

Measures to contain the spreading pandemic of COVID-19

May 4, 2020

Context

Starting March 17, 2020 stay at home instructions have become the basic rule for everyone in France. In Paris, several measures targeting Parisians have since been set up to support healthcare workers, ensure continuity of municipal services, and take vulnerable people into account in compliance with governmental measures. These measures are as follows.

1. Containing the spreading pandemic

Distribution of masks

As early as March 16, the City of Paris provided Parisian doctors, nurses and health workers with masks from its strategic stockpiles. An amount of 2.5 million of masks has been given to Parisian public hospitals (AP-HP) and 2 million extra masks to entities taking care of vulnerable people. 150,000 surgical masks have also been distributed to private medicalized homes for elderly people, in addition to the ones given by the State. On April 7, Mayor Hidalgo announced the coming distribution of 2 million fabric masks to Parisians (France info interview)

Quarantine

On Friday 17 of April, the City of Paris jointly with Parisian Public Hospitals (AP-HP) and ACCOR Company started the "COVISAN" project to quarantine those potentially infected and contagious who don't need hospitalization and thus protect their families. Specially adapted rooms in hotels are made available to those who volunteer to participate. At the beginning, priority will be given to working class neighborhoods where according to recent surveys more people than average are impacted by the virus. A trial run has just started involving 4 hospitals, the two Parisian hospitals of Pitié-Salpêtrière and Bichat, Avicenne hospital in Bobigny and Louis-Mourier hospital in Colombe. To guarantee the success of the project a partnership has been developed to associate all parties involved --institutions, professionals and volunteers--.

2. For health workers

While the flagship event in support of frontline caregivers is, since March 27 the illumination of the Eiffel Tower, other measures have also been directly taken to facilitate their work.

Every evening from 8 to 11p.m., **the Eiffel Tower pays tribute to all the people mobilized** against the Covid-19 by displaying messages of gratitude and warnings to stay home. First “Merci” (thank you) is displayed on the Eiffel tower in tribute to caregivers, police and enforcement officers, fire fighters, Paris City agents, first-aid workers, ambulance drivers, soldiers, cashiers, garbage collectors, shopkeepers, delivery personnel, volunteers, caretakers, NGOs, and Parisians, all of them mobilized against the Covid-19, then from 8:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., there is two alternating messages, in French and English respectively, to remind people that staying home and going out only if absolutely necessary helps save live « Restez chez vous » and « Stay at Home ».

Since March 17, 28 childcare centers remained open with a capacity of up to 2,300 pupils and a minimum service was proposed in schools for the care of health workers ‘children. 240 accommodations have been made available to health care workers; this comes in addition to the free parking in the spaces reserved for deliveries, or taxi fares covered. Velib, the city wide bike sharing system, is now free of charge for hospital staff.

3. Uninterrupted city public services

In addition to the implementation of home-working for city’s staff, municipal services are now focusing their attention on Parisians’ essential needs, namely garbage collection, municipal 2 police, care for the elderly, and more specifically the delivery of meals, Maternal and Child Protection (MCP), support for patients in municipal health centers, emergency accommodation, social assistance for children, registrar and funeral services, as well as children care centers, schools and institutes mobilized for the care of the children of health workers, fire fighters, Paris funerary agents and food store owners.

The City has also launched an appeal for mobilization among its agents, to provide immediate reinforcements of personnel on these priority missions. Doctors, nurses, nursery nurses, childcare workers, nursing auxiliaries and social workers from the City have volunteered on a massive scale. 400 city agents have been dispatched to medicalized homes for elderly people (EHPAD) managed by the Center for social welfare of the city of Paris. A quarter of the Maternal and Child Protection (MCP) centers are still operating to ensure the essential services such as the compulsory vaccinations for newborns. Midwives are monitoring pregnant women, family planning and education centers are still providing contraception, abortion and preventing domestic violence as well.

The City of Paris’ call center 3975 is open seven days a week, to answer people’s questions, meet their demands or record alerts concerning vulnerable or isolated people, pass on information or report situations that the municipal public service can best deal with. Many volunteers have joined the call center regular staff as it receives an average of 3,500 calls per day.

Some of the major City actions:

Waste management and security

Household waste is collected daily, and following a strict protocol, collection trucks are being washed and disinfected every day. In the streets, priority is given to the collection of unauthorized garbage and to street cleaning with street washers and vacuum cleaners on sidewalks. Daily, 1,000 municipal workers and around 250 garbage collection trucks go through the streets to collect waste and almost 100 machines sweep roads and sidewalks. Since the Regional Health Agency validated washing protocols, those operations have been deployed in all Parisian districts. However with the closure of restaurants, the volume of waste daily produced in Paris has fallen by a third.

The 140 public toilets managed by the JC Decaux Company and equipped with drinking water fountains, have remained open in public areas. All ongoing municipal civil works other than the ones commissioned for safety or security reasons are suspended. The launching of new works is not authorized for the time being.

About non-drinking water

Regular tests carried out jointly with Eau de Paris on the city's non-drinking water network, have shown close to undetectable traces of the Covid virus on some samples. Without waiting for the ongoing analyses of the possible risks presented by these traces, the municipality has decided to suspend until further notice all uses of its non-drinking water network in the public space. This network, used in particular for watering some parks and gardens or cleaning streets, is separated from the drinking water network. The latter, which is constantly monitored, has shown no trace of virus and the City of Paris reminds that drinking water can be safely consumed.

Trips

Since March 17 parking in Paris is free for residents and since the beginning of the lockdown the city wide bike sharing system, is now free of charge or reimbursed when used for under an hour trip.

Food markets

At the beginning of the lockdown, food markets remained open, strict and firm guidelines such as stall spacing, minimum distances and barrier gestures recommended by public health authorities were enforced. These rules were reminded at the entrance of markets. Municipal services after consulting with the Prefect of Police and every Parisian Market managers decided to increase the controls of the busiest markets in particular in the north –east of Paris at their entrance and reinforce the distancing measures for all customers. On March 24, as the pandemic outbreak expanded, the city of Paris decided to close all food markets.

It is now possible to shop online for food markets on line and get bike delivered or pick up orders at pedestrian delivery points in the 9 market halls of the city. This strengthens the home delivery system already proposed by 823 volunteer small businesses and artisans listed on Paris [interactive map](#).

Culture

Parisians are offered tailored services to maintain their access to culture:

- Access to municipal libraries' digital offer has been enlarged during lockdown upon free registration, it allows for the downloading of: 6 digital books per month, and provides free access to school books, online training (office, multimedia, highway code, foreign languages...), and a catalog of hundreds of movies on demand.
- 14 city museums, under the supervision of « Paris Museums » and cultural entities, have giving free online access to more than 320.000 items, virtual visits of recent exhibitions or special contents for dedicated audiences.

Paris is also supporting the “Mouvement des Fenêtres” (windows movement) and documents their creations through which the Parisians express themselves during and after they clap from their window every night at 20h in support of health workers. Guaranteeing a minimum pay level for artists and technicians whose performances are cancelled is also under consideration. The City of Paris will pay broadcasting and creation aids it has committed to, even if the initially scheduled number of performances is not reached.

Funerary services

Parisian funerary service, which represents 150 city workers and 20 cemeteries, are mobilized to maintain proper burials of the deceased in presence of their loved ones. The activity has greatly increased and required adjustment due to restrictions on the number of people allowed to attend ceremonies and the implementation of social distancing rules.

4. About lockdown measures

In March 16, the City of Paris decided to close its parks and gardens to avoid spreading of the virus though gatherings of people. Since March 20, all outdoor walks and gatherings on the right and left banks of the river Seine, on the lawn of the Esplanade des Invalides and the Champ-de-Mars as well are prohibited.

On March 30, in accordance with the Prefecture of Police, access to certain areas of Vincennes and Boulogne woods have been prohibited to all including local residents. In these areas, law enforcement officers are making sure that these lockdown measures are respected by all.

Since April 8, individual sports activities have been prohibited in Paris between 10am and 7pm, and authorized from 7pm to 10am, when streets are the emptiest.

5. Solidarity with the most vulnerable

With regard to food aid, and in addition to the distribution points that associations have managed to keep running (see map on paris.fr) the City of Paris is distributing on a daily basis around 15,000 individual meal packs in 10 soup kitchens, 22 Churches or with the help of social services (Samu social) and civil defense patrols. Also jointly with the State and the association Aurore, five distribution points give away every day meal packs: Barbès (18th district), Carreau du Temple (3rd district), Grands Voisins (14th district), Quai D'Austerlitz (13th district) Halte humanitaire Porte de la Chapelle (18th district).

On April 9, the City also provided families paying the lowest canteen rates (0,13€/meal, 0,85€/meal and 1,62€/meal) with an exceptional aid of 50 to 150€ per month (+ an extra 50€ for the second and third child only). It will benefit 28.579 Parisian families, i.e. 52.000 children.

In addition, since April 25 and upon free registration "food baskets" with 10 kilos of fruit and vegetables are sold for 20€ to vulnerable people.

As for migrants, and most vulnerable or homeless people, several measures have been taken in terms of accommodation, hygiene or nutrition:

- Jointly with the State and NGO's, 14 gymnasiums have been opened to homeless people.
- Hotel rooms were made available to NGOs sheltering families with children, such as the CIS Paris Kellerman hotel in the 13th district.
- All 17 municipal bath and shower establishments remain open and an interactive map on paris.fr gives the location of drinking water fountains some of which have been repaired with the cooperation of Eau de Paris.

Through the Fabrique de la Solidarité, a call for volunteers has been circulated for volunteers wishing to help homeless people. In less than a week, more than 1.000 Parisians participated in social patrols, in preparation and distribution of meal packs. Local aid networks, via jemengage.paris.fr platform, have been created enabling Parisians in need of help to connect with those willing to give a hand in their building or neighborhood, while always abiding with lockdown and recommended health measures.

On April 9, to address **the inequalities in access to information**, the city of Paris and the Seine Saint-Denis region, in partnership with the association *Vers Paris sans sida*, launched an information campaign on the health crisis for allophones, undocumented

workers and asylum seekers, with the support of a video available in almost 25 different languages.

During the lockdown period, **to rescue the victims of domestic violence**, jointly with State services, the decision has been taken to keep police stations open for the filing of complaints, and the emergency number 17 has been made available to report abuses 24/7. Leaving home to file a complaint at the police station is authorized under lockdown rules. The emergency call services are maintained, as well as the Parisian legal information centers. The city is providing around fifteen accommodation facilities for women and children victims of violence who were forced to leave their home.

Tenants experiencing a fall of income or a tense financial situation and having trouble paying their rents, should contact their landlord without delay, to find appropriate solutions. The staggering of unpaid rents may be considered, for a period of time adapted to each situation, and specialized counseling in the clearing of debts is being offered. In an effort to support the purchasing power of tenants, Paris Habitat, the City's largest social landlord, has decided to adjust the collection of condo fees: 56.000 tenants will benefit from reimbursements for a total amount of 10 million euros.

For the elderly and disabled people: starting April 6, the city of Paris has decided to test systematically all public and private Parisian medicalized elderly homes (EPADH). The *Paris en Compagnie* program has been redefined for elderly people staying at home. The usual volunteer program supporting isolated people over 65 years old has been replaced with companion calls to maintain the social link.

Since March 11 volunteers have placed more than 2.900 calls and since April 7, famous people such as Elsa Zylberstein, Yamina Benguigui, Catherine Frot, Christophe Lambert, Franck Dubosc, Gad Elmaleh, François-Xavier Demaison, François Berléand, Dave, Liane Foly... are placing calls to catch up on people's news or to read to them.

For students: the city of Paris and the CROUS together have undertaken to support students in lockdown through student centers or *maisons de la vie étudiante* : scholarships are maintained and students in precarious situations can apply for emergency aids. A free of charge phone line offering psychological counseling has been set up for all Parisian students.

6. Support economic operators

Jointly with the State and the Parisian region, the City of Paris has developed schemes to back up and support economic actors :

- Freezing of rents, road and terrace taxes and miscellaneous municipal taxes for closed business and NGOs
- Weekly exchanges with professional unions, trade associations and economical partners

- Connecting of independent businesses and logistic entities to deliver goods
- Support to the agricultural sector and next door distribution circuits by allowing AMAPs to keep delivering and maintaining some markets open.

Links and contacts

Visit paris.fr website, for [news of measures to contain the spreading pandemic](#)

Contact Paris International Relations Department [by email](#)