



Fact sheet for persons with refugee status and temporary admission

You will be staying in Switzerland for some time – possibly even for ever. Welcome to Switzerland!

This fact sheet informs you about the special rules that apply to persons with refugee status and temporary admission. It also provides the addresses of offices where you can obtain further information on migration, employment and integration. Visit our Web site www.bfm.admin.ch and the Web site of the Federal Commission on Migration www.ekm.admin.ch/. You can obtain information on Switzerland, its culture, its people, the state and its laws at various events and in courses on integration. You will also find a great deal of information on: www.ch.ch.

It is important that you gather information early on about language courses, education and employment. Make use of the opportunities provided to collect information, and obtain advice and instruction. We hope that you will soon find your way about in Switzerland. Federal Office for Migration FOM, July 2008

	WHO IS GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS?	WHO IS GRANTED TEMPORARY ADMISSION?
DEFINITION	<p>The 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the European Convention on Human Rights form the basis of Swiss asylum law. Refugees are thus defined as persons who in their home country or in the country of last residence are subject to serious disadvantages or have a well-founded fear of being subject to such disadvantages for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Serious disadvantages can be the following: a threat to life, physical integrity or freedom as well as measures exerting an unbearable psychological pressure. Flight motives specific to women are to be taken into account.</p> <p>The Geneva Convention on Refugees also provides that no person may be deported to a country in which he or she could be subject to the above-mentioned disadvantages. This principle known as "Non-Refoulement" is also extended to situations in which persons may be subject to torture or inhumane treatment (Art. 3 and 5 Federal Act on Asylum).</p>	<p>Asylum seekers whose application is rejected but who cannot be returned to their home country are granted temporary admission. A person may not be able to be returned to the home country for the following 3 reasons: 1) return is not admissible because it would violate Switzerland's international obligations; 2) return is not reasonable because the person would be at risk, for example due to war, a general situation of violence or a medical emergency; 3) return is not possible for technical reasons.</p> <p>FOM reviews at regular intervals whether a person is still eligible for temporary admission. Temporary admission is lifted when the above-mentioned reasons no longer apply. If this is the case, FOM issues a removal order.</p> <p>If a person in possession of temporary admission leaves Switzerland or is granted a residence permit, temporary admission is lifted.</p>
	If a person fulfils the requirements for obtaining refugee status but there is a reason for excluding the person from obtaining asylum, the person will not be granted asylum but will receive temporary admission as a refugee.	
LEGAL BASIS	The legal status of persons in the asylum procedure is governed by the Asylum Act: www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/c142_31.html (not available in English)	The legal status of persons on temporary admission status is governed by the Foreign Nationals Act (Chapter 11): www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/c142_20.html (not available in English)



	PERSONS WITH REFUGEE STATUS	PERSONS ON TEMPORARY ADMISSION
PERMIT FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS	<p>Persons with refugee status receive a grey-coloured permit for foreign nationals (B permit).</p> <p>The permit is issued for one year and can be extended if there are no disqualifying reasons (e.g. threat to security).</p> <p>You must present this permit to the authorities upon request.</p> <p>Persons with refugee status are eligible for a settlement permit after 5 years in Switzerland if there are no disqualifying reasons. The C settlement permit is green and is valid indefinitely.</p> <p>The permits will be issued in credit card size from the end of 2008.</p>	<p>Persons on temporary admission receive a light-blue F permit. This is limited for 1 year and can be extended every 12 months by the canton in which you are residing. Refugees on temporary admission also receive an F permit and must be able to present this permit to the authorities upon request.</p> <p>Persons on temporary admission can apply for a residence permit after 5 years in Switzerland. The authorities take the level of integration and the personal circumstances of the applicant into account when processing the application. They also examine whether a return to the home country is reasonable. If the application is approved, the applicant receives a grey-coloured B permit. This permit is valid for 1 year and is extended if there are no disqualifying reasons.</p> <p>The permits will be issued in credit card size from the end of 2008.</p>
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	<p>Persons with refugee status and those with temporary-admission status may choose their place of residence within the designated canton. You must notify the cantonal authorities of your address. They will make the necessary changes in your permit.</p> <p>If you have difficulties with the landlord of the apartment where you are living (for example, too much rent increase, unjustified notice to leave or unclear points regarding the additional expenses invoice) you can contact the tenants agency in your canton of residence.</p> <p>Information for tenants in 11 languages: www.bwo.admin.ch/dokumentation/00106/00112/00121/index.html?lang=fr</p> <p>Swiss Tenants Association: www.asloca.ch (not available in English)</p> <p>Your permit is only valid in the canton of residence. This means that refugees and persons on temporary admission may only reside in the canton that has issued the permit.</p>	
CHANGING CANTONS	<p>The regulations that apply to foreign nationals also apply to persons with refugee status. If you wish to change your canton of residence, you must submit an application to the cantonal migration authorities.</p>	<p>Persons on temporary admission can apply to FOM if they wish to change their canton of residence. A change of canton will only be granted for reasons of family reunion. FOM consults the cantons involved and is responsible for the final decision.</p>
TRAVELLING ABROAD	<p>Persons with refugee status are entitled to a special travel document for refugees. This document allows the person to leave and re-enter Switzerland. You must submit the application in person to the migration authorities responsible.</p>	<p>Persons on temporary admission are not permitted to travel abroad on the F permit. For travel abroad, FOM may grant in exceptional cases an identity document for foreign nationals with no papers or a return visa in the applicant's own valid passport.</p>



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FAMILY REUNION	<p>Persons with refugee status are permitted to bring members of their family to Switzerland. These family members will also be recognised as refugees and receive asylum status.</p> <p>Family members include: spouses, official partners and children under 18 years. Other close relatives (e.g. parents, siblings) can also be included in family asylum if they rely on the person in Switzerland for special help (e.g. they are disabled).</p> <p>If the family member is still living abroad, an application must be submitted to FOM to request permission for the family member to enter Switzerland.</p> <p>Children born to persons with refugee status are not automatically granted refugee status. The parents must submit the birth certificate and an application to FOM as soon as possible after the child's birth. FOM then examines whether the child is also eligible for refugee status.</p>	<p>Persons on temporary admission are only permitted to bring their spouse and unmarried children under 18 years to Switzerland after a period of at least 3 years.</p> <p>The conditions for family reunion are: 1) the family lives together; 2) the family has adequate accommodation; 3) the family does not require social welfare assistance.</p> <p>The application for family reunion must be submitted within 5 years.</p> <p>The application for children who are older than 12 years must be submitted within 12 months. Family reunion will only be granted after this period if there are important reasons for doing so. The reason for this rule is to ensure that children are integrated into Switzerland as young as possible.</p> <p>Applications for inclusion of family members in the temporary admission status should be submitted to the cantonal migration authorities who, in turn, forward it together with their comments to FOM.</p>
WHAT IS INTEGRATION?	<p>Whoever lives in Switzerland lawfully and long-term should be integrated in the country as well as possible. Integration is a two-way process, requiring the efforts of both the Swiss and foreign population. This presupposes openness on the part of the Swiss population.</p> <p>Migrants are expected to tackle the challenge of life in Switzerland and learn the language spoken in the place of residence. They are expected to find work and take part in social life. Swiss integration policy is aimed at equal opportunities for everyone, with the goal of peaceful coexistence based on the values of the Federal Constitution and on mutual respect and tolerance.</p> <p>Further information on Swiss integration policy is available under: www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/en/home/themen/integration.html</p>	
FOSTERING INTEGRATION	<p>Person with refugee status and temporary admission are expected to learn the language spoken where they live and familiarise themselves with life in Switzerland. State agencies and numerous private organisations offer various courses for this purpose. These are intended to help foreigners learn the language, become acquainted with life in Switzerland, enter the job market etc. You can obtain the necessary information without any obligation from the integration competence centres and the migration offices (see the address lists). Do make use of the services provided!</p>	



	PERSONS WITH REFUGEE STATUS	PERSONS ON TEMPORARY ADMISSION
SCHOOLING	<p>The children of persons with refugee status have the same opportunities as all other children living in Switzerland. They attend Kindergarten and receive 9 years of mandatory schooling. They can do an apprenticeship and study at a university. They can also receive a grant.</p> <p>Further information on schooling is available under: www.ch.ch/private/00060/00062/index.html?lang=en</p> <p>On professional training: www.berufsbildung.ch/phpLDfr/</p>	<p>The children of persons on temporary admission attend Kindergarten and receive 9 years of mandatory schooling.</p> <p>Apprenticeships are regulated on a cantonal basis.</p> <p>Further information on schooling is available under: www.ch.ch/private/00060/00062/index.html?lang=en</p> <p>On professional training: www.berufsbildung.ch/phpLDfr/</p>
EMPLOYMENT	<p>Refugees and persons on temporary admission basically have free access to the labour market of their canton of residence and may work in all economic sectors.</p> <p>Persons with refugee status, temporary admission and refugees on temporary admission all require a work permit, which is obtained through the employer from the cantonal migration office.</p> <p>You may only begin work once the permit has been issued. The authorities only issue a permit if salary and working conditions are met; this is intended to protect refugees and persons on temporary admission as employees, and ensure that they are paid fair wages.</p> <p>Persons with a residence permit (C permit) do not require special permission to work or change jobs.</p> <p>Further information on employment is available under: www.jobarea.ch/</p> <p>For help in finding a job: www.jobarea.ch/jobsuche/Jobs/einfache_suche/</p> <p>Information for employees: www.ch.ch/private/00054/00055/index.html?lang=en</p> <p>Information in case of problems at work: www.ch.ch/private/00054/00057/index.html?lang=en</p>	
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	<p>Foreigners' qualifications are often not equivalent to those required by the Swiss labour market. The reasons for this may be, for example, that language skills are insufficient or the person's qualifications from the home country are not recognised in Switzerland. Language and further training courses as well as special projects facilitate access to the labour market. The integration competence centres and the careers advisory centres can advise on offers in the region.</p> <p>Addresses of careers advisory centres in the cantons: www.kbsb.ch/Mitglieder_KBSB.pdf</p>	
HEALTH	<p>The Federal Office for Public Health provides offers and detailed information especially for migrants on the prevention and treatment of physical and mental afflictions: www.migesplus.ch/ (not available in English)</p> <p>The Swiss Red Cross (SRC) provides medical assistance and psychotherapy in Bern, Zurich, Geneva and Lausanne for victims of torture and war and their families: redcross.ch/activities/health/ambu/index-fr.php (not available in English)</p>	



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SOCIAL INSURANCE	<p>A strong social welfare network exists in Switzerland, offering those who live and work here generous financial support in a variety of cases.</p> <p>Basic health insurance with a sickness insurance fund is mandatory in Switzerland – also for children.</p> <p>All employees in Switzerland must be insured against accident and sickness at work.</p> <p>Social welfare, which is financed through wage contributions, provides insurance against unemployment, maternity leave, pension, disability, destitution and the death of a spouse or a parent.</p> <p>Employees with children are entitled to child benefit payments. These are regulated on a cantonal basis.</p> <p>Further information on social insurance is available under: www.bsv.admin.ch/themen/index.html?lang=en</p> <p>Information on unemployment insurance: www.jobarea.ch/ueberuns/kassen/</p> <p>Other insurance: www.ch.ch/private/00029/00039/index.html?lang=en</p>	
SPECIAL TAXES	<p>No special taxes are levied on refugees with refugee and temporary admission status.</p>	<p>Besides the contributions to the social insurance funds, asylum seekers and persons on temporary admission pay a special tax. This tax may not exceed 10 percent of the person's salary and is deducted by the employer directly from the person's salary and paid to the Swiss Government.</p> <p>This special tax is intended to cover the costs incurred by the Government for the asylum seeker and persons on temporary admission as well as their families.</p> <p>Payment of the special tax ends at the latest 3 years after the person receives temporary admission or 7 years after entry into Switzerland.</p> <p>Information sheet on special taxes (not available in English): www.bfm.admin.ch/etc/medialib/data/migration/asyl_schutz_vor_verfolgung/sozialhilfe.Par.0001.File.tmp/Merkblatt%20Sonderabgabe-f.pdf</p>
SOCIAL WELFARE	<p>Social welfare is financed through taxes. The cantons are responsible for the payment of social welfare, which is why this may vary between cantons. However, national guidelines determine minimum standards.</p> <p>More on social welfare: www.ch.ch/private/00045/00048/00610/00611/index.html?lang=en</p> <p>Swiss Conference on Social Welfare. Frequently Asked Questions: www.skos.ch/fr/?page=faq/</p>	