

Settlement permits

A settlement permit (a permanent residence permit) confers the right to live and work in Norway permanently. This permit is not time-restricted and therefore does not need to be renewed.

You may obtain a settlement permit once you have lived in Norway for three years consecutively with a residence or work permit issued with a view to permanent residence in the country and which constitutes the grounds for a settlement permit. This applies to persons who have been granted asylum, residence on humanitarian or protection grounds, family reunification or a work permit as a skilled worker/specialist. The permit will always indicate whether or not it constitutes the grounds for settlement.

For your settlement permit application to be granted, the terms for the permit you have when you apply for the settlement permit must continue to be met.

If you are a national of an EU/EEA/EFTA country and wish to apply for a settlement permit, you must satisfy the same requirements. Thus if you wish to apply for a settlement permit, you must have a permit that constitutes the grounds for a settlement permit (a work or residence permit pursuant to the EU/EEA/EFTA regulations does not constitute the grounds for a settlement permit).

Once you have been granted a settlement permit, you cannot lose it, even if the grounds for the original permit no longer pertain, for example due to unemployment or divorce.

When you apply for a settlement permit, the following documents must be submitted:

- Application form with (passport) photograph
- Copy of passport (also of previous passports if you have had more than one passport while you have had a permit to work or reside in Norway)
- Overview of any trips taken abroad during the last three years

When you apply for a settlement permit you will receive automatic notification in the mail that the immigration authorities have received your

application. This notification includes information about case processing times.

If you leave Norway after having been granted a settlement permit, you must ensure that you have a valid sticker in your passport. This sticker is confirmation that you have a settlement permit and it can only be renewed by the police. You go to the police station for a renewal, no application is required.

The general rule is that you will lose your settlement permit if you live abroad for more than two years consecutively, or more than two years in total during a period of four years. In exceptional cases you may apply to maintain the permit if you will be living abroad for more than two years. You must apply for this well before the two first years abroad have passed.

With some exceptions, it is required that persons granted their initial work or residence permit after 1 September 2005 must complete Norwegian language instruction. As a general rule this requirement does not apply to persons who were granted their initial permit before this date.

Frequently asked questions

When and where should I apply?

You apply for a settlement permit to the police in Norway no later than one month before your residence or work permit expires. If your application is submitted on time, you have the right to continued residence on the same terms as before until your application has been decided.

How long does it take to process my application?

It varies. See the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration's website (www.udi.no) or call the UDI's applicant information service for updated information in Norwegian and English.

Does it cost anything to apply for a settlement permit?

It costs NOK 1600 to apply for a settlement permit.

The fee must be paid when you submit the application to the police (cash/card). The fee can also be paid in advance (credit transfer) with the receipt enclosed with the application, regardless of whether the application is mailed or submitted in person. The police will inform you of the account number, as the police receive the money, not the UDI.

If the application is to be submitted in Oslo, it is possible to call the police immigration office to obtain the account number. The telephone number for the police in Oslo is 22 34 21 00.

Can I appeal the decision?

Yes. If you appeal, your appeal will be processed by the UDI and then by the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) if the UDI does not reverse its earlier decision. The processing of the appeal does not cost anything.

What requirements must I meet?

You must as a general rule have lived in Norway for three consecutive years with a valid residence or work permit without limitations. The permit must constitute the grounds for a settlement permit. Note that under certain circumstances more than three years of residence may be required, for example if you have been sentenced for a criminal offence.

Consecutive means that you must have had the same permit for all the three years and that the terms under the permit must have been met during the entire period. Nor can you have had periods without a permit ("slip-ups") which together exceed three months during the three-year period. Such slip-ups are counted from the expiration date of a permit until the application for renewal is submitted.

You also cannot have been abroad for more than seven months over the course of the last three years. Certain groups of applicant may stay abroad for up to 15 months without losing the right to being granted a settlement permit. This applies to persons with a work permit as skilled workers and to persons who have a permit based on a professor's post or other academic position (permit granted pursuant to section 3 second paragraph a) or d) of the Immigration Regulations). It is a requirement in these cases that private trips do not exceed seven months and that other trips are on assignment for the employer.

With some exceptions, it is required that persons granted their initial work or residence permit after 1

September 2005 must complete Norwegian language instruction. As a general rule this requirement does not apply to persons who were granted their initial permit before this date. This requirement only applies to applicants who must complete obligatory Norwegian language instruction pursuant to the rules in the Act relating to the Introductory Programme.

From which date is the period of residence counted?

Normally, the period of residence begins from the date on which you were granted your initial residence permit. If this permit was granted prior to your arrival in Norway, the period of residence begins from the date you report to the police after arriving in the country. For persons who are granted asylum, the period of residence is counted from the date on which they applied for asylum. The period of residence for asylum seekers who are granted residence on humanitarian grounds is counted from the date the residence permit was granted. If the grounds for your permit change, or if you have had a period where the grounds for the permit have not been present, the residence time is normally counted from the time you were granted the permit on the last grounds, alternatively from the point in time the grounds once again applied.

Can I lose my settlement permit?

Even though a settlement permit entitles you to stay in Norway permanently, it is a requirement that you actually live in the country. If you live abroad for two or more years within a four-year period, you will lose your permit. In some cases, you may apply for an exemption to this rule if you have a good reason for living abroad for an extended period of time.

Other questions?

If you have any other questions about the rules, contact the nearest police station. You can also contact the UDI's applicant information service by phone on +47 23 35 16 00, or e-mail ots@udi.no, or look up www.udi.no for more information in Norwegian and English.

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