

Recommendations for the sex industry

As at 12/05/2021

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These recommendations are for people working in the sex industry and their clients. The general regulations that apply to the population on how to protect themselves and others from a SARS-CoV-2 infection must be observed (<https://www.sozialministerium.at/Informationen-zum-Coronavirus.html>).

Information and communication

- If you have any questions regarding the coronavirus, the AGES Hotline can be contacted **24 hours a day** on **0800 555 621**. **Information is also available in English at www.sozialministerium.at/en.html**.
- If a person is suspected of being ill (e.g. high temperature, coughing, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties), they should stay at home and dial the **healthcare number 1450** for advice on what to do next (diagnostic questioning). The healthcare number can be called 24 hours a day.
- The operator or owner of the brothel establishment (e.g. club, studio, brothel, etc.), in which the services are provided, must draw up and implement a COVID-19 prevention concept for the various areas of the establishment. In addition to this, a COVID-19 representative must be appointed.
- The operator must ensure that clients only enter the establishment between 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- If food and drinks are served within the brothel, the rules for gastronomy apply.
- In places where sex work is performed, it is recommended that information leaflets for sex workers and clients translated into many languages are visibly displayed and made available for distribution.
- Operators of websites promoting sexual services and/or carrying advertisements for sexual services should put a banner on the website providing information for sex workers and clients.
- If a sex worker falls ill or is suspected of being ill and is subsequently quarantined by the authorities, they are entitled to claim compensation for lost earnings under the Epidemics Act.

Hygiene

- Existing professional hygiene standards and safer sex practices must continue to be maintained.
- The locations where the sex work is taking place must be provided with freely available hand sanitiser. Special attention should be paid to regular cleaning and/or disinfecting of door handles and handrails, and other surfaces that are frequently touched, using disposable cloths.
- It is recommended that the places where contact between the sex worker and their client takes place are frequently ventilated.
- Towels used by clients and sex workers should be replaced after each contact (and washed at 60°) and must not be shared.

Materials used

- An FFP2 mask, or a mask of an equivalent standard, should be worn by both the sex worker and the client and changed by the sex worker before contact is made with a new client.
- Gloves may be used, but the main method of hand hygiene is to wash and/or disinfect the hands.
- Mattress covers should be changed after each session with a client and washed at 60°. An exception are polyurethane sheets, which should be cleaned with a disinfectant after each use.
- Sex toys should not be used by the sex worker and the client together and should be cleaned and disinfected after use as usual.

Body contact

- It is generally permissible to keep a distance of less than the required two metres, provided that it is typical for the service concerned.
- Because the virus is transmitted through droplets of saliva, it is recommended that all activities where saliva is exchanged, kissing, oral sex and face-to-face sex positions should be avoided. If oral sex does take place, a condom or dental dam should be used and the face and all parts of the body that came into contact should be washed afterwards.

- Sexual services should only take place between two people.

Observing clients' and sex workers' state of health and testing

- Clients are only to be admitted if they show proof of a low epidemiological risk (negative test result, proof of vaccination or recovery). The clients must have this proof ready to show for the duration of their stay.
- Sex workers must present a negative antigen or PCR test every seven days unless they have other proof of a low epidemiological risk (proof of vaccination or recovery). [FAQ: Types of Testing & Evidence](#)
- You can find more information on opportunities for free testing in Austria at www.oesterreich.gv.at. However, a COVID-19 test can only detect a possible infection at the time of testing. Even if the test result is negative, the recommended measures must still be adhered to. [FAQ: Österreich testet](#)
- Sex workers are encouraged to check their client's state of health before starting to provide sexual services (absence of COVID-19 symptoms such as cough, high temperature, shortness of breath) and, if such symptoms are observed, always to refrain from providing sexual services to that client and to keep their distance.
- In the event of COVID-19-specific symptoms or suspicion thereof among sex workers, no type of sexual service (including sexual massages) may be performed. In this case, the person concerned should dial 1450.
- An option for clients to voluntarily provide confidential contact details (e.g. email address, telephone number) should be available on site and communicated to clients in the event of a COVID-19 infection.

Other important and relevant information about sex work in Austria, the contact details for advice centres and links to information brochures in different languages can be found here:

<https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/frauen-und-gleichstellung/prostitution.html>



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