

## Good to Know

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## 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-Landschaft, 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), Day of Prayer, Christmas (December 25th) and Boxing Day (December 26th).

### Shop Hours

Shop hours vary according to canton. Canton Basel-Landschaft does not have officially regulated shop hours. Most grocery shops are open from Monday to Friday, from 8.00 am to 7.00 pm. However, the times may vary depending on the shop and may be longer or shorter. On Saturdays, most shops close earlier than during the week. On Sundays, most shops are closed, with the exception of shops in railway stations or at fuel stations 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 to 12.00 and from 14.00 to 17.00. Several services reopen at 13.30 in the afternoon or can be reached by telephone outside of regular office hours. Office hours for community public services vary greatly. Particularly small communities may have limited opening hours. Finding out in advance what the opening hours are, by telephone or internet, is recommended.

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

[www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/opening-hours--holidays](http://www.hallo-baselland.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 Office for Migration and Citizenship (Amt für Migration und Bürgerrecht). There are short-term permits (up to 1 year), residence permits (temporary), settlement permits (permanent) and cross-border commuter permits.

- 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 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 persons 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 Office for Migration and Citizenship.
- 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. 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, while fingerprints and a picture are recorded. They must have their biometric data collected at the Office for Migration and Citizenship. All non-German-speaking new arrivals are also invited to an initial information meeting, where they receive important information about their arrival in the canton. 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, a form is issued (Verfallsanzeige). This form must be completed, confirmed by the employer and then submitted to the Office for Migration and Citizenship (Amt für Migration und Bürgerrecht) together with a copy of the passport from the original country or the identity card (for EU/EFTA). The community of residence or the Office for Migration and Citizenship are 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. A sufficient period of residency in Switzerland, German language proficiency, integration and a good financial and legal standing are important requirements for naturalisation.

## 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 to taking naturalisation decisions in the case of simplified naturalisation.

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

[www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/residence-permit](http://www.hallo-baselland.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-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/personal-liability-insurance](http://www.hallo-baselland.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-Landschaft, 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-Landschaft 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 busses, 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. Many restaurants have smoking areas.

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

[www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/alcohol--tobacco--drugs](http://www.hallo-baselland.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. Communities may charge fees for keeping dogs.

### Keeping Pets

Persons 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 according to the rental contract. Animals that are noisy or dangerous may also be forbidden. 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-Landschaft 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 community of residence. The communities may charge a fee for dogs. Moreover, an obligatory liability insurance (Haftpflichtversicherung) has to be concluded for keeping each dog.
- 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).

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

[www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/pets](http://www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/pets)

# What Makes Switzerland Tick

Every country has its own customs. In Switzerland there are several unwritten rules which should be observed.

## Different Cultures

Switzerland is a culturally diverse country due in particular to the four language regions. It is not surprising that regional mentalities vary. The customs of German-speaking Switzerland need not apply to French-speaking Switzerland. Differences between urban and rural regions may also be vast. But there are also some commonalities.

## Greetings

A Swiss greeting involves shaking hands and eye-contact. This also applies to greetings between men and women. The common greeting is "grüezi" (friends use different greetings, such as "hallo" or "hoi"). In rural regions it is common to greet passersby even when one doesn't know them. Saying "thank-you" and "please" is very important: For example, saying "thank-you" and "please" multiple times in shops or restaurants is almost a ritual.

## Punctuality

The famous Swiss punctuality is not just a cliché. If one is more than 5 minutes late one should telephone. In the professional world punctuality is particularly important. Meetings are generally planned ahead of time. Unannounced social visits are not common either.

## Indirect Communication

Uncomfortable matters are often addressed indirectly in Switzerland. Many conversation partners will only use disguised criticism. Nonetheless they will expect the criticism to be taken seriously. This is not easy when one is still learning German. Direct confrontation is avoided in order to preserve harmony when conflicts do arise. For example, one may receive a letter from an irritated neighbour. If a situation is unclear it is better to ask again than not to be sure.

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

[www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/what-makes-switzerland-tick](http://www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/good-to-know/what-makes-switzerland-tick)