

The Confederation's postal requirements are being adapted to the crisis

30-03-2020

Swiss Post is doing its utmost to ensure that its services are available to all customers throughout Switzerland. With the Confederation's authorization, Swiss Post is adapting its processes to the current situation in order to protect its employees from coronavirus and ensure that huge parcel volumes can be processed despite staff shortages. The aim is to maintain Swiss Post's essential services throughout the duration of the crisis.

In emergency situations, when everyday life is disrupted, it is especially important to ensure a nationwide universal postal service. Swiss Post fulfils the Federal Council's mandate in this respect through its role as both the backbone of the Swiss logistics industry and universal service provider. Our employees ensure that this remains possible despite the crisis by demonstrating impressive levels of commitment on a daily basis. At the same time, Swiss Post is facing major challenges: firstly, parcel volumes in particular are increasing significantly, with a rise of almost 40 percent, and are reaching peak levels similar to those usually seen in the run-up to Christmas. At the same time, fewer employees are available, as around 2,100 staff members are unable to come into work. This could be because they belong to a high-risk group, are caring for children, are in quarantine or are ill themselves. Many processes are also undergoing a slowdown due to essential compliance with hygiene requirements and social distancing – for

instance, in sorting. International letter and parcel deliveries are also experiencing restrictions due to the halt in the international flow of goods.

Swiss Post must take action to ensure that it can maintain the universal postal service throughout the duration of the crisis whilst protecting its employees. Based on the Federal Council's COVID ordinance, Swiss Post has obtained authorization from the Swiss Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) to temporarily suspend the legal provisions relating to letter and parcel transport and delivery times as well as the provisions regarding the availability and accessibility of its branches. Based on a delegation from the Federal Council, DETEC is authorized to approve relevant requests from Swiss Post. The relaxing of these universal service provisions will remain in force until the extraordinary situation is lifted by the Federal Council. This

gives Swiss Post the opportunity to respond to ongoing developments without infringing statutory requirements. If the situation worsens further, Swiss Post may be obliged to make additional modifications to its range of services. "Despite the difficult situation, we are doing everything we can to guarantee our postal services throughout Switzerland," says CEO Roberto Cirillo. "No region will be forgotten. However, our employees' protection is also top priority. I am glad that the Confederation's postal regulations are being reconciled with our ability to protect staff from the virus."

Changes to letter and parcel deliveries

Despite the crisis, Swiss Post is currently maintaining its range of services for letters and parcels. However, more time is needed to process the rapidly growing parcel volumes and to guarantee services despite increasing numbers of absent employees. This means that transport times may be lengthened and delivery times modified. Due to the current situation, Swiss Post has asked DETEC to lift the obligation to comply with delivery times during the extraordinary situation, and this authorization has been

granted. In return, DETEC requires Swiss Post to do everything in its power to maintain delivery times. As a result, Swiss Post is sorting parcels on Saturdays as an exceptional measure. For bulky parcels, we were obliged to reduce the maximum dimensions to ensure that our employees can comply with social distancing rules.

Maintaining the best possible access to the postal network

Swiss Post must also combat the impact of coronavirus on its network. Due to increasing staff shortages, Swiss Post may be required to shorten the opening hours at certain self-operated branches or even to close individual branches on an interim basis. For this reason, DETEC has temporarily lifted the cantonal accessibility requirements but requires Swiss Post to open branches again wherever possible. To improve social distancing in branches, sales will be restricted to postal products and services for the time being. When the emergency situation was announced, certain branches in partner businesses were temporarily closed in line with the administrative ruling.

Source: [Swiss Post](#)