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First Steps

Have you just moved to Canton Basel-Stadt? You will need to register at the registry office within 14 days. When personally registering at the registry office, new arrivals receive an individual welcome meeting.

Official Registration

Everyone who moves to Canton Basel-Stadt needs to register at the registry office of their place of residence (Basel, Riehen or Bettingen) within 14 days.

If you are from Switzerland or from an EU country or EFTA country:

You can register either in writing, via E-Umzug CH or in person at the registry office in Basel-Stadt, Riehen or Bettingen.

If you are not from an EU country or EFTA country:

Please go to the registry office (Einwohneramt) at Kundenzentrum Spiegelhof. Here, we will need to record your biometric data. You will need to pay a fee for the registration.

This is the address:

Kundenzentrum Spiegelhof

Spiegelgasse 6

4001 Basel

Tel. 061 267 70 60

What do you need for registration?

Please find out in advance about which documents you need to bring along.

The documents must be in German, French, Italian or English.

In any case, you will need these documents:

- Registration form (Anmeldeformular) which you must complete in advance
- Colour copy of your valid passport or ID card (for EU/EFTA)
- Copy of your rental contract or residence card

You may also need these documents:

- Visa
- Employment contract
- Statement on previous convictions
- Marriage certificate
- Other documents where relevant

If you move within the canton or move out of Canton Basel-Stadt, you will also need to inform the registry office.

If you are not from an EU country or an EFTA country but already live in Switzerland:

When changing canton, please obtain the approval of the migration office before moving to Canton Basel-Stadt. Registration is only possible afterwards.

Welcome Meeting

When you go to the registry office to register, you will have a personal meeting. We will welcome you, answer your questions and inform you about life in Basel.



**Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets,
brochures)**

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/good-to-know/first-steps

Opening Hours / Holidays

Most shops are closed on Sundays in Switzerland with the exception of shops in railway stations. Official holidays are defined by the cantons.

Holidays

Holidays are regulated by labour law and are legally equivalent to Sundays. August 1st is the national holiday and an official holiday in the entire country. In addition, every canton may define eight other official holidays. In Canton Basel-Stadt, the following days are defined as public holidays: New Year's Day (January 1st), Good Friday (Friday before Easter), Easter Monday, Labour Day (May 1st) Ascension Day (Thursday, 40 days after Easter Sunday), Whit Monday, the national holiday (August 1st), Christmas (December 25th) and Boxing Day (December 26th).

Shop Hours

Shop hours vary according to canton. In Canton Basel-Stadt, shops are permitted to be open from 6.00 am to 8.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays. However, the times may vary depending on the shop and may be shorter. On Saturdays, most shops close earlier than during the week, often at 6.00 pm. On Sundays, most shops are closed, with the exception of shops in railway stations, at fuel stations or neighbourhood shops, which are usually open 7 days a week, open earlier and close later than regular shops.

Office Hours for Public Services

The cantonal public services are, in general, open Mondays through Fridays from 8.00 am to 12.00 pm and from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm. Several services reopen at 1.30 pm or can be reached by telephone outside of regular office hours. In any case, it is a good idea to find out in advance what the opening hours are, by telephone or online.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/good-to-know/opening-hours--holidays

Residence Permit and Naturalisation

In order to live in Switzerland for an extended period of time, or in order to work here, a permit is necessary. There are different types of residence permits as well as a settlement permit.

Types of Permits

Working in Switzerland or remaining in the country for more than 3 months requires a permit. The permit is issued by the cantonal Migration Office (Migrationsamt). There are short-term permits (up to 1 year), residence permits (temporary), settlement permits (permanent) as well as cross-border commuter permits.

- Short-term permit (L): This permit is for people who will reside in Switzerland for a limited time (usually 1 year) for a particular reason. Most citizens of EU-/EFTA-countries who have evidence of a work contract with a duration between 3 months and 1 year are entitled to this permit.
- Residence permit (B): This permit is for people residing in Switzerland for an extended period of time. Most citizens of EU-/EFTA countries are entitled to this permit if they have a work contract with a duration exceeding 1 year. EU-/EFTA-citizens will receive permits for a duration of 5 years. Citizens of other countries will receive permits for a duration of 1 year after which an extension must be applied for. The extension may be granted under certain conditions, such as that applicants take German classes. Applicants are not entitled to an extension. Reasons that may act against an extension include, for example, a criminal offence or dependency on social welfare. The residence permit expires upon an uninterrupted period abroad of more than six months. Recognised refugees are also granted B permits.
- Settlement permit (C): This permit is granted following 5 or 10 years of Swiss residency. Here, too, different conditions apply to people from EU/EFTA states and third countries. For people moving abroad, the settlement permit may be retained under certain conditions for a maximum period of four years. This requires submission of an application to the Migration Office.
- Provisionally admitted foreigners (F): This permit is granted to asylum seekers who have not been officially recognised as refugees, but have been provisionally admitted. This permit must be renewed every year.

Foreigner Identification

Foreigners living in Switzerland receive a foreigner identification card (Ausländerausweis). The type of identification card depends on various criteria. People moving from abroad receive a biometric ID in credit card format after providing fingerprints and an image during registration. Lost or stolen identification must be reported to the police immediately. You can use the loss statement from the police and a copy of the passport from your country of origin or identity card (for EU/EFTA nationals) to order a new ID from the Migration Office (Migrationsamt).

Extension

According to the type of permit and citizenship, the process of applying for an extension may differ. If an extension is necessary, you will receive a form (Verfallsanzeige). This form must be completed, confirmed by the employer and then submitted to the Migration Office (Migrationsamt) together with a copy of the passport from the country of origin or the identity card (for EU/EFTA nationals). The Migration Office is available to answer questions in this context.

Ordinary Naturalisation

Those who have lived in Switzerland for ten years may submit an application to obtain a federal naturalisation licence. The years a person has spent in Switzerland between the ages of 8 and 18 count double. Important requirements for naturalisation are that you meet the required period of residency, you are proficient in German, are integrated and do not have any debts or previous convictions.

Simplified Naturalisation

Under certain legal requirements, simplified naturalisation is mainly open to foreign spouses of Swiss citizens and the children of a Swiss parent. The federation is solely responsible for taking naturalisation decisions in the case of simplified naturalisation.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/good-to-know/residence-permit

Personal Liability Insurance

Every adult should have a personal liability insurance. This form of insurance covers costs that arise when one has inadvertently caused damage to someone else.

Personal Liability

Persons who have injured another person or an object belonging to another person are financially responsible for the damage caused. This is the case even when the damage was caused inadvertently. Costs may be very high. If, for example, one injures a person in a skiing accident the damage may add up to hundreds of thousands of Swiss francs.

Personal Liability Insurance

One must have personal liability insurance (Privathaftpflichtversicherung) to prevent financial difficulties in the event of damage to another person. This form of insurance is offered by most private insurance companies. Often, a private liability insurance contract can be settled for an entire household. This form of insurance is not compulsory, yet strongly recommended.

Insurance Benefits

Personal liability insurance covers property damage and damage to persons which the insured party has caused another party to suffer. This includes the cost of repairs, medical treatment, loss of wages, or compensation for pain and suffering. Personal liability insurance also covers damages caused by certain pets. It does not cover damages to persons living in the same household or damages as a result of intent or gross negligence.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/good-to-know/personal-liability-insurance

Alcohol / Tobacco / Drugs

Owning, consuming, or selling drugs is punishable by law. There are age limits for the selling of alcohol and tobacco.

Drugs

Owning, selling, and consuming illegal drugs is punishable by law. This also applies to small amounts of drugs. The Federal Act on Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances (Betäubungsmittelgesetz) regulates which substances are illegal. Commercial drug-selling is punished severely.

Alcohol and Tobacco

There are age limits for the selling of alcohol and tobacco. In Canton Basel-Stadt, tobacco products and alcoholic beverages may not be sold to children and young people under the age of 16. For certain alcoholic beverages, such as liquor, the age limit is 18.

Ban on Smoking

Bans on smoking vary according to the canton. Canton Basel-Stadt follows the Federal Act on the Protection Against Passive Smoking and the Cantonal Public Houses Act. A ban on smoking applies in:

- Closed spaces accessible to the public (hospitals, public services, schools, museums, theatres, trains and buses, shops and malls)
- Spaces that serve as a workplace for more than one person

Whether or not smoking is banned in a restaurant depends on the size of the restaurant. Some restaurants have smoking areas.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/good-to-know/alcohol--tobacco--drugs

Pets

People with pets need to observe several rules. Certain animals are not permitted in every apartment. Dogs must be registered with the canton.

Keeping Pets

People living in a rented apartment may keep small pets, such as guinea pigs, hamsters, canaries or fish. Larger animals (even cats or small dogs) may be prohibited under the rental contract. Animals that are noisy or dangerous may also be forbidden by the lessor. In addition, pet owners must observe animal protection laws. For example, certain animals may not be kept alone (for example rabbits). There are also regulations concerning the size and equipment of cages. Many animals (exotic animals) are not allowed to be brought into the country. Others require a special authorisation issued by the veterinary department.

Dogs

Canton Basel-Stadt has special legislation concerning dogs. This includes a description of a dog owner's duties. Additional information is provided by veterinarians.

- All dogs in Switzerland must be marked with a microchip and registered in a database. The dog is issued a dog identification (credit card format). This form of identification is not identical to the Pet Passport that is required when people wish to enter an EU country with an animal.
- Dogs must be registered with the canton. There is an online form for this purpose and annual fees are charged. Moreover, an obligatory liability insurance (Haftpflichtversicherung) has to be concluded for each dog kept as a pet.
- All dog owners must pick up and dispose of their dog's droppings. Not doing so may result in a fine.
- Several dog breeds require a special authorisation (e.g. pit bulls or rottweilers).
- Dogs are generally forbidden from entering city parks and children's playgrounds. The canton's "mapserver" shows the zones where dogs may run freely and swim.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/good-to-know/pets

Coexistence in Switzerland

Every country has its own cultural characteristics. Likewise in Switzerland, there are certain forms of etiquette that you should know.

Different Cultures

There are different cultures and mentalities in Switzerland. This also due to the four national languages. What may be normal in German-speaking Switzerland could be quite different in French-speaking Switzerland. The differences between the cities and the countryside can also be significant. Nonetheless, there are traditions that all of Switzerland shares.

Greetings

How we greet each other in Switzerland: We usually shake hands and look each other in the eyes. Men and women also look each other in the eyes. In Basel, we say "Griezi". If people know each other well, they may also say "Sali" or "Hoi". In the countryside, people greet each other on the street even if they do not know each other. Politeness is important in Switzerland. That is why we often say "Danke" and "Bitte". For example, we may say "Danke" and "Bitte" multiple times in shops or restaurants.

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important in Switzerland, especially at work. If you arrive five minutes too late, please let the other person know in advance. When you want to meet someone, you should first agree on a time.

Indirect Communication

In Switzerland, we usually do not express criticism directly. We often only make a suggestion. Nonetheless, we assume that the other person understands the criticism. If you do not yet understand German very well, you may find this particularly difficult. Moreover, we sometimes avoid conflict. For example, if your neighbours feel disturbed, they might not knock on your door in person but may write you a letter. If you are ever unsure of whether you have understood something correctly, it is best to ask for clarification.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/good-to-know/coexistence-in-switzerland