



**Do you want to  
work in Sweden?**



# Sweden

Sweden is the third largest country in western Europe. Half of the country is covered in forests, with some 100,000 lakes. The population is 9 million, 85% living in the south and 1.9 million in Stockholm, the capital. In recent decades, a high level of immigration, primarily refugees from various parts of the world, has transformed Sweden into a multi-cultural society.

A member of the European Union since 1995, Sweden is a party to the Schengen agreement.

## **Vibrant cultural life**

Sweden enjoys a rich cultural life, with proud traditions in literature, architecture, dance, fashion and design. There is a well-developed infrastructure, with museums, libraries, theatres and cinemas throughout the country. Stockholm boasts a number of world-famous cultural institutions, such as the Royal Opera House, Dramaten (the Royal Dramatic Theatre), the National Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Modern Art. Swedish artists, entertainers and pop musicians are well known for their creativity, even on the international scene.

[www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se)  
[www.wwlink.se](http://www.wwlink.se)  
[www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)  
<http://eures.europa.eu>





	Average temperatures		Daylight	
	January	July	January	July
Malmö	-0.2°C (+31.6°F)	+16.8°C (62.2°F)	7 hours	17 hours
Stockholm	-2.8°C (+27.0°F)	+17.2°C (63.0°F)	6 hours	18 hours
Kiruna	-16.0°C (+3.2°F)	+12.8°C (55.0°F)	0 hours	24 hours



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### **Exciting recreational opportunities**

Sweden offers a broad range of outdoor activities such as fishing, forest walks, hiking in the mountains and sailing. You are always close to nature, with endless opportunities for firsthand experience. Popular sports include football, ice hockey, bandy and orienteering, and interest in physical exercise has never been greater. Swedes like to get together on major holidays and celebrate special days in the calendar such as Walpurgis Night, Midsummer, Lucia and Christmas.

### **Working climate**

Most Swedish workplaces are known for their commitment to openness, equal opportunity and democratic values. Companies and institutions are often 'flat' organizations with few interim levels of management, and employees are expected to participate in decisions and demonstrate initiative as part of a team. Managers work closely with their employees. In day-to-day working life, people tend to use first names when talking to customers, bosses or colleagues. Swedish workplaces encourage mutual respect and a positive work environment. Flexible working hours and effective childcare enable parents to combine work and family. Trade unions have considerable influence on Swedish working conditions and almost 80% of the labour force is unionised.



## The language

Learning the language is obviously very important. Information about Swedish language courses in other countries and in Sweden can be found at [www.si.se](http://www.si.se). Jobseekers who have become residents in Sweden and who have been issued with a personal identity number (*personnummer*) should contact the local municipality for information about free Swedish lessons for immigrants (*Sfi*). There are also several adult education associations which give Swedish classes. Fees and courses vary. Check in the Yellow Pages under Studieförbund. You can also do a web search in your own language.

The imminent retirement boom is likely to give rise to labour shortages in many areas and could threaten future growth. Numerous measures are implemented to counteract this threat. More information about the Swedish labour market can be found at [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se) and <http://eures.europa.eu>



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# Work

Nordic citizens need no permit or special registration to live and work in Sweden.

EU/EEA citizens can freely reside in Sweden for up to three months and may start working prior to registration with the Swedish Migration Board. Work permits are not required. Those wishing to stay longer than three months in Sweden must apply to register their right of residence. A residence certificate is issued to those who are employees, self-employed, service providers, students and those with sufficient funds to support themselves. Residence certificates will also be issued to family members who are EU/EEA citizens. Family members who are not EU/EEA citizens apply for a residence card. Family members who require a visa to enter Sweden must apply for a residence card before coming to Sweden.

In some cases, family members do not have right of residence. In such cases, if intending to stay longer than three months, you must apply for a residence permit under Swedish law. As an EU/EEA citizen you can submit an application after entering Sweden.

All applications for residence certificates, cards and permits must be received by the Swedish Migration Board no later than three months after entering the country.

Non-EU citizens who have acquired the status of long-term resident in another EU Member State, and citizens of Switzerland, have similar rights to EU/EEA





citizens. Those wishing to remain longer than three months in Sweden must apply for a residence permit within this period.

Citizens from non-EU/EEA countries other than those mentioned above must apply for work and residence permits before entering the country. New regulations regarding work permits will come into force as from December 15th 2008. Check [www.migrationsverket.se](http://www.migrationsverket.se) for more details.

University students from non EU/EEA countries who have a residence permit may work in Sweden as long as the residence permit is valid. The permit must be stamped in your passport before entering the country.

For application forms and more information in several languages, see the Swedish Migration Board website at [www.migrationsverket.se](http://www.migrationsverket.se).

If you intend to stay in Sweden, you must register in person at the local Tax Office. There you will be issued with a civic identity number. Those who intend staying one year or more will be issued with a personal identity number (*personnummer*). This process is called *folkbokföring*. If you will be working but staying less than a year, you will be issued with a co-ordination number (*samordningsnummer*). The *personnummer* is necessary for all kinds of transactions and access to service in society. The *samordningsnummer* serves the same function but not always to the same extent. More information at [www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se) under the heading “*Folkbokföring*”. This site also contains addresses and contact details for local offices.

### **Authorised and regulated professions**

Some professions require authorisation, certification or the equivalent. These professions are known as regulated professions. A list of such professions and contact details for the responsible authorities can be found on the website for the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education at [www.hsv.se](http://www.hsv.se). The first point of contact for matters concerning vocational education and training in Sweden and Europe is the National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications (NRP). The authority responsible for this is the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*). See [www.senrp.se](http://www.senrp.se)

### **The EURES network**

When seeking work in Sweden from outside the country, the first step is to contact your local employment office, which can advise you on how to find work in other EU/EEA countries.

The Public Employment Offices in the EU/EEA and Switzerland cooperate within the EURES network (EUROpean Employment Services). On the European Job Mobility Portal at <http://eures.europa.eu> you can access vacancies, post your CV and find information about living and working conditions in Sweden as well as in other Member States. You can also search for a EURES adviser to contact if you need more information and advice.





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## How to find a job

The Swedish Public Employment Services job vacancy site at [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se) is the largest and most used in the country. As well as posting job vacancies, the site also features a “My CV” section, where jobseekers can fill in their qualifications and career details and present themselves to prospective employers. Links to private recruitment and temporary employment agencies can be found by clicking on “*Söka jobb* (Look for work)” then “*Länkar* (Links)” in the left margin.

Please note that nearly all the job descriptions at [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se) and the other sites mentioned above are in Swedish. Most employers point out that at least a basic knowledge of the language is required. The reason most frequently given is that employees must be able to follow safety instructions at work as well as communicating with the employer, colleagues and customers. This does not of course mean that it is impossible to find a job where Swedish is not required, but anyone in this position must be prepared to be very active. Jobseekers who have special skills which are in demand and professional contacts who can open doors may find it easier.

A list of Swedish newspapers may be found at [www.onlinenewspapers.com/sweden.htm](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/sweden.htm). Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet and Dagens Industri are particularly important sources for job adverts. Information in English about companies and the business community throughout the country as

well as other useful facts about public facilities can usually be found at the official city websites. Do a search for [www.cityname.se](http://www.cityname.se) e.g. [www.stockholm.se](http://www.stockholm.se)

If already in Sweden, looking for work and have the right to work there, you should immediately register as a jobseeker at one of the Employment Offices. You must provide identification and evidence of your right to work in Sweden.

If you are looking for work which requires qualifications and/or experience you should take any documents which can support your application with you. If you have a personal identity number your details will be registered on the jobseeker database. If not, your details will be registered manually. Jobseekers are expected to be active and to make full use of the self-service and other job-finding facilities provided. Those without access to the internet at home can use the self-service terminals at the employment office.

Jobseekers are expected to make full use of all personal contacts. You should not hesitate to contact employers directly, even those who are not advertising vacancies, and market your skills. This method is commonly used in Sweden. You should also be prepared to look for work in other towns and cities within commuting distance. This is a requirement for jobseekers receiving unemployment benefits. Download the handbook "Find a job" at [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se) under "Other languages".



## Writing a job application

Swedish job applications usually consist of a personal letter and a CV. A Swedish job application is usually simple in language and layout. Make sure the letter and CV are targeted for the job. It should not look as if you have sent out the same job application to many different companies. Traditionally neither of these two documents exceeds one page. Nowadays it would be acceptable for your CV to be somewhat longer, especially if you have been working for a number of years. It is very important that you structure your information well and that you indicate the skills/achievements/experience gained through your education and working life. Start from the most recent.

The personal letter should not be longer than one page. Since it is not customary to include copies of certificates or diplomas if they are not specifically requested, you should bring them to your first interview. Never send original documents. If you are uncertain about how to proceed, call the employer and ask. Do not forget to sign the letter. For more information see <http://eures.europa.eu> and <http://europa.eu/youreurope>.

- 40 hour working week.
- Vacation: minimum of 25 working days per year.
- The official retirement age is 65 for both men and women. Employees in most occupations have the right to work until the age of 67.

## Working conditions

Employment contracts in Sweden are either until further notice or for a given period. Temporary employment is permitted for stand-in jobs or for projects. Trial employment for a maximum of 6 months is permitted at most workplaces covered by collective agreements.

Although verbal employment contracts are valid it is always better to have a written contract. In accordance with EU directives, employers must, within a month from the start of employment, provide the employee with a written statement concerning the terms of employment. If possible, try to arrange for a written contract of employment or an employment statement from your employer before you move.

There is no legislation on minimum wages. Since wage and salary levels and working conditions for blue collar workers are agreed by collective bargaining between trade unions and employers, most Swedes, regardless of profession or trade, belong to a trade union. For white collar workers, individual salaries are more common. Trade unions are good sources of information. It can be useful to be a member of trade union, e.g. when negotiating for a pay rise or



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better working conditions. Ask about this when you start work. More information can be found at [www.saco.se](http://www.saco.se), [www.tco.se](http://www.tco.se) and [www.lo.se](http://www.lo.se). You should also consider becoming a member of an Unemployment Insurance Fund as soon as possible.

### **Starting a business in Sweden**

Company names must be registered with the Swedish Companies Registration Office, [www.bolagsverket.se](http://www.bolagsverket.se). Information for self-employed people and companies regarding tax declarations and provisions for handling VAT (*moms*) is provided by the Swedish Tax Authority at [www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se). The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth publishes the “Entrepreneur’s Guide” with links to relevant authorities at [www.nutek.nu](http://www.nutek.nu). At [www.ifs.a.se](http://www.ifs.a.se), similar information is available in many languages. The brochure “Starting up a business”, with information and guidance from six government authorities to help you save time when starting up your own business, can be downloaded at [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se) under “Other languages”. Local authorities can often provide services and/or information. Employment offices can provide advice and some degree of financial support to jobseekers who are receiving unemployment benefits and who meet certain criteria.



**Taxes**

People working more than 6 months in Sweden are subject to normal tax regulations. Tax deducted includes social insurance contributions and, in contrast to a number of other countries, this applies whether the employee is married or single or has children or not. The tax on income from employment comprises municipal tax (which varies between municipalities, being on average 31%) and state tax. State tax is only deducted on the part of the income that exceeds SEK 340,900 per annum. The rate is 20% up to SEK 507,100 per annum, and 25 % for anything above this sum (financial year 2008).

Tax returns must be submitted no later than May 2nd the following year to determine final tax due. People living and working in Sweden for less than 6 months can choose to pay a special income tax (*SINK*) of 25%. For more information in several languages about the Swedish tax system, tax returns and addresses for local offices, see [www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se). General questions about taxes can be answered by the tax authorities at +46-27-073 498 or, if in Sweden, at 0771-567 567.

Tax deduction examples:	
Gross SEK/month	Net SEK/month
15.000	11.728
17.500	13.475
20.000	15.221
25.000	18.703
30.000	21.833
35.000	24.283
40.000	26.733
50.000	31.246



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# Living

## Accommodation

There are three main types of residential accommodation in Sweden: own homes, co-operative housing and tenant-owner housing. Co-operative and tenant-owner housing are usually in the form of apartments, but occasionally also detached or semi-detached homes. Most tenant-owner housing is owned by public housing companies. Acquiring co-operative housing entails membership in an economic association which requires a financial investment. Prices for co-operative housing and own homes vary a great deal from region to region. Prices and rents also differ according to location, size and standard. Local and national newspapers often contain adverts about houses and apartments for sale and rent (check out the Swedish-language site [www.onlinenewspapers.com/sweden.htm](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/sweden.htm)). Municipalities have information about local flats for rent on their websites – often in English. Search for [www.cityname.se](http://www.cityname.se), e.g. [www.stockholm.se](http://www.stockholm.se). See also [www.bovision.se](http://www.bovision.se) (in German and English) and [www.hemnet.se](http://www.hemnet.se) (in several languages).

## Childcare and school

Childcare in Sweden is an important issue since most parents work. The various forms of public childcare in Sweden today are available to children aged 1–12. Municipalities are obliged by law either to provide this service themselves or to give grants to private care-providers.











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The official age for starting school is 7 but almost all children attend pre-school from the age of 6. School is compulsory up to the age of 16. Almost all pupils go on to the Upper Secondary school level (*gymnasium*), which offers a variety of three year programmes. For information about the school system in Sweden, from pre-school to adult education and Swedish for immigrants, see [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se). Information is also available at <http://europa.eu/youreurope>. For information about local schools and colleges, contact the relevant municipality, [www.cityname.se](http://www.cityname.se) e.g. [www.stockholm.se](http://www.stockholm.se). General information about higher education studies is provided by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education at [www.hsv.se](http://www.hsv.se). For information about courses and applications see [www.studera.nu](http://www.studera.nu). Information for foreign students is provided by the Swedish Institute and is available at [www.studyinsweden.se](http://www.studyinsweden.se).

### **Social insurance**

Swedish social insurance is financed mainly through employers' contributions, with only a small proportion being covered by individual contributions. Contributions are included in the tax deductions from salaries. Social insurance is administered by the Swedish Social Insurance Office (*Försäkringskassan*).



It is possible to take out extra insurance via insurance companies and trade unions. Some employers provide extra insurance coverage as a staff benefit.

To be covered by or to be eligible for social benefits through the Social Insurance Office you must as a rule either be resident in Sweden or working here. Examples of residence-based benefits are child allowance, housing allowance and an allowance for medical expenses. If you work in Sweden you are insured for employment-based benefits which include sickness benefits and rehabilitation compensation.

### **Medical health care**

Patient fees for consulting a physician working within the national health scheme usually vary from SEK 120 to SEK 300. In some counties medical health care for children is free. When you buy a prescribed medicine you are given a discount. Further discounts are given to those who exceed the yearly cost limit.

### **Sick leave**

No wages or sickness benefits are paid for the first day you report sick. The employer pays for the first 2 weeks of sick leave. You may be eligible for sickness benefits if you have been sick for more than two weeks and no longer receive sick pay from your employer. As a rule, both sick pay and sickness benefits amount to 80% of salary (up to a certain limit), and are liable to income tax. In most cases a doctor's certificate is required for more than 7 days of sick leave.

### **Dental care**

Dental care is free up to and including 19 years of age. After this you have to pay part or the entire cost of dental care yourself. The regulations applying to Swedish dental care have been reformed as of July 1st 2008, and information about these changes is available at [www.fk.se](http://www.fk.se).

People from other countries should make sure that they fully understand their situation regarding social insurance. Please note that unemployment benefits are not covered by the Swedish social insurance scheme. More information in other languages is available at [www.fk.se/sprak](http://www.fk.se/sprak).

### **Unemployment insurance**

The Swedish system for unemployment insurance differs from most other countries. There is a universal basic unemployment insurance providing benefits to those over the age of 20 after a qualifying period. Most workers in Sweden apply to belong to a voluntary Unemployment Insurance Fund, which provides income-related insurance up to a certain limit. Information about the system is provided in several languages at [www.iaf.se](http://www.iaf.se) and in English at [www.samorg.org](http://www.samorg.org). As more

workers earn above the maximum amount for income-related unemployment insurance, more trade unions offer their members extra insurance coverage.

If you become unemployed after working in Sweden you should immediately register as a job-seeker at the employment office. They will advise you on procedures. If you have not worked long enough to qualify for Swedish unemployment benefits, it is possible that work in another country can be taken into consideration. In such cases the E 301 form will be needed to verify periods of work. You will find more information about this at [www.iaf.se](http://www.iaf.se).

### **Parental allowances and parental leave**

A parental allowance can be paid out from 60 days prior to the birth of a child. A parent is entitled to be on full-time leave from work up to eighteen months after the birth of the child. Until the child's eighth birthday, parents are entitled to reduce their working hours by 25 %. A new father is entitled to ten days leave plus compensation for lost income in conjunction with the child's birth, without affecting payment of the mother's parental allowance.

A parental allowance may be paid out over a maximum of 480 days. Parents are entitled to divide parental leave equally between them, although one parent can waive this right in favour of the other parent, apart from the 60-day period. A temporary parental allowance can be granted to parents who need to stay at home with a sick child (60 days), or when normal care is not available (60 days), until the child is 12 years old.

If you have a child who is under 16 years of age, you are entitled to a child allowance, if the child is resident in Sweden. This allowance is terminated when the child is 16 and replaced by an extended child allowance if the child continues in full-time secondary education. If you have three or more children, you are entitled to a supplementary child allowance.

Moving abroad: [www.tullverket.se](http://www.tullverket.se)

Vehicles and driving licences:  
[www.bilprovningen.se](http://www.bilprovningen.se), [www.vv.se](http://www.vv.se)

The Swedish news in English:  
[www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

## Information sources for EU/EEA citizens

### **EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) ► <http://eures.europa.eu>**

The European Job Mobility Portal including job vacancies, CVs, information about member states and your rights. Contact details for EURES Advisers in your own country and other member states are listed here. EURES Advisers work through the EURES network (EUROpean Employment Services) and provide advice for EU/EEA citizens.

### **Europe Direct ► Tel: 00800 6789 1011**

A freephone number from all member states for general EU/EEA information and questions.

### **Your Europe ► <http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope>**

Information in nearly all EU/EEA languages covering your legal rights as well as useful information and checklists.

### **European Commission representative in Sweden ► [www.eukomm.se](http://www.eukomm.se)**

Services include Eurojus. Eurojus provides free legal advice to individuals concerning the EU citizen's rights and obligations with respect to the EU legal system and its application on a national level. Tel: 08-5624 4438 or 08-5451 2557, [info@eurojus.se](mailto:info@eurojus.se).

### **SOLVIT ► <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit>**

The EU/EEA network for solving problems on the EU/EEA market. The Swedish SOLVIT-centre is based at the National Board of Trade (*Kommerskollegium*), [www.kommers.se](http://www.kommers.se). Tel: 08-6904 800. SOLVIT services are for individuals and companies and are free of charge.

If problems arise concerning your labour market rights while in Sweden you are welcome to contact one of the EURES Advisers. You will find contact details at <http://eures.europa.eu>. You can also ask for contact details at the employment office. EURES Advisers can in some cases be of assistance in helping you in your contacts with other authorities. Please note however that EURES Advisers in Sweden cannot help individuals look for work. This is the responsibility of the local Public Employment Office. **Although all due care has been taken to verify the facts provided in this leaflet, no responsibility can be accepted for any errors (August 2008).**



**[www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se)**  
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