

As a foreign employee in Finland

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Right to work and gathering information of foreign employees

EU citizens* and registration of the right of residence

If you are an EU citizen, you can work in Finland without a special permit. However, you must register your right of residence with the Finnish Immigration Service if you stay in Finland for more than three months. The exception to this is Nordic citizens whose registration takes place at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

* This also applies to citizens of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Non-EU citizens

If you are not a Finnish or EU citizen, you need a residence permit that entitles you to work, with a few exceptions. For example, it is possible to work on a seasonal work certificate or a seasonal work visa for a maximum of 90 days.

If you have a residence permit, the right to work can be found on the residence permit card. However, a Kela card, driving licence, tax card or A1 certificate are not documents that entitle you to work.

Your residence permit may automatically include the right to work (e.g. permanent residence permit or residence permit based on family ties). Your residence permit may be granted as employer or sector-specific, in which case you can only work for a designated employer or in the sector indicated in the permit.

With the student's residence permit, you have a limited right to work.

Asylum seekers

If you are an asylum seeker and have an official travel document, you can work in Finland on the basis of an asylum application after three months have elapsed from the submission of your application. If you have arrived in the country without an official travel document, your right to work begins six months after you have submitted an asylum application.

For more information on an asylum seeker's right to work, its termination and the right to work, visit the Finnish Immigration Service website at www.migri.fi/en.

Employer's responsibilities

The employer is obliged to ensure from their employee's official travel document or residence permit card that a foreign employee has a residence permit for an employee or that they do not need one.

The employer must keep the data on the right to work of a foreign employee also after the termination of the employment relationship. For this reason, the employer has the duty to request a residence permit from you for viewing and copying.

Terms of employment

Employment contract

Employment contract can be made either in writing or orally. In practice, it is always wisest to conclude a written employment contract for

the legal protection of both parties and to avoid misunderstandings. If you have entered into an employment contract orally, the employer must provide you with the terms of employment in writing within a month at the latest.

A written employment contract or statement of the terms of employment shall specify at least:

- the domicile or business location of the employer and the employee
- work start date
- the duration of a fixed-term contract and the basis for the fixed-term contract
- length of the trial period (if a trial period is agreed on)
- place where work is to be performed; if there is no fixed workplace, an explanation of the principles according to which the employee will work in various work locations
- principal work tasks of the employee
- collective agreement applicable to the work*
- grounds for determination of wages and wage payment period
- working hours to be observed, and if the employer has agreed on variable working hours (e.g. 10–30 hours a week), the employer must provide an explanation of how the working hours will vary in practice
- the manner in which the annual holiday is determined
- the period of notice or grounds for determining it.

* A collective agreement is an agreement concluded by employers' and employees' organisations that determines, for example, what working hours and wages are in the area of the agreement.

Working hours and working time records

Daily and weekly working hours

Regular working hours are a maximum of 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week. In some jobs (restaurant, transport, care facilities, etc.), regular working hours can be arranged as a period-based work schedule. In such cases, the regular working hours referred to in the Working Time Act are either 80 hours over a two-week period or 120 hours over a three-week period. In the restaurant sector, regular working hours are a maximum of 112.5 hours over a three-week period.

Review the detailed provisions on working hours in the sector from the applicable collective agreement.

Working hours can also be set as an average, which means that daily and weekly working hours can vary without you accumulating overtime. The employer must inform the employees if the workplace has such a working time system in place. In this case, the employer must prepare a plan for the equalisation of working hours in advance. The plan must state how long it is valid and what the weekly working hours of the employees are. At the end of the planned period, the working hours must be equal to normal working hours, usually 40 hours a week. If the working time does not balance out, you must receive overtime compensation.

Working time records and pay

The employer must keep records of the hours worked by the employee and the salaries paid for these. You have the right to receive a copy of the working time records from your employer. You should also keep a record of the hours you have worked. Remember to also record the start and end times of shifts.

Rest periods

Daily break

During workdays that last over six hours, you are entitled to a break of at least 30 minutes for which you will not be paid if you are free to leave the workplace during the break.

Daily coffee breaks may have been agreed on in collective agreements, in which case these are paid work time.

Daily free time

An uninterrupted period of free time lasting 11 hours is usually required between the end and beginning of working hours. In certain cases, the free period may be shorter.

Weekly free time

As a rule, you must receive an uninterrupted weekly rest period of at least 35 hours once a week.

If possible, the weekly rest period must be placed in connection with Sunday.

Overtime

According to the Working Time Act, overtime is working hours that exceed 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week. In two-week period work, overtime are hours exceeding 80 hours and in three-week period work hours that exceed 120 hours. However, overtime compensation may be agreed on differently in the collective agreement.

Check your sector's overtime regulations in the applicable collective agreement.

Maximum number of working hours

The total working time of an employee (regular and overtime combined) shall not exceed an average of 48 hours per week over a four-month period. Differing provisions on this period may have been agreed in the collective agreement.

The employer must monitor the working time of the employees so that the maximum working time is not exceeded.

Consent to overtime

The employer must request your consent for overtime separately each time. In other words, the employee cannot give permanent consent for overtime in their employment contract.

Pay and payslips

Pay

In Finland, you always have the right to be paid for your work. There are no unpaid internships in Finland unless you are studying at school or in a TE Office work try-out. In Finland, there is no general minimum wage defined by law, but the salary is determined in accordance with the collective agreement of the sector in question. If the sector does not have a collective agreement, you must be paid a normal and reasonable salary for work.

The salaries specified in the collective agreement vary according to your job description and the job's vocational skills requirements.

For example, in 2023

- a cleaner's minimum salary after training period is EUR 11.73/hour
- the starting salary for a cook in the restaurant industry is EUR 11.38/hour
- the minimum wage of a new professional in the construction sector is EUR 14.45/hour
- in the horticultural and agricultural sectors, the hourly wage is at least EUR 9.35/hour (+ a vocational skills allowance of at least 4% at the latest when you have worked for the same employer for a total of 10 months).

Salaries are usually increased at regular intervals. You can check up-to-date wages and salaries from the collective agreement for each sector in Finnish on the Finlex website at www.finlex.fi/fi/viranomaiset/tyoehto/.

Sick pay

In case of illness or an accident, that prohibit you from working, you are entitled for your salary from the duration of the illness. A salary is paid for at least the day of illness and nine subsequent days of illness. If you fall ill, notify your employer immediately. The employer may require you to present a medical certificate for the illness. The collective agreements contain more detailed sector-specific provisions on the determination of sick pay.

Payslip

When the employer pays your salary, the employer must provide you with a payslip showing the amount of your salary and the grounds for its determination, for example the number of hours worked and the amount of the hourly salary, as well as any overtime or other compensation. Based on the payslip calculation, you must be able to calculate that your salary has been paid correctly.

Allowances and compensation that increase a salary

Overtime allowance

Every day when your work time exceeds 8 hours (= daily overtime), your salary must be increased by 50% for the first 2 hours and by 100% for the following hours.

Every week when your work time exceeds 40 hours (= weekly overtime), your salary must be increased by 50% for the first 8 hours and by 100% for the following hours. Daily overtime will not be included in weekly overtime.

Overtime compensation may be agreed on differently in the collective agreement. Check the provisions on overtime compensation in your field from the applicable collective agreement.

In some areas, work is done in periods. In such

work, no weekly or daily overtime is calculated, and all hours worked during the period are added up. For example, employees in the transport sector work in two-week periods, in which the first 12 hours of work exceeding 80 hours are paid with a salary increase of 50 % and the remaining hours with a salary increase of 100%. In the restaurant sector, on the other hand, employees work in three-week periods, in which the salary for the first 18 hours of work exceeding 120 hours is increased by 50% and the salary for the remainder is increased by 100%.

Exchanging overtime compensation for time off

You may agree with your employer on the replacement of the additional and overtime allowance in whole or in part with paid free time. If you have agreed that overtime is to be paid in the form of free time, your free time must be increased in the same way as overtime pay. For example, one hour of 100% overtime is two hours of free time.

Sunday compensation

A employee working on a Sunday or a church holiday must be paid 100% extra of their daily salary as Sunday compensation. You can agree with your employer on changing Sunday work compensation for paid free time. If you work on Sunday for one hour, you get two hours off. If Sunday work has been overtime, you must also receive overtime compensation. This may be agreed upon differently in a collective agreement.

Evening and night allowances

You may also be entitled to evening and night work compensation in accordance with the collective agreement. The amounts and calculation methods for these allowances can be found in the sector-specific collective agreements. For example, if you work in the restaurant sector after 6 p.m., you are entitled to a separate evening allowance, which is paid for each evening hour.

Annual holidays

Accumulated holiday days

You are legally entitled to paid annual leave. You will accumulate holiday days during the holiday credit year, i.e. the period between 1 April and 31 March, when you have worked for at least 14 days or 35 hours per month.

- Holiday entitlement is two weekdays for each full holiday credit month if, by the end of the holiday credit year, the duration of the employment relationship has been an uninterrupted period of less than one year.
- If your employment relationship has been an uninterrupted period of more than one year, your holiday entitlement is 2.5 weekdays for each full holiday credit month.

Holidays

Your employer must grant you a summer holiday (24 weekdays) during the holiday season of 2 May – 30 September.

A winter holiday (the portion exceeding 24 weekdays) is granted after the holiday season and before the beginning of the next holiday season, between 1 October and 30 April.

Earned annual leave days must be kept free, they cannot be taken as money. You must take at least 18 days off each year during the holiday period. If you want to save the rest of your holidays and take them off later the following year, for example, you can agree on this with your employer. This practice is known as carried-over holiday.

Employer's responsibilities

The employer must keep a record of the employee's annual holidays and carried-over holidays as well as the holiday pay and holiday compensation determined on the basis of the Annual Holidays Act.

The annual holiday records must show the duration and dates of the annual holidays, the amount of holiday pay and compensation, and the basis on which they are determined. You have the right to receive a copy of your annual holiday records from your employer.

Holiday pay and compensation

Employees on a monthly salary

An employee on a monthly salary has the right to receive their normal salary also during their annual leave.

Employees on an hourly or project-based wage

The holiday pay of hourly and contract employees may be different in different collective agreements.

However, the annual holiday pay is always at least 9% of the salary paid during the holiday credit year in an employment relationship of less than a year and 11.5% in an employment relationship of more than a year. For example, in the construction sector holiday pay is 18.5%. This also includes a holiday bonus.

Holiday compensation

If you work part-time and do not accumulate annual holidays, or if your employment relationship ends before you have been able to take annual holidays, you are entitled to a financial holiday compensation. This is 9% in an employment relationship lasting less than a year and 11.5% in an employment relationship lasting for more than a year. Annual holiday compensation is paid at the end of your employment relationship or at the latest at the end of the holiday period.

Holiday bonus

Several collective agreements have also agreed on a holiday bonus (return from holiday money), which is usually 50% of holiday pay. This holiday bonus is paid in addition to the annual holiday pay.

Employer's responsibilities

When paying holiday pay or holiday compensation, the employer is obliged to provide you with a statement that must indicate the amount of holiday pay or holiday compensation and the basis on which it was determined.

Important to note

Each employee is entitled to annual holiday and holiday pay.

Occupational health care and accident insurance

The employee is entitled to at least statutory preventive occupational health care.

If desired, the employer may also include medical services in the occupational health care agreement, which means that you can get to a doctor through occupational health care if necessary. In this case, you can also get a medical certificate through occupational health care if you are ill.

Employer's responsibilities

The employer must arrange occupational health care for all their employees regardless of the number of employees, the quality of the work to be done and the contract of employment or the working time.

A written occupational health care agreement must be available for employees to see. The agreement shows where occupational health care is arranged and how to contact occupational health care.

In sectors where there is a particular risk of illness, there are mandatory health examinations to which the employer must guide you.

Occupational accident and occupational disease insurance

Employers must take out occupational accident and occupational disease insurance for their employees. Insurance compensates for the costs and loss of earnings caused by an occupational accident and occupational disease. Information concerning the insurance company must be provided to the employee in writing either in the employment contract or statement of the terms of employment.

In the event of an accident

If you experience an accident at work, notify your employer or your immediate supervisor immediately. Your employer or supervisor will provide you with an insurance certificate that will allow you to get treatment for your injury free of charge, for example at a health centre or hospital. If you do not have the insurance certificate with you, you will have to pay for the treatment and medicines yourself. In this case, the expenses you have paid will be reimbursed by the insurance company against receipts.

Identification card and tax number

If you work on a construction site, you must display a photo ID that you receive from your employer. The personal ID must include your name, employer's name and your tax number entered in the public tax number register. The tax number can also be used in other sectors, such as shipyards.

Where do you get a tax number?

You have received a tax number in connection with your tax card. If you have lost your tax card, you can ask for your tax number from the tax office.

Foreign employees must usually apply for a tax number from the tax office.

Termination of employment

If you have a fixed-term employment contract, it will end at the time indicated in the employment contract. An employment contract valid until further notice must be terminated separately.

The contract can be terminated by either the employer or the employee. The employer must have a justified reason for dismissal. The employee does not need to specify any reason for giving notice. However, both must comply with the period of notice specified in the employment contract.

If the employment contract includes a trial period at the beginning of employment and you wish to terminate the employment relationship during the trial period, you do not need to observe the period of notice, instead the employment relationship will end immediately.

General

The employer is forbidden to charge you anything for getting a job. You have the right to keep your passport and residence permit in your own possession. The employer only has the right to see them. If you have a bank account in Finland, you do not need to give a bank internet codes or a bank card to any third party, including your employer.

As a foreigner, you have the same rights and obligations at work as a Finn. If you are treated poorly in the workplace or are paid lower pay because you are a foreigner, the employer may be guilty of discrimination prohibited by law. This treatment may be considered criminal.

The occupational safety and health (OSH) authority ensures that everyone has the statutory terms of employment and working conditions at the workplace. The OSH authority also monitors that no one is discriminated against at the workplace. The OSH authority provides advice and instructions on matters such as working hours and pay, but cannot resolve disputes or assist employees in legal proceedings. In addition, the OSH authority cannot demand unpaid salaries on your behalf.

You have the right to join a trade union and the unemployment fund. A trade union can help you if, for example, your employer does not pay your salary. The unemployment fund provides a daily allowance based on your salary if you become unemployed.

OSH authorities' telephone service:

The occupational safety and health authorities' telephone service is available at **+ 358 295 016 620**. Anyone can call for advice. You don't have to reveal your name.

More information on telephone service:
www.tyosuojelu.fi/telephone-service

Victim Support Finland:

The Victim Support Finland provides support and advice to victims of crime, their families and witnesses. A special support service operates at the Victim Support Finland, whose employees specialise in providing advice and assistance to victims of human trafficking and its related crimes. You can become a customer regardless of your gender, place of residence or nationality, and you may contact them in your own mother tongue. If necessary, a reliable interpreter can be used in the services.

You can contact the special support service by:

- email: help@riku.fi (mails will be responded within three days)
- phone (also SMS or Whatsapp):
+358 40 632 9293

Victim Support Finland website:

- www.riku.fi/en/



National assistance system for victims of human trafficking

Have you or your family been threatened? Did you pay a lot of money for your work? Is anyone restricting your movement? Is someone pressuring you to do something you don't want to do? Have you been left without pay, but you can't do anything about it? Are you forbidden from speaking with anyone? Are you a victim of human trafficking?

You can contact the assistance system for victims of the human trafficking confidentially, without revealing your name or whereabouts.

The assistance system provides services in Finnish, Swedish and English. Interpretation for other languages can be arranged.

- Phone: +358 295 463 177 (24h)
- Email: ihmiskauppa.auttamisjarjestelma@migri.fi

Further information

This publication contains summarised information for foreign employees on the basic principles of working in Finland. The publication is not exhaustive, more information can be obtained from the sources below.

Website of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland Tyosuojelu.fi:

- www.tyosuojelu.fi/en
(including terms and conditions of employment and working conditions)



Residence permits:

- Finnish Immigration Service
www.migri.fi/en/permits-and-citizenship



Tax number:

- www.vero.fi/taxnumber



Translations of Finnish acts and degrees:

- www.finlex.fi/en/laki



Collective agreements in Finnish:

- www.finlex.fi/fi/viranomaiset/tyoehto/



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