



VELFERÐARRÁÐUNEYTIÐ

*Ministry of Welfare*

**Act on Health Security and Communicable Diseases, No. 19/1997,  
as amended by Act No. 90/2000, No. 93/2002, No. 164/2002, No. 55/2004,  
No. 43/2007, No. 167/2007, No. 88/2008, No. 112/2008, No. 162/2010,  
No. 126/2011 and No. 117/2016.**

**SECTION I**

**Definitions.**

**Article 1**

General measures against infection are those measures which by the terms of this Act are to be applied invariably against communicable diseases.

Official measures against infection are those measures that shall be applied against dangerous communicable diseases:

1. when a risk exists of epidemics reaching Iceland, or being spread from Iceland,
2. when a risk exists of an epidemic spreading within the country,
3. when an infected individual creates a risk of the spread of infection by his/her conduct.

**Article 2**

[This Act applies to diseases and agents that can cause epidemics and pose a threat to public welfare, and also other serious infectious diseases. "Diseases" means disease or infection caused by infectious material, microbes or parasites and also serious health consequences caused by toxic chemicals and radio nuclear materials. This Act also applies to unusual and unexpected events which may cause severe health consequences of international concern.]<sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Act No. 43/2007, Article 1.

**Article 3**

[The Minister decides by regulations,<sup>1)</sup> on the advice of the National Committee on Communicable Diseases, which communicable diseases or diseases caused by toxic chemicals and radio nuclear substances shall be notifiable, and which must be registered (*cf.* the first and second paragraphs of Article 9). Those notifiable communicable diseases which can pose a threat to public welfare are subject to registration. Also, any event that may pose a health threat of international concern shall be registered including events of unknown etiology or source.]<sup>2)</sup>

The term "notifiable" means that the Chief Epidemiologist must be sent non-personally identifiable information. "Subject to registration" means that he must be sent personally identifiable information on cases of disease.

The Chief Epidemiologist is responsible for maintaining a register of communicable diseases. [This register includes diseases, agents causing diseases and events (*cf.* Article 2), immunisations (*cf.* indent 1 of Article 5) and use of antimicrobial drugs (*cf.* indent 3 of Article 5) and is intended to be of use in preventive measures and in epidemiological research.]<sup>2)</sup> The utmost confidentiality shall be maintained regarding all private information appearing in the register of communicable diseases; the register is subject to the same rules as other medical records.

[The Chief Epidemiologist shall be provided with information from the medications database maintained by the Director of Health according to Article 27 of the Medications Act and from health care institutions in order to keep a record of antimicrobial drug use. The information shall be non-personally identifiable.]<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Regulation No. 420/2008, cf. No. 816/2012. <sup>2)</sup> Act No. 43/2007, Article 2. <sup>3)</sup> Act No. 55/2004, Article 1.

## SECTION II

### **Overall management of health security and communicable disease control and prevention.**

#### Article 4

The Directorate of Health shall be responsible for the implementation of communicable disease control and prevention, under the supervision of [the Minister].<sup>1)</sup>

[At the Directorate of Health a physician, the Chief Epidemiologist, shall be responsible for the health security and the measures against communicable diseases and other threats to health. The Chief Epidemiologist shall have knowledge of communicable diseases and their epidemiology.]<sup>2)</sup>

The Chief Epidemiologist shall in his work collaborate with [Chief Physicians of Health Care Centres],<sup>3)</sup> other staff and institutions within the health care service, health committees and [the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority]<sup>4)</sup>, as applicable.

[The Minister decides by regulations<sup>5)</sup> which Chief Physicians of Health Care Centres shall be responsible for measures against communicable diseases, under the supervision of the Chief Epidemiologist.]<sup>3)</sup>

[Chief Physicians of Health Care Centres (cf. the fourth paragraph)]<sup>3)</sup> and the Chief Epidemiologist shall collaborate on the implementation of necessary communicable disease control and prevention and shall be assisted by police authorities if necessary.

<sup>1)</sup> Act No. 126/2011, Article 230. <sup>2)</sup> Act No. 90/2000, Article 1. <sup>3)</sup> Act No. 93/2002, Article 15. <sup>4)</sup> Act No. 167/2007, Article 77. <sup>5)</sup> Regulation No. 387/2015.

#### Article 5

The principal responsibilities of the Chief Epidemiologist are as follows:

1. To organise and co-ordinate communicable disease control and prevention and immunisations throughout the country, e.g. by publishing guidelines on how epidemics should be handled.
2. To maintain a register of communicable disease, in order to monitor the spread of communicable diseases, by gathering detailed data on their diagnosis from laboratories, hospitals and physicians.
3. To keep a register of human use of antimicrobial drugs which may cause microorganisms to become resistant to antimicrobials.]<sup>1)</sup>
- 4]<sup>1)</sup> To promulgate information on spread of communicable diseases, within Iceland and abroad, to physicians and other health workers, regularly and as required.
- 5]<sup>1)</sup> To provide advice to physicians and other dealing with measures against communicable diseases.
- 6]<sup>1)</sup> To supervise communicable disease prevention, e.g. by promulgating information and educational material to the public on these matters.

<sup>1)</sup> Act No. 55/2004, Article 2.

#### Article 6

The Minister shall appoint a committee of seven, the National Committee on Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases, for a period of four years at a time. The Committee shall include specialists in the fields of communicable diseases, bacteriology, virology, sexually transmitted diseases and epidemiology/hygiene, and a community health physician and a nurse with specialist knowledge in the field of communicable diseases. The Minister shall appoint one of the members to chair the Committee. Substitutes shall be appointed in the same manner.

When the National Committee on Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases deals with a matter that falls within the ambit of [the Environment Agency],<sup>1)</sup> [The Icelandic Radiation Safety Authority]<sup>2)</sup> or of [the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority]<sup>3)</sup>, representatives of these bodies shall attend the meeting of the Committee, with a right to speak and to propose motions.

The National Committee on Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases shall create policy on measures against communicable diseases, and shall advise health authorities on measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

The Committee shall be located at the Directorate of Health, and the Chief Epidemiologist shall be the Committee's secretary.

<sup>1)</sup> Act No. 164/2002, Article 26. <sup>2)</sup> Act No. 43/2007, Article 3. <sup>3)</sup> Act No. 167/2007, Article 77.

### SECTION III

#### **General measures against communicable disease.**

##### *1. Obligations of individuals.*

###### Article 7

It is incumbent upon everyone to take all precautions against communicable disease, and to do one's best avoid to infecting oneself or others, as far as possible.

Any person who has reason to believe that he/she is infected with a communicable disease that may pose a threat to others must seek medical attention without delay. Should medical tests reveal such an infection, the person must follow the instructions of the physician on treatment and measures to prevent infection.

If the physician regards it as important to trace the infection in order to prevent further spread of the disease, the patient must provide necessary information on possible sources of the infection, and on those that he/she may have infected. If the physician is unable to do this, he/she shall refer the patient to an institution that is able to trace the mode of transmission. Those involved must obey the physician's instructions on necessary tests to prevent the spread of infection from a patient.

##### *2. Obligations of physicians and other health workers.*

###### Article 8

Physicians and other health workers shall in their work be on the alert regarding communicable diseases and their spread.

###### Article 9

A physician who discovers through his/her work that an individual is infected with a disease that is subject to registration by the provisions of this Act, or has reason to believe this is so, shall immediately inform ...<sup>1)</sup> the Chief Epidemiologist.

Directors of laboratories, hospital departments and other health institutions are subject to the same obligation. Laboratories carrying out tests of samples from patients with communicable diseases as provided in this Act must be licensed by [the Minister].<sup>2)</sup>

Those involved are under an obligation to assist [the Chief Epidemiologist and the relevant district physician (*cf.* the fourth paragraph of Article 4)],<sup>3)</sup> e.g. by providing information they regard as necessary for measures against spread of disease.

[Directors of health care institutions must send the Chief Epidemiologist information of the quantity of antimicrobial drugs used in the institution in question, classified by department when appropriate.]<sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Act No. 93/2002, Article 16. <sup>2)</sup> Act No. 162/2010, Article 66. <sup>3)</sup> Act No. 55/2004, Article 3.