

A silhouette of a person in a suit stands with their back to the camera, looking out at a large commercial airplane taking off from a runway. The scene is set against a bright blue sky with some light clouds. The person is positioned in the center of the frame, and the airplane is in the upper right quadrant.

VISA AND TRAVEL INFORMATION - SWITZERLAND

The Federal Council has implemented border controls as part of measures to maintain Switzerland's capacity to cope with the COVID-19 epidemic. Extraordinary entry restrictions apply for people arriving from the Schengen countries, as well as all non-EU countries.

The Federal Council has also decided to suspend all new Schengen visa and national visa requests from all non-EU countries until 15 June 2020.

Learn more below about who is affected and what action needs to be taken.

Am I affected by these extraordinary entry restrictions?

All foreign nationals wishing to enter Switzerland directly from a Schengen or a non-EU country will be refused entry. This includes, but is not limited to, foreigners entering Switzerland as service recipients, tourists, visitors or participants in events; for medical treatment; to look for work; or to apply for a residence permit. Self-employment and the provision of services are subject to compulsory registration from day one (EU/EFTA).

Am I allowed to travel to Switzerland?

Holders of any of the following documents are entitled to enter the country:

- ▶ Cross-border permit G
- ▶ Short-termin residence permit L
- ▶ Residence permit B
- ▶ Permanent residence permit C
- ▶ Legitimation cards of the FDFA
- ▶ A visa issued by Switzerland, but only:
 - C visas with the purpose „Business travel“ as specialists in the health sector or „Official visits“
 - D visas within the period of validity
- ▶ Official approval of residence permits
- ▶ Online notification certificate (the document is required from day one for all industries. The eight-day registration free option is currently not available)

What happens if I cannot leave the Schengen area before my Schengen visa expires?

No sanctions will be imposed for travellers who are unable to leave the Schengen area before expiry of their visa due to the current health crisis. Travellers must contact the cantonal migration authorities.

Questions?

Contact BDO -
your partner for all
immigration questions.

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How can I obtain a Swiss visa if I have not submitted an application yet?

The issuing of Schengen visas as well as national visas to persons from risk countries and non-EU countries will be suspended until 15 June 2020. Exceptions to this rule may be made for applications from persons in a situation of extreme need, or those of great importance (e.g. specialists in the health sector or other special cases).

I have submitted my visa application. When will I receive my permit?

Visa applications that have been submitted but have not yet processed will be returned to the applicant and the visa fee will be refunded.

I am already in possession of a national visa but cannot travel due to COVID-19. What happens now?

Persons who already have a visa issued by Switzerland, but who cannot use it due to travel restrictions because of COVID-19, will be issued a free substitute or follow-up visa under the following conditions:

- ▶ A new visa application must be submitted
- ▶ The documents must clearly show that the trip is a substitute trip, i.e. has the same purpose and duration
- ▶ A (new) valid travel health insurance policy is available
- ▶ There must be no entry restrictions
- ▶ This relief procedure applies only between 15 March and 30 September 2020, subject to the general visa ban

My work permit application is pending with the Swiss authority. What happens now?

If your work application has already been approved by the federal migration authorities or the cantonal migration authority has issued the approval, you may still enter Switzerland. If the entry permit or the approval of the permit has not yet been issued, it must be suspended.

Can I submit a new work permit application?

Until further notice work permit applications for newly arriving foreign workers are no longer accepted by the authorities. This does not apply to specialists in the health sector (e.g. researchers) whose work is of great importance in Switzerland.

I already hold a Swiss permit. What happens with permit extension, localisation and other regular modification requests?

All permit extensions and changes will continue to be processed and approved by the authorities provided that all requirements are met.

Am I still allowed to deliver goods to Switzerland?

Entry is permitted if you are executing a transport order (e.g. as a forwarding company) and can present a goods delivery note.

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