



Your  
Relocation  
Guide  
to  
Switzerland



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RELOCATIONS

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**MOVING LIVES** *Not just boxes*



Professional  
Cooperation  
Guidelines



<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	Country code (0041) + Area Code.
<b>STANDARD TIME:</b>	GMT + 1 hour.
<b>WEIGHTS &amp; MEASURES:</b>	Metric.
<b>ELECTRICITY:</b>	380/220v, 50Hz, 3 phases.
<b>INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:</b>	No special requirements.
<b>PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:</b>	The only official public holiday recognised in Switzerland is National Day, however, the below dates relate to most Cantons. Please note there are numerous other holidays in the various Cantons New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whit Monday, 1st August National Day, Federal Fast Day 3rd Sunday in September, Christmas Day.
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	Office hours are often flexi, and the average working week is 40 to 42 hours.
<b>BANK HOURS:</b>	0830-1630 Mon-Fri.
<b>EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:</b>	Police 117 Fire Department 118 Ambulance 144
<b>UK EMBASSY:</b>	UK Embassy Thunstrasse 50, CH-3000 Bern Tel: +41 31 359 7700
<b>SWISS EMBASSY IN LONDON:</b>	16-18 Montague Place London W1H 2BQ Tel: 02076 166 000



## Part 1 – Background Information on the Swiss Confederation

### Background

The Swiss Confederation was founded in 1291 as a defensive alliance among three cantons. In succeeding years, other localities joined the original three. The Swiss Confederation secured its independence from the Holy Roman Empire in 1499. Switzerland's sovereignty and neutrality have long been honoured by the major European powers, and the country was not involved in either of the two World Wars. The political and economic integration of Europe over the past half century, as well as Switzerland's role in many UN and international organisations, has strengthened Switzerland's ties with its neighbours. However, the country did not officially become a UN member until 2002. Switzerland remains active in many UN and International organisations but retains a strong commitment to neutrality.

### Geography

This is a landlocked country of west central Europe that is surrounded by France, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein and Italy. It is also Europe's most mountainous country. The southern half lies within the Alps, while the northwest is dominated by the Jura mountains. The rest of the land is on a high plateau where most people live. Switzerland has one of the highest standards of living in the world. Yet it has few mineral resources and most food and industrial raw materials must be imported.

Engineering is the most important industry, producing precision instruments and heavy machinery, other important industries are chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Banking and financial services also are very important.

### Climate

The climate varies greatly, depending on altitude and relief, but in general summers are mild and winters are cold with heavy snowfalls.

### Population

Switzerland has a population of about 8.5 million. Foreigners account for around 25% of the residence population. The average is increasing, as people live longer and have fewer children. Lifestyles are changing, family relations, work and education are adapting to new demands. Young Swiss follow the same trade as their contemporaries abroad, but many traditions remain.

### Language

The main languages in Switzerland are German, French and Italian.

### Environmental Issues

The environment is under intense pressure from pollution, air pollution from vehicle emissions and open-air burning, acid rain, water pollution from increased use of agriculture fertilizers and loss of biodiversity.

### Currency

The unit of currency in Switzerland is the Swiss Franc (Sfr) divided into 100 centimes. The following denominations are in circulation:

- Notes: 10, 20, 50, 100 and 1,000 Francs
- Coins: 5, 10, 20 and 50 (1/2 Franc) centimes and 1, 2- and 5-francs

Leading credit cards are widely accepted.

### Economy

Switzerland, a country that espouses neutrality, is a prosperous and modern market economy with low unemployment, a highly skilled labour force, and a per capita GDP among the highest in the world. Switzerland's economy benefits from a highly developed service sector, led by financial services, and a manufacturing industry that specializes in high-technology, knowledge-based production. Its economic and political stability, transparent



legal system, exceptional infrastructure, efficient capital markets, and low corporate tax rates also make Switzerland one of the world's most competitive economies.

The Swiss have brought their economic practices largely into conformity with the EU's to enhance their international competitiveness, but some trade protectionism remains, particularly for its small agricultural sector. The fate of the Swiss economy is tightly linked to that of its neighbours in the euro zone, which purchases half of Swiss exports. The global financial crisis of 2008 and resulting economic downturn in 2009 stalled demand for Swiss exports and put Switzerland into a recession. During this period, the Swiss National Bank (SNB) implemented a zero-interest rate policy to boost the economy, as well as to prevent appreciation of the franc, and Switzerland's economy began to recover in 2010.

The sovereign debt crises unfolding in neighbouring euro-zone countries, however, coupled with ongoing economic instability in Russia and other eastern European economies continue to pose a significant risk to the Swiss economy, driving up demand for the Swiss franc by investors seeking a safe-haven currency. In January 2015, the SNB abandoned the Swiss franc's peg to the euro, roiling global currency markets and making active SNB intervention a necessary hallmark of present-day Swiss monetary policy. The independent SNB has upheld its zero-interest rate policy and conducted major market interventions to prevent further appreciation of the Swiss franc, but parliamentarians have urged it to do more to weaken the currency. The franc's strength has made Swiss exports less competitive and weakened the country's growth outlook; GDP growth fell below 2% per year from 2011-16.

In recent years, Switzerland has responded to increasing pressure from neighbouring countries and trading partners to reform its banking secrecy laws, by agreeing to conform to OECD regulations on administrative assistance in tax matters, including tax evasion. The Swiss government has also renegotiated its double taxation agreements with numerous countries, including the US, to incorporate OECD standards, and is openly considering the possibility of imposing taxes on bank deposits held by foreigners.

### **Education**

There are also numerous independent schools. Education is generally compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15, but Cantons do vary.

### **Religion**

Switzerland has a vast multinational culture and all religions are represented.

### **Electricity**

The domestic supply of electricity is usually 220v AC, 50 cycles/Hz; a supply of 380v 3-phase is available in most buildings as well. Plugs are of the two-round-pin type, 4mm diameter with the live and neutral pins 2cm apart. Electric light bulbs are of the screw type. If importing electrical goods which run on lower voltage, remember that a transformer will be needed. Appliances brought from abroad may not fit into the standard Swiss kitchen.

### **Health and Medical Facilities**

The Swiss healthcare system is a combination of public, subsidised private and fully private systems. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows you to access state-provided healthcare in Switzerland at a reduced cost and will cover your treatment until you return to the UK.

*Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date our company cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.*



## Part 2 – Switzerland Import Customs Regulations

To the best of our knowledge, the following documentation is required to import household and personal effects into Switzerland. Regulations are subject to change without notice. You will be required to supply the documentation to us in plenty of time before the commencement of your move.

To apply for duty free entry of your household and personal effects.

### First report at customs

All Importers

- 18.44 form Original to be supplied by us.
- Passport or ID card copy.
- Inventory of the goods in one of the official languages, French, German, Italian, and English is also accepted.
- Copy of lease or property title for your Swiss apartment or house.

### Additional documentation for returning Swiss and immigrants from the 25 EU Countries

- Copy of registration certificate from the local town hall.

### Additional documentation for foreign Non-EU immigrants

- A copy of residence permit or approval letter from the local immigration department.

Duty free entry provided the imported goods have been in your possession and use for at least six months prior to importation.

The import of the removal goods must take place within 24 months from change of residence.

Second or additional shipments must be notified at time of main import of household goods and again must take place within 24 months from change of residence.

### Diplomats removals

Documents required:

- Application for free entry on form 14.60 to be made by Embassy to the Customs Office of importation as requested.

Application to be forwarded to the nearest customs office i.e. to Geneve-La Praille or Bern, where the formalities for duty-free importation will be carried out.

Customs form on file with most foreign Embassies and Consulates. Copies are not accepted – original signature is mandatory.

Diplomats can import alcohol duty free, but this is limited to the actual quota agreed by the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the respective embassies.

### Wedding Trousseaux

Documents required:

- Original Customs form 18.45 to be supplied by us.
- Inventory of the goods.
- Marriage certificate.
- Residence permit for both partners (if non-Swiss citizens).

Duty free entry provided the items will be used for another 12 months and the shipment must take place within six months of the civil marriage.

If used articles only are imported Clearance is the same as Household goods with documents as stipulated.



## **Inheritance**

Documents required:

- Original Customs form 18.46 to be supplied by us.
- Inventory of the goods with supporting legal declaration or Will confirming that the goods to be imported are the rightful property of the inheritor.
- Certificate of death or equivalent document confirming the last residence of the deceased.
- Passport copy of inheritor.

Duty free entry provided the inheritor has resided in Switzerland at the time of death and at the time of import, but please note the Swiss Customs Authorities may charge additional for the clearance.

Only used household goods and effects can be imported duty-free as inheritance goods

## **New furniture and household goods**

Documents required:

- Purchase Invoice.

All new items are subject to duties and taxes payment.

Duty is charged on the weight.

Taxes: VAT is charged at 8%

All duties and taxes must be paid prior to our vehicle entering Switzerland, and please note the Swiss Customs Authorities may also charge additional for the clearance.

## **Works of Art and Antiques not part of normal Household and Personal effects**

Documents required:

Inventory list showing the art work:

- name,
- year of production and if over 100 years old will need certification,
- author / artist,
- value (if possible).

Please note Antiques and Works or Art if not part of household and personal effects is usually liable to VAT.

## **Motor vehicles**

Even if the vehicle is being imported separately, or driven by yourself, it must be mentioned on the 18.44 form (type and chassis number).

A copy of your Registration document and the Purchase contract/receipt will be required, and you must have owned and used the vehicle in the UK for at least six months for duty free entry.

Third party liability insurance is mandatory for the registration and use of a vehicle on Swiss roads. Vehicle cannot be used without number plate (foreign or Swiss).

## **Alcoholic beverages, wine, beer etc**

Declared on a separate inventory.

Duty free if part of a removal and in a reasonable quantity appropriate to the amount of removal goods (max 200 litres of wine). Must be packed separately to enable easy access by Swiss Customs Authorities if required.



### **Strong Liquor over 25% proof**

Must be declared on separate inventory.

Duty free up to 12 litres. Additional quantities will attract very high taxes and duty. Again, must be packed separately to enable easy access by Swiss Customs Authorities if required.

Although wines and spirits can be imported into Switzerland, we will not remove these unless they are suitably packed to alleviate spillage, and the consignment may be delayed for a customs inspection, which can result in additional removal costs.

### **Firearms**

Please note we will not carry firearms in any of our removal vehicles.

### **Plants**

No documents required if in reasonable a quantity together with removal, plant health certificate is helpful.

If not together with removal or large quantities, then a health certificate is required.

### **Pets (dogs, cats, etc.)**

Please see further information for relocating your pets to Switzerland:

<https://www.blv.admin.ch/blv/en/home/tiere/reisen-mit-heimtieren.html>

### **Food**

It is recommended that food stuffs are not included with your removal goods. However, if there are certain items you must remove from the UK, please contact us for further advice.

### **Endangered Species**

A CITES certificate is normally required. There is a worldwide ban on the movement of Ivory without a CITES certificate, **please note old pianos usually have ivory keys and a CITES certification will be required.**

For Information on obtaining a CITES certificate then please visit: <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/endangered-species-application-for-import-and-export-permit>

### **Wood Packaging**

The Swiss Government adopted ISPM-15 standards for wood packaging. Wooden packing materials, i.e. outer casing must have been heat treated and proofed with an according ISPM seal.