

Recommendations for the sex industry

25.06.2020

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

As at 25.06.2020

Information and communication

- If you have any questions to do with the coronavirus, the AGES Hotline can be contacted **24 hours a day** on telephone number **0800 555 621**.
- 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. Tests are free of charge.
- Operators and owners of brothel businesses (e.g. clubs, studios, walk-in brothels etc.) where the services are provided must implement a Covid-19 prevention policy in the public areas of the business. They must also support compliance with the recommendations.
- (Multilingual) information for sex workers and clients must be clearly displayed in locations where sex work is taking place and must also be available as handouts.
- A way in which clients can provide contact details (e.g. an email address or telephone number) confidentially should be provided and clients told about it.
- 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.
- Clients and sex workers should shower before and after each session. Alternatively, the hands and face should be washed using liquid soap.
- Towels used by clients and sex workers should be replaced after each contact (and washed at 60°) and must not be shared.

Materials used

- A disposable or fabric mouth and nose mask (washable at 60°) should be worn by both the sex worker and the client and changed by the sex worker after each session with a 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°. The only exception to this is polyurethane sheets which must be cleaned with 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

- Body contact should be reduced to a minimum.
- 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 contact should only be between two people, with group sex being inadvisable.

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

- A Covid-19 test can only identify a possible infection at the time of testing. Negative results can give a false sense of security and should not result in the recommended measures being ignored. An approach whereby the risks are reduced and people are kept informed and made more aware is therefore preferable to the regular testing of asymptomatic sex workers.
- 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.
- If Covid-19-specific symptoms are present or suspected, under no circumstances should any kind of sexual service be provided (including sexual massages). **The person concerned should go to a test centre or call 1450.**
- It is strongly recommended that the contact details of all possible contacts are retained in case an infection occurs, to enable the authorities to carry out their investigations faster. This will make an important contribution to reducing the risk of spreading the disease.

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:

www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/frauen-und-gleichstellung/prostitution.html



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