

I. Arrival and stay

A. The work permit requirement

Everybody that is going to work in Norway must, as a general rule, have a work permit. You will need a work permit even though you might be working without getting paid. Only a few groups are exempted from this requirement. You have to pay a fee when applying for a work permit. More information about work permits can be found at: www.udi.no/work.

B. Renewing a work permit

In general, work permits are valid for one year. If your work permit can be renewed, you have to apply for the renewal at least one month before the permit expires. A fee has to be paid when submitting your application. Contact the police in your local area if you want to apply for a renewal of your work permit or if you want to find out if it is possible to have your permit renewed.

C. Permanent permit

Some work permits give you the right to permanent residence in Norway.

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D. Work permits for persons from EEA/EU/EFTA

If you are from a EU/EEA/EFTA member country, you can get a work permit in Norway if you have an offer of employment. According to the EU/EEA rules, citizens of EU/EEA/EFTA member countries do not have to pay any fees when applying for a work permit in Norway. Such a permit gives you the right to work in Norway and is usually valid for a period of five years. It does not give you the right to permanent residence. You can get more information about the EEA rules at: www.udi.no/eea.

E. Family immigration

Family immigration means that someone in your family can move to Norway to live here.

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F. Visitor's visa

If someone who wants to visit you needs a visa to come to Norway, they must apply for a visitor's visa at the Norwegian foreign service mission in their home country.

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G. Visits from visa waiver countries

If people from visa waiver countries want to visit you in Norway, they can do so provided that they have funds to cover their travel and stay.

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H. Loss of permits and expulsion

You will lose your work permit if you have given the authorities wrong information. If you lose your permit, you will have to leave Norway. You can be expelled from Norway if you break the rules of the immigration act or get convicted of a criminal offence. You cannot come back to Norway for the duration of your expulsion period. Usually, this travel restriction will also apply to the rest of the Schengen-area.

I. Citizenship

If you have a permit that may give you the right to permanent residence; you can normally apply for citizenship after you have lived in Norway for seven years. There are special rules regarding citizenship for children and persons married to Norwegian citizens. More information about citizenship can be found at: www.udi.no

II. First experiences in Norway

A. Contact with the police

Within 7 days of arriving in Norway, everyone who receives a residence permit must go to the police to register. At the police station, you must show your passport or other identification papers and provide all the necessary information. If you do not register with the police, you will be staying in Norway illegally. This may result in you being deported from the country. Separate rules apply to nationals from EU/EEA countries.

B. Contact with the Norwegian National Population Register

Within 8 days of arriving in Norway, everyone who receives a work or residence permit must go to the Norwegian National Population Register ("Folkeregisteret") to register. You will need to show your passport or other identification papers to the National Population Register. The National Population Register can ask for additional original documents. For more information, contact the National Population Register at www.skatteetaten.no. Separate rules apply to nationals from EU/EEA countries.

C. Tuberculosis test

Most people who are going to remain in Norway for more than 3 months must be tested for tuberculosis. You will normally receive a letter from your local municipality with information about when and where you should go to take the test. If you do not receive this letter, you should contact the public health nurse or Chief Municipal Medical Officer where you live.

D. The national insurance scheme

Membership in the national insurance scheme provides you with a number of rights in Norway, for example the right to free hospitalisation.

E. Driving license

To drive a motor vehicle in Norway you have to have a valid driver's license. If you have a driver's license from another country, you have to contact the Norwegian public roads administration (Vegvesenet). You will be given all the information you need on what to do in order to make your driving license valid in Norway. Generally, driving licenses from other EEA countries are generally valid in Norway. You can get more information about driving licenses and being a motorist in Norway at: www.vegvesen.no or at your local traffic station.

III. Norwegian lessons

A. Learning Norwegian

It is important that you are able to speak Norwegian in order to live in Norway. The Norwegian authorities demand that those who intend to reside in Norway for a long time should learn Norwegian. You have to complete 300 hours of Norwegian language classes in order to get permanent residence and eventually, citizenship in Norway.

B. Obligation to participate

You are obligated to participate in 300 hours of Norwegian language and society classes if:

- You are between the ages of 16 and 55 years, and
- have a work permit that may qualifies you for permanent residence or
- you are married to/living with a person that has a work permit that may qualify the holder for permanent residence.

You are not obliged to participate in language classes when:

- You have a work permit in accordance with the EEA-rules or
- your work permit does not qualify you for the right to permanent residence, for example, au pairs.

C. Costs

You do not have the right to free classes. You or your employer should pay for those classes.

D. More information about Norwegian classes

Norwegian language classes are the responsibility of the municipality you live in. You can find out more about this by contacting the service center or adult education center in the municipality.

IV. Work and the labour market

A. Employment contract

When you get a job, both you and your employer must sign an employment contract. In the contract, your employer will write what your work will involve, how much you will be paid, how many hours you will work, and the rules that will apply for termination of your contract.

B. Wages, taxes and a tax card

When you start working, you have to apply to your municipal tax office for a tax card.

C. Tax return

A tax return is an overall summary of your financial position. It includes a simple tax calculation which states how much you have earned over the course of a year. You will receive your tax return for the previous year from your tax assessment office each spring. You must then check that the information it contains is correct, and send it back to the tax assessment office.

D. Unemployment

If you become unemployed, you are obligated to inform the police. You will lose your permit to work in Norway, but you can apply for a new work permit if you get a new job offer. Get in touch with the police in the area where you live. There are special rules for EEA citizens.

E. NAV

NAV is the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation in Norway. At your local NAV office, you can find a list of job vacancies that have been advertised. You will also find vacancies on www.nav.no. You can also get information about vacancies by calling NAV's service centre at 800 33 166. NAV will inform you about your rights and duties if you become unemployed.

V. Health care

A. Hospitals and Emergency wards

In Norway a person does not go to a hospital without a referral. Contact your personal doctor during office hours.

B. Medical doctor

Read about the personal doctor system and other practical information such as making appointments with a doctor, changing your doctor, being sent to a specialist and the payment of costs.

C. Phone 113 for Ambulance services

In critical or life-threatening situations, you should immediately phone the ambulance service by dialling 113. When you call 113, explain what has happened, and give your address and telephone number.

D. Sick children

If you have one or two children under the age of 12, you are entitled to 10 days of sick leave per calendar year. Children under 12 do not pay any cost-sharing charge at the doctor's office (you may have to pay for the material). Ask your doctor about the rules that apply if your child becomes chronically sick or referred to a hospital.

E. Pregnancy and birth

Pregnant women in Norway have the right to get free check ups and medical help.

F. Abortion

In Norway, pregnant women can choose whether they want to keep the child or not. An abortion must be carried out by the 12th week of the pregnancy. If you wish to have an abortion, you must contact your personal doctor.

G. Dentist

Dentistry is not a part of the personal GP system. The costs of treating teeth are mainly paid by the adult patients themselves. When visiting a private dentist, you pay the price that is set by the dentist for any particular treatment. Children and youth who are 18 years of age and younger get necessary dental treatment free of charge when they visit the public healthcare dentist's office.

VI. Family and children

A. Many kinds of families

In order to get married in Norway, you must be over 18 years old. In Norway you are only allowed to have one spouse.

B. Separation and divorce

If you no longer wish to live with your spouse, you have the right to separate or divorce.

C. Pregnancy and birth

Pregnant women in Norway have the right to get free check ups and medical help.

D. Children

If you have a baby, you or your spouse can have time off work or studying until the child is about one year old.

E. The elderly

Many older people in Norway lead active lives and live by themselves. In order to allow older people to live at home as long as possible, they are offered help at home. If older people become ill or cannot cope by themselves, it is normal for them to move to a nursing home where they can be looked after.

F. Death in the family

All religions and religious communities have their own traditions and rituals for deaths and funerals. In Norway, funeral parlours provide information about how a funeral can be arranged and organise the ceremony. In some situations, it is possible to apply for the National Insurance Service to cover the cost of a funeral.

VII. Education

A. Compulsory education for children

Children living in Norway for more than 3 months, have the right and obligation to go to school. If you have children who are above the age of 6, they must go to school, and they must attend compulsory education for 10 years. You must contact your nearest school or your municipality to register your children at the school.

B. Upper secondary school

After completing their compulsory education, it is normal for children to continue their education at upper secondary school. Young people are entitled to go to upper secondary school, but it is not compulsory.

VIII. Society and democracy

A. Population

Approximately 4.6 million people live in Norway, and most people live in the big towns and cities. Oslo is the capital, and has a population of about 530,000 people. In Norway there are

around 365,000 immigrants from over 200 countries. The biggest immigrant populations come from Pakistan, Sweden, Denmark, Iraq, Vietnam, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, Turkey and Serbia and Montenegro. There are about 120,000 immigrants in Oslo.

B. Democracy

Norway is a democracy. This means that the people choose who will govern them, and that the people choose representatives to the Storting – the Norwegian parliament – and for the county and municipal authorities. Norway is a monarchy, but the King has no real power. The Storting and the government are the most powerful political bodies in the country.

C. Laws

Norway is governed by Norwegian laws, which are adopted by the Storting. Everyone who lives in Norway must follow these laws. If you break the law, you will not escape punishment just because you were not aware of the law.

D. Social rights

In Norway everyone has freedom of speech and freedom of the press. You can, for example, criticise or protest against things that you believe are wrong. Newspapers and radio and TV stations are not dependent on what the state says or thinks.

E. Welfare and taxes

Everyone must pay part of their income and wealth in tax to the state and municipality where they live. The tax revenues are used to run hospitals, nursery schools, schools and asylum centres, to build roads and for many other tasks that are important to society. By paying tax, everyone contributes to society.

IX. Knowing the law

A. Norwegian law

Everyone in Norway needs to know what is legal and what is illegal. You may be convicted of an offence even if you do not know that you are breaking a Norwegian law.

B. The police

The police have many functions. They prevent crime and keep the peace. They also protect people within the country's borders, and investigate crime. You can call the Police at 02800.

C. Discrimination

Discrimination means treating someone worse than others because of their gender, nationality, race, religion, skin colour, disability or sexual orientation.

D. Theft and handling stolen goods

Theft is illegal in Norway. It is also illegal to buy or sell items that have been stolen, even if they were stolen by someone else.

E. Alcohol

It is legal to consume alcohol almost everywhere in Norway, but not in public places. It is illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol.

F. Smuggling

It is not permitted to bring goods into the country unlawfully. All buying and selling of smuggled goods may result in prosecution. You have a personal responsibility to make sure that you do not buy smuggled goods.

G. Narcotic drugs

The sale, possession and consumption of all forms of narcotic drugs is strictly forbidden within Norway's borders. Khat, hashish and cannabis/marijuana, which may be legal in some other countries, are considered to be illegal narcotics in Norway.

H. Weapons

It is illegal to carry firearms, knives or any other weapons, even for self-defence purposes. The same applies to replica firearms, toys, air soft guns and other objects with the appearance of a weapon. It is illegal to buy or sell weapons without a special permit from the Norwegian authorities.

I. Violence and threats of violence

The use of violence and causing physical injury to any person is illegal in Norway. This also applies to family members. It is also illegal to threaten someone with violence. The law is particularly strict with regard to violence against women and children.

J. Age of consent

It is illegal in Norway to have sexual intercourse with anyone who is under the age of 16, even if both parties give their consent. It is the responsibility of each person to find out if their sexual partner is over the age of 16.

K. Rape/sexual abuse

Rape is a serious crime in Norway. This also applies to marital rape. There is no excuse for rape, regardless of how the victim is dressed or behaves. Convicted rapists are sent to prison.

L. Genital mutilation

Female circumcision is strictly forbidden in Norway. All forms of female circumcision, including "sunna", are regarded as genital mutilation.

M. Sexually transmitted diseases

If you know that you are infected with a sexually transmitted disease yet still infect other people with this disease, you may be prosecuted. If you are in any doubt about whether you have a sexually transmitted disease, you should consult a doctor. Doctors have a duty to protect their patients' privacy.

N. Forced marriage

Everyone has the right to choose who they want to marry, and it is illegal to force someone to marry. It is a punishable offence to force someone to marry, and a forced marriage can be annulled.

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