkets and liquor shops, need to be closed at 8 PM.

28 November 2021: Only 15 days after the proclamation of the partial lockdown the rules are tightened up again. Catering venues must close between 5 PM and 5 AM. A new feature is that the 1.5 meter distance rule must be taken into account within the catering venue. Mouth caps are obligatory. Take away and delivery remains allowed. The exceptions for roadside restaurants also remain.

Essential shops, such as supermarkets and liquor shops, are allowed to be open until 8 PM. In shops 1 visitor per 5 m² is allowed. Mouth caps are obligatory.

19 December 2021: Due to the threat from the Omicron variant of the Corona-virus, the Dutch government has decided that the Netherlands will go into a nearly complete lockdown from Sunday 19 December until at least Friday 14 January 2022.

Almost all catering venues need to be closed, except for delivery and takeaway. Hotels can stay open, but guests have to eat in their rooms. The exceptions for roadside restaurants remain. Events are not permitted.

Essential shops, such as supermarkets and liquor shops, can open until 8 PM. Mouth caps must be worn. The maximum number of visitors is one per 5 square metres.

15 January 2022: Non-essential shops are allowed to be open until 5 PM. The maximum number of visitors is one per 5 square meter. Mouth caps must be worn. Further relaxation is also possible for other sectors, such as higher education and sports.

Cafés, restaurants, cinemas and theatres will remain closed for the next ten days. The cabinet did not consider further relaxation because the number of corona infections are

increasing rapidly in the fourth wave of the pandemic. There will be a new weighing moment on January 25.

26 January 2022: All cafes, restaurants, cinemas, museums and theatres can open their doors again from 5 AM to 10 PM. Nightclubs are not allowed to open yet.

Visitors to catering venues and the cultural sector are only welcome with a corona-entry-pass. Visitors must also be given a permanent seat and mouth caps must be worn. Everyone must stay 1.5 metres apart. Take-away and delivery are permitted.

Shops (supermarkets, liquor shops) are allowed to open again until 10 PM.

Indoor and outdoor events are allowed again. Indoor events will be limited to 1,250 visitors, while outdoors capacity will be limited to one third. In addition, everyone will have to show a corona-entry-pass.

18 February 2022: The closing times of catering venues and the cultural sector will be extended to 1:00 AM. The mandatory mouth cap, the 1,5 meter distance rule and a 'fixed seat for everyone' will be cancelled.

25 February 2022: The normal municipal closing times from before the corona pandemic will apply again for catering venues. The use of the corona entry pass will expire. Visitors of indoor events with more than 500 people, must be tested negative in advance.

Sandra van Ginneken, 16 February 2022

