

# Looking for work in Sweden?



*This information is intended as a guide for people living in other countries who are interested in looking for work in Sweden and who need some basic and general information about living and working conditions. Contact details for those needing further information is provided under each heading. Although all due care has been taken to establish the facts provided here, this is not a legal document and no responsibility can be accepted for any errors. © February 2007.*

# 1 About Sweden

In terms of size Sweden is the third largest country in western Europe. Half of this area is covered in forests and about 100,000 lakes. The population is 9 million, of whom 85% live in the south and 1.9 million live in Stockholm, the capital. Over the past decades Sweden has developed into a multi-cultural society owing to high immigration, primarily refugees from various parts of the world.

Sweden has been a member of the European Union since 1995 and is a party to the Schengen agreement.

The official website for information about Sweden in several languages is [www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se). Information about Swedish companies and authorities can be found at Gateway to Sweden [www.wvlink.se](http://www.wvlink.se) and statistical information at [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se). Practical information about living and working in Sweden and your mobility rights can be found at <http://eures.europa.eu>.

# 2 Work and residence permits, residence certificates

**Nordic citizens** do not need any kind of permit or registration to live and work in Sweden.

**EU/EEA citizens** can freely reside in Sweden for up to three months and may start working before registering 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 who have 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 this case if you are intending to stay longer than three months you must apply for a **residence permit** under the national laws. 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 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.

**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 about the right of residence, work and residence permits, regulations concerning family members and the documents required see the Swedish Migration Board website at [www.migrationsverket.se](http://www.migrationsverket.se).

## 3 The Swedish Labour Market

After a long period of relatively high unemployment particularly for young people, academics and immigrants, the economy is now in an expansive phase with many more jobs coming on the market. At the same time an unexpected increase in the number of jobseekers coming onto the market means that the level of unemployment is expected to remain about the same in the year to come. The unemployment rate for 2006 was 8.4%. The estimated level for 2007 is 7.3%. This figure represents jobseekers registered at the Public Employment Services as openly unemployed and those participating in labour market programmes.

Due to large number of retirements in the years ahead labour shortages in many areas will arise which could threaten future growth. Various measures are being put into action to counteract this. More information about the Swedish labour market can be found at [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se) and <http://eures.europa.eu>.

## 4 Labour Legislation

Employment contracts in Sweden are either until further notice or for a given period. Temporary employment is permitted for stand-in jobs or for temporary projects. Trial employment for a maximum of 6 months is permitted at most work places 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 are agreed on by collective bargaining between trade unions and employers, most Swedes regardless of profession or trade belong to a trade union.

Officially there is a 40 hour working week in Sweden although some employers offer shorter hours. The legislated holiday period is a minimum of 25 working days per year. The official retirement age is 65 for both men and women although employees in most occupations have the right to work until the age of 67.

## 5 Recognition of qualifications

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).

## 6 Looking for work

If you are looking for work in Sweden from abroad, your first step should be to contact your local employment office. They can give advice on how to find work in other EU/EEA countries.

The Public Employment Offices in the EU/EEA and Switzerland co-operate within the EURES network (EUROpean Employment Services). On the European Job Mobility Portal on <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.

The job vacancy site organized by the Swedish National Labour Market Board at [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se) is the largest and most used in the country. More information about jobs can be found by clicking on “Söka jobb” then “Länkar” in the left margin. This leads to a long list of private recruitment and temporary employment agencies.

A list of Swedish newspapers can be found at [www.onlinenewspapers.com](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com). The national newspapers Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet and Dagens Industri are particularly important sources for job adverts.

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 which can open doors, may find it easier.

Information in English about companies and the business community in towns and cities 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).

## 7 Learning Swedish

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. The fees and courses vary. See Yellow Pages under “*Studieförbund*”. You can also do a web search in your own language.

## 8 Using the Public Employment Offices

If you are in Sweden, are 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. EU/EEA citizens, family members and those who are not EU/EEA citizens but have the status of a long-term resident in a member country do not need work permits and can freely work and look for employment 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 into 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 who do not have access to the internet at home can use the self-service terminals at the employment office.

Jobseekers are expected to make full use of any 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.

## 9 Coming to Sweden with an E303 form

The E303 form allows jobseekers to retain unemployment benefits for a period of three months whilst looking for work in another member state. The Employment Services or other authorities in your own country who issue this form can provide you with information about the conditions attached and routines to be followed. It is highly recommended that you prepare yourself well before leaving. Read all you can about living and working conditions in the new country and the possibilities of finding work on <http://eures.europa.eu>. EURES Advisers in your own country may also have additional information.

When you arrive in Sweden you should immediately register at an employment office as a jobseeker, taking your E303 form with you. There you will be informed about payment routines and about your contacts with the employment office during the period you look for work in Sweden.

# 10 Applications

Swedish job applications usually consist of a personal letter and a CV. A Swedish job application is usually simple, both in language and layout. Make sure the letter and CV are targeted to 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 would exceed 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.

The personal letter should never be longer than one page. Since it is not customary to include copies of certificates/diplomas if they are not specifically requested, you should take them along 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/>.

# 11 Starting a business in Sweden?

Company names must be registered with the Swedish Companies Registration Office (*Bolagsverket*). See [www.bolagsverket.se](http://www.bolagsverket.se). Information for self-employed people and companies concerning 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 has 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) there is similar information in many languages. Local authorities can often provide services and/or information. When labour market policy allows, employment offices can provide advice and some degree of financial support to jobseekers who are receiving unemployment benefits and who meet certain criteria.

# 12

## First job in Sweden/Trade unions

If you have not already done so, this is the time to apply for a civic registration number (see chapter 14).

It is very common in Sweden with a probationary period of employment (*provanställning*) – a maximum of 6 months. Since wage and salary levels and working conditions are agreed on by collective bargaining between the Trade Unions and employers, most Swedes regardless of profession or trade belong to a trade union. 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 (see chapter 13).

# 13

## Unemployment insurance in Sweden

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 however 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). As more workers earn above the maximum amount for income related unemployment insurance, more trade unions are offering their members extra insurance coverage.

If you become unemployed after working in Sweden you should immediately register as a jobseeker 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 E301 form will be needed to verify periods of work. You will find more information about this at [www.iaf.se](http://www.iaf.se).

# 14 Civic Registration

If you are intending 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 and not always to the same extent. More information can be found at [www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se) under the heading “Folkbokföring.” At this site you will also find addresses and contact details for local offices.

# 15 Taxation

People living and working in Sweden for less than 6 months can choose to pay a special income tax (SINK) of 25%. People working more than 6 months in Sweden follow the normal tax rules.

The tax deduction includes social insurance deductions and is, unlike several other countries, independent of whether the employee is married/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 that part of the income which exceeds SEK 328,600 per annum. The rate of deduction is 20%. Over SEK 488,600 per annum the rate is 25%.

**Tax deduction examples (Income year 2007)**

Gross SEK/month	Net SEK/month	Gross SEK/month	Net SEK/month
10,000	8,108	25,000	18,441
12,500	9,831	30,000	21,366
15,000	11,553	40,000	26,266
17,500	13,275	50,000	30,702
20,000	14,997		

For more information about the Swedish tax system, declaration forms and addresses for local offices, see [www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se).

# 16 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 for staff.

To be covered by or to be eligible for social benefits through the Social Insurance Office you must as a rule either be a resident in Sweden or be 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 under the public social insurance scheme usually vary between SEK 120-300. 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:* Normally no wages or sickness benefits are paid for the first day you report sick. The employer pays for the first 2 weeks 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 sick leave.

*Dental care:* Dental care is free up until and including 19 years of age. After this you have to pay part or the entire cost of dental care yourself.

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/).

# 17 Housing

The three main types of housing in Sweden are own home, co-operative housing and housing with rights of tenancy. Co-operative and rights of tenancy housing are usually flats, although sometimes houses are available.

Most right of tenancy 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 flats for sale and for rent, [www.onlinenewspapers.com/sweden.htm](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/sweden.htm) (in Swedish). Municipalities have information about local flats for rent on their websites – often in English. Seek 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 Swedish).

# 18 Childcare and the education system

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 to either provide this service themselves or to provide grants to private care-providers.

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 but 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). There is also information at <http://europa.eu/youreurope/>. For information about local schools and colleges contact the relevant municipality for example [www.karlstad.se](http://www.karlstad.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).

## Other contacts

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

Vehicles and driving licenses: [www.bilprovningen.se](http://www.bilprovningen.se) and [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 67 89 10 11**

A free-call number from all member states for EU/EEA information and questions.

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

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

**European Commissions 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: 08-562 444 38

**SOLVIT** <http://europa.eu/solvit/> (Information in all EU languages.)

SOLVIT is the EU/EEA network for solving problems in 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: 08-690 48 00. 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 Offices.*

## Some useful words and phrases:

Alfa-kassan	One of the voluntary Unemployment Insurance Funds, not related to specific occupations or fields of work.
Arbetsförmedlingen	Employment Office
Arbetsgivare	Employer
Arbetslöshetskassa (A-kassa)	Voluntary Unemployment Insurance Fund. All, except Alfa-kassan, are related to specific occupations or fields of work.
Arbetslöshetsersättning	Unemployment benefits, general basic benefits or income-related benefits.
Arbetstillstånd	Work permit
Fackförening (Facket)	Trade Union
Försäkringskassan	Social Insurance Office
Kommun	Municipality, Local Authority.
Län	County
Lön	Salary, wage.
Myndighet	State or local authority.
Skatteverket	The Swedish Tax Authority.
Uppehållstillstånd	Residence permit
Uppehålls rätt	Right of residence (refers to EU/EEA citizens and their families).

### Job search glossary as used on the Employment Service website [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se)

Ansökan	Application
Arbets tid	Working hours
Deltid	Part-time
Egen företagare	Self-employed
Företag	Company
Heltid	Full-time
Kollektivavtal	Collective agreement between employers and Trade Unions for wages, working conditions etc.
Lön enligt avtal	Wage/salary according to collective agreement.
Platsbanken	Job vacancy database.
Sommarjobb	Summer and seasonal work.
Yrke	Occupation
Varaktighet	Duration of employment contract.

### Occupational categories as used on the Employment Service website [www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se)

Teknik, data	Managers, project leaders qualified positions in engineering, construction, town planning, logistics. All kinds of IT work.
Naturvetenskap	Scientists, chemists, pharmacists, biologists, hospital technicians, laboratory workers, forestry experts, environmental and health protections, animal health protection.
Hälsa- och sjukvård	Healthcare, life Science and social work, veterinary work, animal keepers.
Pedagogiskt arbete	Teaching, educational work, religion.
Kultur, media	Culture, media
Ekonomi, administration, personal	Finance, administration, human resources.
Kontors-, kundservice och försäljning	Office, customer service, sales, warehouse work.
Service-, omsorgs- och säkerhetsarbete	Hotel, restaurant, social care, security work.
Jordbruk och trädgård	Agriculture, forestry, garden work, animal care, fishing.
Gruv-, bygg- och anläggningsarbete	Mining, construction, building, trades such as plumbing, painting etc.
Metallarbetare, reparatörer	Metal workers, welders, electrical appliance work etc.
Finmekaniskt, grafiskt hantverk mm	Precision crafts in many fields, printing industry etc.
Annat hantverksarbete	Baker, butcher, tailor, garment industry etc.
Processoperatörer	Operators – chemical, mechanical, timber etc.
Maskinreparatörs- och monteringsarbete	Machine repair, assembly work, telecom etc.
Transport och maskinförare	Drivers of all kinds, construction machine operators.
Arbete utan krav på yrkesutbildning	Unskilled work in various occupational fields.





 Arbetsförmedlingen