



## Working in Building and Construction or in Cleaning sectors in Switzerland



## CHAPTER II. Working migration in Switzerland

### General information

#### FACT BOX Switzerland



Capital:	Bern
Currency:	Franc Suisse (CHF)
Languages:	German, French, Italian, Rhéto-Romanche
Population:	7'783'000
Immigrants:	1'711'000
Surface:	41'285 km <sup>2</sup>
Major cities:	Zürich, Geneva, Basel, Lausanne
Time zone	GMT + 1 hour
International dialling code:	+44
Measure units:	Meter/ Litre/ Kilogramme/ Degree Celsius



## • II.1 General information about Switzerland

Switzerland is a federal state, formed by three political units: the Confederation, the cantons and the communes (local authorities). The Confederation is in charge of the domains defined as such by the federal constitution: foreign and security policies, customs, currency and the drawing up of national legislation. The tasks that are not allocated to the Confederation fall within the responsibility of the 26 cantons. They –the cantons– are in particular competent for public health, education and cultural affairs. Each canton has its own constitution, parliament, government and courts. The 2596 communes represent the smallest of the political units, and they are in charge of tasks defined by the Confederation and the cantons, such as the population register and the civil defence. They –the communes– also have their own responsibility in several fields: education, social welfare, energy supply, traffic infrastructures, tax system, etc.

The federal Constitution confers national sovereignty to the people. The people elect the parliament, which represents the legislative power and is formed by two houses: the national council – representing the people – and the state council – representing the 26 cantons. The parliament elects the government, formed by the seven members of the Federal Council, who represent the executive authority. The parliament also elects the Federal Tribunal: the judiciary power.

## • II.2 Entry in Switzerland

To travel to Switzerland, you must be holder of a legitimate document, recognized by the country's authorities. Depending on the country of origin, a visa is required. If you originate from a country concerned by the agreement on free movement of persons and are in possession of a valid passport or identity card, you can enter Switzerland without any prior formalities. If you are not a citizen from the countries concerned by the agreement on free movement of persons, you must be in possession of a valid passport and a visa delivered by a Swiss embassy or consulate, in the country of origin. Documents needed in order to obtain a visa are the following:

- a visa application form
- a valid passport (for the entire duration of your stay)
- 2 passport photos
- the guarantee that you have the financial means to cover your stay's expenses (about 100.- CHF per day)
- cash

Foreigners not subject to a visa obligation may ask before their entry into Switzerland, for stay authorization insurance. This can be useful notably to simplify procedures at the customs. For candidates from countries subjected to the visa obligation, it is imperative to apply from abroad. It is highly recommended to undertake this administrative procedure at least 3 months before departure, because the examination procedure of a visa application form can take some time.

Foreigners, who take up residence in Switzerland, must announce themselves at the foreigner's office or the inhabitants' register office of their new place of residence. They must apply for a request of stay application form within eight days after their arrival in Switzerland. Documents needed in order to obtain a resident permit are the following:

- a valid passport
- a visa, if required
- 2 passport photos
- the guarantee that you have the financial means to cover your stay's expenses
- a marriage certificate, if married
- cash

A resident permit is indispensable to access or leave the national territory. It is highly advised that you keep this document on you at all times. The application



forms in the local authorities' offices are often only available in the national languages. If you are not familiar with the language, it is best to be accompanied by someone who can help you with translation.

You must obtain a working permit in order to have a professional activity in Switzerland. The cantonal administrative unit "Foreigners" of the population administration department is in charge of all matters regarding working permits for foreigners. Each canton has its own administrative unit "Foreigners". The addresses and telephone numbers of these administrative units are available on the Federal Migration Office's web site:

[http://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/fr/home/die\\_oe/kontakt/kantonale\\_behoerden/adressen\\_kantone\\_und.html](http://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/fr/home/die_oe/kontakt/kantonale_behoerden/adressen_kantone_und.html)

The request for a working permit always takes place after the employment proposition. It's the firm which offered you a contract of employment that will undertake the administrative steps to obtain this authorization.

### • **II.3 Foreigners integration promotion**

The law on foreigners (LEtr – Loi sur les Etrangers), in force since 2008, defines the objectives and principles of the Swiss policy on integration. Integration is described as a global and transverse task that the Confederation, the cantons and local authorities must fulfil in concert with the civil society and migrants' organizations. The goal is to bring Swiss and foreign inhabitants to live peacefully, to share the values of the federal Constitution, in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance in order to guarantee equal opportunity.

In the terms of the LEtr, the Confederation, the cantons and local authorities must support national language-learning, professional promotion and take preventive actions in the field of public health; they support displayed efforts to promote mutual comprehension between Swiss and foreign populations in order to make their coexistence easier. In practical terms, migrants are provided support to access appropriate national language-learning offers. The objective is to ease migrants' social integration, by means of offers that promote communication between local and migrant populations but also between migrants speaking different languages on the one hand, and to motivate migrants to learn a national language on the other hand.

The Confederation supports, by means of service contracts, the setting up of regional centres assigned to integration tasks. One can distinguish, on one side, competence centres for integration, which play a key-role as contact points and coordination services in favour of migrants, local authorities, private individuals and organizations active in the integration process; and on the other side, professional services for community interpreting in the fields of health, social matters, justice or school, that enable good communication between migrants and related institutions.



## • II.4 Labour market

The economical context has been favourable up to 2008. Main labour market indicators confirm the good performance of the Swiss economy: numbers for active employed persons, jobs and total volume of worked hours increase appreciably, unemployment goes down and the immigration of workforce largely exceeds that of emigration. The capital markets crisis of end 2008 rapidly affected this evolution and in 2009, employment receded and the number of unemployed rose noticeably.

Since 2001, Switzerland knows a high level of foreign workers immigration. Between 2004 and 2009, according to the OFS (Federal Statistics' Office), the increase in the number of non-Swiss workers was three times as high as that of Swiss workers. This difference is even more marked when one doesn't take into account naturalizations. During this whole period, the level of unemployment for foreigners was two to three times higher than that of the Swiss.

In Switzerland, employment keeps on becoming more open to women: occupation of women goes up more strongly than that of men. Numbers provided by the OFS, show that five working women out of six work in the service sector, and that more than one working woman out of two works part-time. Even if nowadays the majority of men also work in the service sector, the manufacturing sector still represents one-third of men jobs.

### Active employed persons, by gender and nationality (Annual average in thousands)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Total</b>	<b>4169</b>	<b>4201</b>	<b>4304</b>	<b>4413</b>	<b>4500</b>	<b>4529</b>
Swiss	3122	3136	3198	3257	3291	3287
Foreigners	1047	1065	1106	1156	1209	1242
<b>Men</b>	<b>2315</b>	<b>2331</b>	<b>2385</b>	<b>2447</b>	<b>2474</b>	<b>2473</b>
Swiss	1674	1678	1706	1737	1739	1721
Foreigners	642	653	679	709	735	752
<b>Women</b>	<b>1854</b>	<b>1870</b>	<b>1919</b>	<b>1966</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2056</b>
Swiss	1448	1458	1492	1520	1552	1566
Foreigners	405	413	427	446	474	490

Source: OFS

Between 2004 and 2009, the expansion of the service sector labour market keeps on. In fact, the service sector keeps on rising faster than the manufacturing sector. And yet, the manufacturing sector shows a strong increase beginning at the end of 2005, even showing in 2006 a more firm increase than the service sector. This recovery of the manufacturing sector ends in 2007.

By the end of august 2010, according to statements issued by the State's Ministry for Economy, (SECO – Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie), 142'879 persons were registered as unemployed at regional placing offices. Unemployment went down by 7'952 persons (-5.3%) compared with the same month one year previously. Unemployment of young people (between the ages of 15 to 24) reached 24'776, going down by 4'522 persons (-15.4%) compared with the same month one year previously.



**Useful links:**

[Confédération suisse](#)

[Département fédéral de justice et police](#)

[Office fédéral des Migrations](#)

[Office fédéral de la statistique](#)

[Documents de voyage pour entrer en Suisse](#)

[Pays ALCP](#)

[Formulaire de demande de VISA](#)

[Représentation suisses à l'étranger](#)

[Bureau de l'intégration](#)

[Portail suisse de l'intégration](#)

## CHAPTER III. Living and working in Switzerland.

### General information

#### • III.1 Everyday living

##### Cost-of-living

As Switzerland isn't part of the European Union, the common currency is the Swiss franc (CHF). In supermarkets, prices are often indicated in CHF and in Euros, to allow comparison. It is possible to pay in Euros, but any change will be in CHF. Credit cards are accepted in most shops and restaurants. All banks, a majority of post offices, many shopping malls and several train stations have automated teller machines (ATM). They are open 24/7. All these machines accept major cards and worldwide networks (Visa, Eurocard/MasterCard, EC, Postcard, Maestro, Cirrus, Electron, Plus, Eufiserv, Cash).

According to a study by the OCDE, Switzerland has amongst the highest cost-of-living in Europe. Here are some common prices for several items in French-speaking Switzerland:

	Price
1 today's special in a café-restaurant	CHF 18.-
1 Big Mac	CHF 6.90
3 dl of Coca-Cola in a café-restaurant	CHF 4.-
1 coffee in a café-restaurant	CHF 3.-
1½ litre of mineral water in a shop	CHF 1.80
1 litre of milk in a shop	CHF 1.80
½ kg of bread in a shop	CHF 2.50
6 eggs in a shop	CHF 3.-
1 cinema ticket	CHF 18.-
1 town bus ticket (ex. Lausanne)	CHF 2.40

Source : <http://www.orbe-tourisme.ch>

Distribution of household expenses is as follows:

Household expenses	Distribution
Food and beverages	7.7%
Alcohol and et tobacco	1.2%
Clothes and footwear	2.9%
Housing and power	16.9%
Furniture and maintenance	3.2%
Health	4.0%
Transport and communication	9.9%
Leisure, culture, recreation	12.5%
Income-tax	13.7%
Insurances (contingency, health ins., private ins.)	22.2%

Source: Office fédéral de la statistique (2005)

##### Housing

Housing is expensive and most people living in Switzerland are renting. In fact, Switzerland has the European lowest rate of accommodations occupied by their owners: in 2000, as little as 34.6% of accommodations belonged to those living in them. To find accommodations, it is preferable to go through an estate agency or a management agency: most of them have websites, where it is possible to look for and at flats or houses for rent. There are specialized



websites that bring together a great number of offers, from management agencies or private persons. Here is a non-exhaustive list of these websites:

[www.immoscout.ch](http://www.immoscout.ch)  
[www.homegate.ch](http://www.homegate.ch)  
[www.immovista.ch](http://www.immovista.ch)  
[www.immostreet.ch](http://www.immostreet.ch)

Another possibility is to consult classified ads in the local press, where you can either look for ads or put an ad in yourself, asking for accommodations. If you are interested by an ad, you must contact the management agency or the person who put the ad up, in order to go and visit the accommodation. In case of further interest, you must register with the management agency by filling out a form. It's the management agency that will select tenants from all the applications. This procedure can take several weeks and offers no guarantee. The support and recommendation of the former tenant can sometimes be in your favour. To deal with your personal file, the lessor will ask for proof of your solvency. You'll have to present the following documents:

- a recent certificate of salary, less than three months old
- an attestation from the legal proceedings' office for persons who already have lived in Switzerland
- a passport or identity card, with your legitimization card or the temporary attestation issued by the Swiss mission.

When an accommodation is allocated, the management agencies ask for from 1 to 3 months rent's worth as security. This sum is returned to the tenant when he leaves the accommodation and if no serious damage is established. **Several companies guarantee this sum for you for a fee, so that you don't have to lock up several thousands of francs.** It is not compulsory but it's strongly advised to carry out an inventory, which is a form attesting the initial state of the rented accommodation.

## Travelling

Switzerland has three international airports in Zurich, Basel-Mulhouse and Geneva. Swiss public transports are regarded as a model in the whole world. Indeed, Switzerland benefits from a well-diversified network, recognized for its reliability and punctuality. Bus and train timetables combine easily and offer excellent connexions to go from one point, even isolated, to another. The Swiss Federal Railway (Chemins de Fer Fédéraux – CFF) offer a whole range of tickets, season and route cards, and have an efficient on-line timetable covering the whole network of public transportation (train, bus and boat). It's even possible to order and print tickets from your home.

There are nearly 71'000 kilometres of roads in Switzerland, where you drive on the right-hand side. In Switzerland, road signs indicating motorways are in green, and those indicating main roads are in blue. Switzerland charges for the use of its motorways. The motorway tax-sticker is a compulsory flat-rate tax for every vehicle and can be bought at customs, post-offices, service stations, Automobile Associations or in train stations. Its validity runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December until the 31<sup>st</sup> of January of the year after next year.

You don't need to own a car to travel by car. The car sharing system ("covoiturage") knows a growing success in Switzerland and has generated new specialized businesses. The cooperative society Mobility, founded in 1997, possesses cars in most cities of the country. Its members gain access to it by a web-based reservation system.





## • III.2 Labour

### Salaries

Swiss mean salaries are objectively high. To get a clear idea of what your salary represents, you have to take in account two aspects: firstly, the high cost-of-living and secondly, the structure of salary charges. In Switzerland, social charges that weigh down on employers are less important than those in most European countries, as some of these charges aren't taken into account in the salary. For example, health-insurance weighs completely on the employee. Regardless of your salary, you must pay for your health-insurance fee yourself. Swiss law doesn't set a minimum wage, but certain professional fields have collective labour agreements or standard contracts which set a minimum wage for that field. Swiss law sets the maximum working-time at 45 hours per week for workers in the manufacturing sector and for office and technical workers. For all the other workers, the limit is set at 50 hours. The minimal vacation-time set by law is 5 weeks per year for workers and apprentices until 20 years of age, and 4 weeks for workers and apprentices over 20 years of age.

### Job-seeking

To get a job in Switzerland, you can use several sources: personal network, online employment search, offered positions on companies' websites, in newspapers, etc. A standard application for a position contains a letter of motivation, which is the first element that the employer will perceive in your file, a CV and an exhaustive list of your professional activities and of your certificates. Many books and websites have examples: (non-exhaustive list)

<http://www.espace-emploi.ch/jobsuche/bewerbungstipps/>

<http://emploi.travailler-en-suisse.ch/category/cv-lettres-suisse>

<http://www.expats-welcome.com/fr/guides/europe/suisse/recrutement.html>

<http://www.publicjobs.ch.ch/publicjobs/cms/fr/119/ratgeber/job/uebersicht.html>

### Taxes

Persons who live or stay in Switzerland but are not holders of a residence permit (permit C), are, by Swiss law, subjected to a pay as you go tax. However, if one of the spouses is Swiss, with a residence permit C or has the status of a political refugee, the couple is taxed according to the ordinary procedure (income-tax return) and not by pay as you go tax. For persons arriving from abroad during a tax year, the liability to tax begins on the date of their arrival. Income-tax is set and collected for each tax period. Tax period corresponds to a calendar year.

## • III.3 Social security

The old-age state pension (Assurance Vieillesse et Survivants – AVS) is the main “pillar” of Swiss social contingency. It aims at compensating the diminution or loss of income due to age or decease. AVS benefits all persons living or working in Switzerland.

Disability insurance (Assurance Invalidité – AI) is a compulsory insurance in the same way as are the old-age state pension (AVS) and health insurance (Loi sur l'Assurance Maladie – LAMal). It aims at preventing disablement through readaptation measures and to guarantee means of support to the insured persons by payments in specie.

Professional contingency is an insurance that allows its beneficiaries to maintain, in an appropriate manner, their standard of living prior to retirement. The objective of professional contingency (Prévoyance Professionnelle – PP) is to attain – in complement to the old-age state pension and the disability insurance – 60% of the last income.

Unemployment insurance (Assurance Chômage – AC) provides benefits in case of loss of job, suspension of the activity due to bad weather, diminution of working hours, and when the employer is insolvent. It also provides measures for professional reintegration.



Family allowance and tax relief are the main measures of compensation for family expenses. The family allowance is included in social insurances. Contrary to the other social insurances, family allowance represents an extra payment to the income and not a substitution.

Benefits from the **optional individual contingency** supplement those of old-age state pension and disability insurance, and those of professional contingency, to attain the standard of living of the insurance taker prior to retirement.

Compulsory **Health insurance** insures that every individual living in Switzerland has access to quality medical care and appropriate medical treatment. Any person living in Switzerland must insure herself, or be insured by her surrogate person, during the three months following their arrival or birth. Health insurance is managed by a multiplicity of insurance companies: registered insurance companies have the obligation to accept all persons for basic insurance, whatever their age, state of health, without reserve or delay. The excess is the sum per year that the insurance-taker has to pay himself, and under which the insurance company doesn't pay for medical care. Over this excess sum, the insurance-taker still has to contribute to the total costs. This contribution is a percentage fixed by law (10%) but is annually levelled. So, insurance companies pay for costs exceeding the excess, but with the insurance-takers' contributions. The sum of the excess is taken into account to fix the insurance premium: the higher the excess is the less expensive will the premium be. Whatever the excess, the right to appropriate medical treatment is guaranteed for everyone. Optional excesses range from 500, 1000, 2000 to 2500 CHF for adults, and from 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, to 600 CHF for children.

Although not compulsory, the personal **public-liability insurance** (Responsabilité Civile – RC) may prove useful during your stay in Switzerland. It's an insurance that covers the insured against claims in damages made by third-parties, on the basis of legal clauses in the field of personal liability (material damage and/or corporeal lesions). In some cases, you must subscribe to particular public-liability insurance. Indeed, in Switzerland, every car owner must have insurance for his vehicle; and if you are a tenant or an owner, you must subscribe to a specific third-party cover.

### • III.4 Where to find useful information and help

#### **Federal offices and other institutions**

**Federal committee for migration matters** (Commission fédérale pour les questions de migration – CFM)

<http://www.eka-cfe.ch/> (German, English, French and Italian)

The federal committee for migration matters is a committee of experts of the Federal Council. The CFM deals with social, economic, cultural, political, legal and demographic matters. It takes position in particular on migration and integration matters.

**Head office for development and cooperation** (Direction du développement et de la coopération – DDC)

<http://www.ddc.admin.ch/> (German, English, Spanish, French and Italian)

Home >Topic >Migrations

The Head office for development and cooperation is the federal office in charge for international development cooperation. Amongst many topics on its website, migration risks and potentials are analysed.

**Political division IV, Human security – Federal department for foreign affairs** (Département fédéral des affaires étrangères – DFAE)

<http://www.eda.admin.ch/> (German, English, French and Italian)

Home >Le DFAE >Organization chart >head offices and divisions >Political Division IV

The political division IV of the Federal department for foreign affairs is in charge of putting in action objectives of civil promotion of peace and human rights reinforcement. It held a conference in autumn 2007 entitled "Migration: opportunities and challenges".



**Federal office for migration** (Office fédéral des migrations – ODM)

<http://www.bfm.admin.ch/> (German, English, French and Italian)

Home >Topics

The federal office for migration deals with all matters in the fields of foreigners' and asylum rights. The website contains accesses to various topics on migration, such as return and reintegration aid, which the ODM develops in collaboration with the Head office for development and cooperation and the International migration organisation (OIM). Many documents on their website are for download.

**International organization for migration** (Organisation internationale pour les migrations – OIM) – Swiss branch

<http://www.ch.iom.int> (German and French)

Home >Activities

The international organisation for migration is an intergovernmental organisation, which is world-recognized in the fields of migration. The "OIM-Bern" is the contact and coordination office for matters regarding national and international questions relating to migration in Switzerland. The website contains information on return aid, immigration in another country and also on family entry and settlement.

**State ministry for economy** (Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie – SECO) – **Service Centre for cooperation and economical development**

<http://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/> (German, English, French and Italian)

The service centre for cooperation and economical development deals, jointly with the Head office for development and cooperation, in the coordination of the cooperation between Switzerland and developing, eastern Europe and central Asia countries, as well as with the ten new members of European Union (EU). Its objectives are integration of countries in the world economy and promoting their economic growth in order to diminish poverty.

**Caritas Switzerland** (Caritas Suisse)

<http://web.caritas.ch/> (German, English and French)

Home >Switzerland >Migration/Asylum

Caritas Switzerland is an association for mutual aid, part of the Caritas network, and active in over 200 countries. Presented on the website are sponsorships and the various fields in which the association is active, notably those of migration and asylum.

**Swiss Red-Cross** (Croix-Rouge Suisse)

<http://www.redcross.ch/> (German, English, French and Italian)

Home >Integration >Migration

The Swiss Red-Cross is a local member of the International Red-Cross and Red-Crescent Movement. Its goal is to protect life, health and dignity of people in distress. On the Swiss website, there is a section dealing with migration in Switzerland, and more particularly with matters that have to do with return aid and training.

**Swiss protestant mutual aid** (Entraide protestante suisse – EPER)

<http://www.eper.ch> (German and French)

EPER is a mutual aid organization of the Swiss protestant church. It offers emergency and survival aid in order to improve living conditions in a lasting way. In its commitment to refugees and displaced persons, EPER carries out integration projects in Switzerland and in developing countries.

**Cooperation federation of Geneva** (Fédération genevoise de coopération – FGC)

<http://www.fgc.ch/> (German, English, Spanish and French)

Home >News >Forums



FGC holds the position of an interface between its members and the local authorities of Geneva. With the idea of an arena devoted to dialogue and sharing, it works with its partners to fight inequalities in the world and to enhance freedom of choice for societies and peoples, in their construction of an economical, social and cultural better welfare.

**Migrants' forum for integration** (Forum pour l'intégration des migrantes et des migrants – FIMM)

<http://www.fimm-integration.ch/> (German and French)

FIMM Switzerland is the central organization for migrants' associations in Switzerland. Communities representing over 50 nationalities are part of it. The website presents a short description of the organization, its objectives and strategic axis.

**Humanrights.ch – Swiss association for human rights** (Association suisse pour les droits humains – MERS)

<http://www.humanrights.ch/> (German, English and French)

*Home >Our services >Themes from A to Z >Droit et politique d'asile et des réfugiés et >Droit et politique des étrangers*

The Swiss association for human rights promotes, carries out and coordinates projects in connection with human rights. A special attention is brought to the situation of migrants, asylum-seekers and people without papers, i.e. without an ID card or passport.

**Swiss aid organization for refugees** (Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés – OSAR)

<http://www.osar.ch/> (German, English and French)

*Home >Addresses/Links*

OSAR is the central organization for Swiss mutual aid associations active in the field of refugees. Their website informs in details about the right to asylum, asylum policy and the situation in the country of origin of refugees.

**Solidarity without borders** (Solidarité sans frontières – SOSF)

<http://www.sosf.ch/> (German and French)

*Home >Migration*

SOSF is an independent organization for information in the fields of asylum and migration policies, racism and human rights. It collaborates directly with the affected people. It fights for harmony between all, without reference to one's origins and with equal rights, and against xenophobia and racism.

**Swiss Academy for Development (SAD)**

<http://www.sad.ch/> (German, English and French)

*Home >Domain >Intercultural dialogue*

SAD is an officially recognised organisation active in the conception and the execution of lasting strategic solutions in the field of cooperation for development and integration. Supporting integration and participation of cultural groups, SAD has led scientific researches and projects on the practise of cohabitation in multicultural societies.

**Swiss Forum for migration and population studies** (Forum suisse pour l'étude des migrations et de la population – SFM)

<http://www.migration-population.ch/> (German, English and French)

SFM is an institute of the University of Neuchâtel, which carries out research work in the fields of migration and demography. Their website gives a list of publications from the institute, of which most are downloadable.

## CHAPTER IV. Working in the construction sector in Switzerland

### General information, links and references

In Switzerland, according to the general nomenclature of economical activities (NOGA) the field of construction consist of the following sectors:

- Building trade (NOGA 41)  
Real estate promotion, construction of residential and non-residential buildings
- Civil engineering (NOGA 42)  
Construction of roads and railway tracks, construction of networks and lines, construction of other civil engineering work (i.e. harbours, dams and levees)
- Specialized construction works (NOGA 43)  
Demolition works and preparation of building sites, installation and electrical installation works, plumbing and other installation works (i.e. painting and glasswork), other construction works (i.e. roofing work).

In 2008, about 315'000 persons were working in the construction industry. It's the most important branch of the manufacturing sector (29.7% of employment) and the third for the economy in its entirety (7.8% of employment).

It's a sector with a strong male predominance (90% of men), which makes it the branch with the most male jobs in Switzerland.

Part-time employment (activity rates less than 90% of a full-time job) represents 9.5% of all jobs in the building trade, which is much inferior to that of the manufacturing sector (11.7%) or of that of the economy in its entirety (30.8%). This rate varies depending on sectors: 11.1% in specialized work, 6.7% in building construction and 5.8% in civil engineering. Between 2005 and 2008, part-time employment increased twice as fast as full-time employment (+12.3% vs. +5.1%) and this in all three sectors.

Almost two-thirds of all jobs are held by Swiss, foreigners representing 36% of all workers. Employment of foreigners is significantly higher than in the economy in its entirety (25.8%) and than in the manufacturing sector (33.5%). Between 2005 and 2008, the rise in the numbers of Swiss (+5%) and foreign (+7%) workers are inferior to those of the manufacturing sector in its entirety (+5.3% Swiss and +13.7% foreign workers).

More than 90% of jobs are in small businesses, which represent 99.9% of the 36'500 businesses in that field.

<http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/news/publikationen.html?publicationID=3992>

Working conditions in the construction trade are governed by a set of collective labour agreements (Conventions Collectives de Travail - CCT) concluded between trade unions and management that commit them legally. Working contracts concluded with signatories of a collective labour agreement, respect minimums set by it. Construction trade has notably a national labour agreement for the main filed of construction, of which foremen, executive, technical and administrative personnel are excluded (other collective labour agreements).

Minimum wage set by collective labour agreements:  
Basic salaries since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2010

*(in francs per month respectively per hour)*

Area of salary	Class of salary									
	CE		Q		A		B		C	
<b>Red</b>	6'219	35.35	5'528	31.40	5'322	30.25	5'016	28.50	4'462	25.35
<b>Blue</b>	5'966	33.90	5'449	30.95	5'248	29.80	4'884	27.75	4'393	24.95
<b>Green</b>	5'713	32.45	5'375	30.55	5'174	29.40	4'752	27.00	4'330	24.60

- CE: Foreman
- Q: Qualified construction worker with vocational training qualification
- A: Skilled construction worker
- B: Construction worker with professional knowledge
- C: Construction worker

Salary areas are mainly divisional areas. However, inside a division, different classes of salary may correspond to areas (different colours). Thus, in the cantons of Vaud and of Geneva, CE is in the blue area and others in the red area. In addition, inside a canton, hourly and monthly wages for a single class, can find themselves in different areas (colours). Thus, in the canton of Zurich, Q, A, B and C are in the blue area for monthly wages, and in the red area for hourly wages. Details can be found in appendix 9 of the national collective labour agreement.

[http://www.baumeister.ch/fileadmin/media/2\\_Kernthemen/LMV/lmv2\\_f.pdf](http://www.baumeister.ch/fileadmin/media/2_Kernthemen/LMV/lmv2_f.pdf)

The work-week is 37.5 hours (5 x 7.5 hrs) at the minimum and 45 hours (5 x 9 hrs) at the maximum. Dispensations are possible, in case of bad-weather or breakdowns. Workers have a right to 13 salaries per year. Work for which no earnings are declared (moonlighting) is heavily punished.

Workers active under the national collective labour agreement, are insured against earning loss and accidents by the company that employs them.

Between the ages of 20 and 50, workers have a right to 5 weeks per year holiday. For all the others, this right is of 6 weeks.

Professional improvement is encouraged and workers may benefit from 5 free days per year (without pay or costs covering by the employer) to do so. **Trade unions and employers associations regularly inform workers on training possibilities.**

Seasonal work is subject to a particular article (art. 20) which notably specifies that **“Seasonal workers and holders of short period stay permits, who cannot be employed, by lack of qualifications or lack of work, will be informed in writing”, and that “Employers arrange themselves so that their former seasonal workers and holders of short period stay permits benefit from priority in relation to new seasonal workers and holders of short period stay permits, even with the same skills and the same will to work.**



## Links and references

Signatory organizations of collective labour agreements (Conventions Collectives de Travail - CCT)

### **Swiss society of owner-managers – Société suisse des entrepreneurs SSE**

Founded in 1897, SSE is the professional, economical and employers' organization of Swiss businesses for construction trade and branches affiliated to the construction trade. It is set up as an association.

<http://www.baumeister.ch/fr/>

### **Unia**

Interprofessional trade union, active in the fields of construction trade, arts and crafts, industry and the service sector.

<http://www.unia.ch/Branches-CCT.370.0.html?&L=1>

### **Syna**

Interprofessional trade union in craft industry, industrial and service sectors.

<http://www.syna.ch/portrait/qui-sommes-nous.html>

### **CPSA**

Swiss joint committee of application for the principal sector of construction trade. Joint organ of application, active on a national level.

<http://ahvbaumeister.ch/570.html?L=2>

## Job-seeking

### **ORP**

Regional Placing Offices (Offices régionaux de placement – ORP) are specialized service centres in the labour market, placing and unemployment fields. There are at present about 130 of them, which represents the biggest job platform in Switzerland.

ORP can give information about different possibilities you have (free of access computer terminals in their premises, job markets on the Internet, etc.). They keep up a databank of vacant posts, which gives you access to the most important job market of Switzerland.

<http://www.espace-emploi.ch/ueberuns/rav/>

[http://www.espace-emploi.ch/jobsuche/Jobs/einfache\\_suche/](http://www.espace-emploi.ch/jobsuche/Jobs/einfache_suche/)

Sitemap with links to private on-line search engines and private placing agencies.

<http://www.espace-emploi.ch/zusatz/sitemap/>

## CHAPTER V. Working in the cleaning sector in Switzerland.

### General information, links and references

The cleaning sector includes, in addition to cleaning activities, all activities in the fields of hygiene and disinfection, as well as additional services linked to the use and maintenance of all sorts of premises, buildings, installations and transport means or equipments.

These activities concern jobs such as building and textile cleaner, cleanliness, stewardship, operating and domestic employee.

Worksites are much diversified and some like hospitals, homes for the elderly, hotels and restaurants present particular constraints.

Domestic work presents employment opportunities for female employees with little or no qualifications, but often takes place in insecure, when not illegal, conditions (work for which no earnings are declared (moonlighting)).

Work for which no earnings are declared, very widespread, makes it difficult to get a good picture of the number of persons working in that field, which must be around 1000'000.

Employment is predominantly female (about 70%) and part-time jobs frequent (about 65%). Women work part-time more frequently than men. Working hours are special, because they take place when other workers aren't on the premises any more (early morning, late evening and on week-ends).

Foreigners represent around 40% of workers.

The cleaning sector offers job opportunities for unqualified – or with little qualification – persons, because hiring constraints often are about personal skills (absence of allergies, ability to work irregular hours or at special moments of the day...) more than professional skills. However, some working areas need that workers are able to understand short instructions written in the language of the working place, and that they are able to write brief notes. Workers are often trained by employers, in collaboration with cleaning machines and products distributors.

The cleaning sector has a few extended collective labour agreements (CCT) that concern main linguistic regions.

In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, the collective labour agreement is for businesses working in the cantons of Vaud, Fribourg, Valais, Neuchâtel, Jura and French-speaking districts of the canton of Bern.

<http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00385/00420/00430/01477/index.html?lang=fr>

This collective labour agreement sets guidelines for individual working contracts. It sets six professional categories:

- I. Foreman (crew chief).
- II. Cleaning operator, with a federal certificate of capacity (CFC).
- III. Qualified personnel with a federal certificate of capacity (CFC) or an advanced vocational certificate in the domain, or still, having successfully taken equivalent courses.
- IV. Unqualified personnel, but with 4 years of activity in the profession.
- V. Unqualified personnel at the time of hiring
- VI. Personnel hired on the basis of a 20 weekly hours of work contract. This work-time won't exceed 18 weekly hours of work from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2012 on.

Gross minimum hourly wages (in CHF) in 2010 are:

- I) 26.25, II) 25.10, III) 24.55, IV) 21.35, V) 19.35, VI) 16.35





The collective labour agreement also sets rules for leave, holiday, insurances, special payment of expenses, etc.

The canton of Geneva has its own collective labour agreement, which differs from the French-speaking part of Switzerland the French-speaking part of Switzerland on many points, even if these differences are sometimes minimal.

<http://www.nettoya-ge.ch/pdf/CCT.pdf>

In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, an extended collective labour agreement also covers activities of cleaning businesses.

<http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00385/00420/00430/02092/index.html?lang=fr>

This collective labour agreement differs from that of the canton of Geneva and from that of the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Employees are often trained by employers who

Of course, domestic workers aren't concerned by a collective labour agreement. Some cantons have standard contracts of employment (contrat-type de travail – CTT) which set – or don't – minimal wage. The Swiss government has nonetheless put up a project (in 2010) for consultation by unions and management, to introduce a standard contract of employment covering the national territory. This project sets 3 salary categories, with minimum gross salaries:

- a. unqualified employee 18.90 francs per hour;
- b. unqualified employee, but with at least four years of professional experience in domestic work 20.50 francs per hour;
- c. qualified employee 22.90 francs per hour.

## Links and references

Signatory organs of collective labour agreements (CCT)

**FREN** fédération romande des entrepreneurs en nettoyage (French-speaking Switzerland)

<http://www.fren-net.ch/>

**Aven** association valaisanne des entreprises de nettoyage (Canton of Valais)

<http://www.aven-vs.ch/homepage.html>

**GESP** groupement des entreprises de services et de propreté

<http://gesp.ch/>

**Allpura** association des entreprises suisses en nettoyage (Swiss association)

<http://www.allpura.ch/>

**AGENS** association genevoise des entrepreneurs en nettoyage et services (Canton of Geneva)

<http://www.proprete.ch/pages/accueil.html>

**CPPGN** commission paritaire professionnelle genevoise du nettoyage (Canton of Geneva)

<http://www.nettoya-ge.ch/cct.htm>

### Unia

Interprofessional trade union, active in the fields of construction trade, arts and crafts, industry and the service sector.

<http://www.unia.ch/Branches-CCT.370.0.html?&L=1>

### Syna

Interprofessional trade union in craft industry, industrial and service sectors.

<http://www.syna.ch/portrait/qui-sommes-nous.html>

**SIT** Interprofessional trade union for workers.

<http://www.sit-syndicat.ch/spip/>



## Job-seeking

### ORP

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ORP can give information about different possibilities you have (free of access computer terminals in their premises, job markets on the Internet, etc.). They keep up a databank of vacant posts, which gives you access to the most important job market of Switzerland.

<http://www.espace-emploi.ch/ueberuns/rav/>

[http://www.espace-emploi.ch/jobsuche/Jobs/einfache\\_suche/](http://www.espace-emploi.ch/jobsuche/Jobs/einfache_suche/)

Sitemap with links to private on-line search engines and private placing agencies.

<http://www.espace-emploi.ch/zusatz/sitemap/>

Extended collective labour agreements

For French-speaking Switzerland

<http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00385/00420/00430/01477/index.html?lang=fr>

For German-speaking Switzerland

<http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00385/00420/00430/02092/index.html?lang=fr>