

Residence Permit

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 Office for Migration and Integration (Amt für Migration und Integration). There are short-term permits (up to 1 year), residence permits (temporary), and settlement permits (permanent).

- Short-term permit (L): This permit is for persons 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 persons 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 speak against an extension include, for example, a criminal offence or dependency on welfare. 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 persons from EU/EFTA states and third countries.
- 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. The type of identification card depends on various criteria. There are credit card format and paper identification cards (non-biometric foreigner identification card, Nicht biometrischer Ausländerausweis). Some individuals receive a biometric foreigner identification card. This ID card has a data chip, fingerprints and a picture are retained. They must have their biometric data collected in Herisau. In order to do so an appointment must be made with the biometric registration centre (Herisau). The ID card will be sent to the home address by registered mail once it is completed. Lost or stolen identification must be reported to the police immediately.

Extension

According to type of permit and citizenship the process of applying for an extension may differ. If an extension is necessary one is issued a form (Verfallsanzeige). This form must be completed and submitted to the community of residence with a valid passport at least two weeks before the permit expires. The community of residence will forward the application to the cantonal Office for Migration and Integration (Amt für Migration und Integration). They will verify whether all requirements for an extension are met. Additional questions will be answered by the community of residence or the Office for Migration and Integration.

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

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