

Permits at a glance

Principle : Any foreigner working in Switzerland must hold a valid work permit or authorization before start of work !

Applicable for :

- Permanent/regular staff
- Temporary staff

Is a work permit needed ? YES for non-Swiss

Activity of less than 3 months :

- EU/EFTA online job advert
- Non-EU/EFTA valid visa covering the duration of stay → is valid as an authorization without registration to the commune

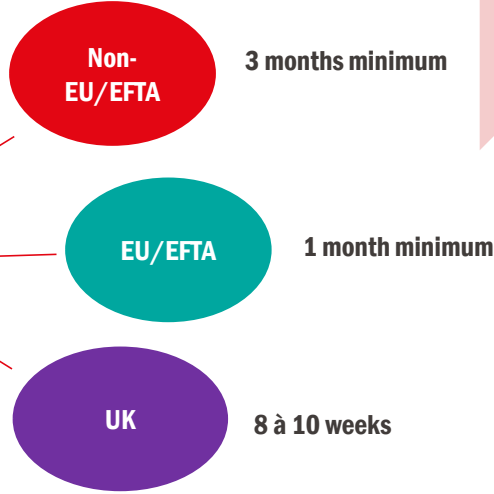
Activity of more than 3 months :

- EU/EFTA registration on arrival in Switzerland within 14 days at the commune of residence to obtain a permit
- Non-EU/EFTA valid visa + registration within 14 days at the commune of residence to obtain a permit

If yes, plan ahead !
 Respect the deadlines and processing time in order to ensure the person can start work as per start date

No work permit or valid authorization = no work
 For non EU/EFTA nationals, the employee must wait for final approval or authorization to enter CH (visa) before traveling

Processing time after application filing



Processing times are estimates and may vary depending on workload of authorities. HR team processing time is not included (approx. 1 week after all documents have been accepted).

Permits at a glance or permits in brief

EU/EFTA Countries

- **EU 26 + EU1** : Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden
- **EU 1** : Croatia, free movement of person with reactivated safeguard clause → 31.12.2026
- **EFTA** : Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway
- **United Kingdom** incl. England, Scotland, Wales - Northern Ireland not considered as EU by CH immigration
- **EU 27 + EFTA** = Geographical and professional mobility with safeguard clause possible (for EU 1). May start work after proper registration with local commune.
- **Rest of the world = Non-EU**

Restrictions

- **Quota*** system applicable for :
 - * except for PhD students, Post-doctoral researcher >2 years
- **United Kingdom**
- **EU 1 - Croatia**
- **Non-EU**
- **Quotas are released quarterly**
- **First come, first served basis**
- **Permits limited to :**
 - Employer (EPFL)
 - Canton (place of work)
 - Type of activity
- **Priority of local workers for new hires (hors UE) :** EPFL has to show that despite serious search efforts on Swiss & EU markets no other Swiss nor EU nationals can perform the job

Types of work & residence permits

L - Permit Short term permit

Limited to the duration of the contract or max. 12 months. Can be extended to further 12 months. Maximum 24 months.

B - Permit Long term permit

For duration above 24 months or unlimited. Depending on nationality has to be renewed every year or every 5 years.

C - Permit

Permanent residence permit

Foreign nationals who have been granted a C permit after five years or ten years of residence in Switzerland (depending on the nationality). Subject to various conditions.

Professor appointed ETH Board obtains C permit directly

G - Permit Cross-border commuters permit

EU/EFTA nationals who reside in an EU/EFTA member state and work in Switzerland.

They must return to their main place of residence abroad at least once a week.

For non-EU, additional and other conditions apply.

Dependent permit

Mainly for married couples / children - permit always strictly linked to the permit of the main holder. Always one main holder and one dependent.

For non-married couples, if special conditions are met according to the guidelines of the authorities but very restrictive! May be with or without allowed work activity.