

general guide for living in spain

Remember: You can only make people respect you if you know your rights and obligations

The concept of citizenship includes a set of political, social and civil rights that all people who live in a democratic country must have, and a set of obligations that they are expected to comply with.

This document is intended as an introductory guide to help people coming to live and work in Spain to become integrated into Spanish society.

What rights and obligations do you have?

There are many rights and obligations that you will gradually need to be aware of, but it is important for you to know that in Spain all people have EQUAL rights and obligations, regardless of their place of origin, legal situation, social class, sex, etc.

When you live and work in Spain you need a residency permit to be allowed to stay in the country and a work permit to be allowed to work here. You have a set of rights and also a set of obligations, which will vary according to your circumstances.

If you don't have the necessary papers, you are not a legal resident in Spain and can't work legally here. Even so:

As a person living in Spain you are entitled to:

- Receive free health care, so you don't need to pay for private health insurance. Make sure you apply for a health-care card.
- Request free legal aid and social grants if you don't have enough money yourself.
- Receive free education services so that your children or other children in your custody can go to State-run schools.
- Participate in the social life and cultural activities in your neighbourhood: street parties, residents associations, sports activities, etc.
- Request information and guidance from the public authorities about any legal or technical requirements affecting any applications you want to make, obtaining sealed copies and being informed of any progress made with the processing of your applications.

But in order for you to qualify for all these rights, you **must be registered in the census as a local resident (in Spanish, empadronado)**. To register for the census,

go to your local council offices (Ayuntamiento). Once you have registered you will be entitled to access many public resources, and you will also be able to prove how long you have been living in Spain if you ever need to do so.

As a person living in Spain you also under the obligation to:

- Know that the public health service is paid for by everyone by making Social Security contributions. So it's important to find out how the system works and only use the service when you really need it.
- Know that grants and other social services are limited. If you use them responsibly, resources will be available for other people who may need them just as much as you or even more.
- Make sure that your children or any children in your care go to school, because education is compulsory in Spain until the age of 16.
- Pay your taxes and rates corresponding to the money you earn (wages, income from any property you rent out, any freelance work you do, etc.) or services you receive (rubbish collection, water supply, etc.) etc.
- Know and respect norms of social coexistence. Observe, ask about and suggest ideas to improve coexistence in your neighbourhood, area or town. Remember that this is not your country of origin and many things are done differently here.

If you come from a country where you have to "pay for everything", you should know that "not paying" doesn't mean you won't be treated well. You should expect and demand equal, fair treatment from everybody. There are many places you can go to for information and advice.

Some places you should be aware of:

- Health centre (in Spanish, centro de salud): to apply for a health card (tarjeta sanitaria).
- Social Security office (Tesorería de la Seguridad Social) to request your employment history (vida laboral).
- Council offices (Ayuntamiento or Junta Municipal de distrito) to obtain a local resident's certificate (padrón) and find out about local social services, women's services, etc.
- Education offices (delegación de Educación) to find out about getting your qualifications recognised in Spain and arrange for your children to go to school.
- Permanent adult-education centres, to learn Spanish, receive theory classes to get a driving licence, etc.
- Local national government office (subdelegación de Gobierno) or immigrants

office (oficina de extranjeros) to find out about and apply for residency permits, work permits, etc.

- Public employment services and job centres (INEM) to register as a person looking for work, attend courses and apply for job vacancies.
- Trade unions (sindicatos) to ask them to defend your rights as a worker. Some trade unions have their own advisory and defence services and process job vacancies, etc.
- NGOs specialising in immigrants from the same country or immigrants in general, to get information, apply for grants, sign up for Spanish classes, get legal advice and arrange for legal defence, free processing of paperwork, help finding a job, training courses, job and accommodation vacancies, etc.
- Residents associations, cultural centres and sports clubs, because you haven't come to Spain just to work and you can meet people while doing things you enjoy, showing them aspects of your own culture, etc.

Registering a complaint

It is the right of every citizen to make your opinions known if you are not satisfied by a public or private service, if you feel cheated or if you feel discriminated against because of your race, nationality, sex, religion, etc.

To allow you to register an official complaint, all public authorities and private businesses must keep a set of special numbered forms, sealed by the government office, and make these forms available for you so that you can set out in writing any complaints you may have.

Reporting a criminal offense (denuncia)

This means telling the authorities about any criminal offences that you are aware of, either because you have been the victim of a crime or have witnessed or otherwise know about one, so that the appropriate action can be taken. (For example, if you are robbed or attacked, or the victim of racial or xenophobic prejudice, abuse, etc.)

You can report crimes by telephone, by calling 091 for the National Police Force (in large towns or cities) or 062 for the Civil Guard (in rural areas), in writing, or by going in person to the nearest police station or magistrate's court. Tel.: 902102112. Website: www.policia.es

Free legal aid

Free legal aid is a right granted to people who

can demonstrate that they do not have enough money to pay for a court case.

Foreign nationals who have a residency permit to live in Spain can apply for legal aid for any kind of civil or criminal case.

Foreign nationals who have no residency papers are entitled to legal aid only for criminal or official proceedings related to deportation proceedings or asylum applications.

What does legal aid entitle you to receive?

- Legal aid if you are arrested, legal advice during the preparation of your case and defence at trial, provided by legal professionals (solicitors and barristers).
- Assistance by professionals to determine the extent of injuries and damages (physical, psychological, material, etc.)
- A reduction of 80% in notaries' fees and registry charges for any documents you may need for your case.

Advice on renting somewhere to live

- Lease contracts may be in writing or oral, although it is advisable to have a contract in writing.

- It's a good idea to make a list of all the furniture and other items in the house or flat and the condition that they are in when you take possession of the property.
- The length of the lease is agreed between you and the owner. If no specific time is agreed, the minimum is one year.
- If you are offered a one-year contract you can demand that the owner extends it to five years, unless the contract says that if the owner wishes to have the property for his or her own use.
- If after five years neither you nor the owner state any wish to end the contract, it is automatically renewed for up to three more years.
- The rent is freely negotiated and agreed between you and the owner.
- You must pay your rent within the first seven days of every month. You may be asked to pay in advance, but only one month in advance, not any longer.
- It's a good idea to ask for a receipt for your rent payments or to pay by making a bank transfer into the owner's bank account.
- Rent reviews: your rent can only be increased after one year, according to the official Spanish inflation rate ("IPC").

Some legal points related to living legally in Spain.

Any foreign national you wishes to acquire Spanish citizenship must accredit having lived in Spain for a certain period of time (which will vary depending on your nationality of origin).

If you have a residency permit with renewed or group authorisation, you can apply for your children (aged under 18 or disabled), wife or husband and grandparents to be allowed to come to live with you.

By complying with certain requirements and having the necessary papers to demonstrate compliance, you can:

- Request residency for children in your charge.
- Obtain legal residency in Spain on the grounds of having acquired social roots, if you have been living in Spain without the necessary papers for the last three years.
- Obtain legal residency in Spain on the grounds of having family or employment ties, if you have been living in Spain without the necessary papers for at least two years.

integration units. addresses



Almería Provincial Council (Diputación de Almería), Albox Unit Community Social Services Centre:

Ctra. de la Estación s/n. 04800 Albox - Almería-
Tel.: 950 633 244
950 633 243

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm.

Immigrants Service:

Paseo de la Conferencia s/n. 11204 Algeciras - Cádiz -

Tel.: 956 58 71 75
956 58 70 72

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Almería Local Council (Ayuntamiento). Social Services Department:

UTS. C/ Francisca Jiménez s/n 04003 Almería
Tel.: 950 271 477

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm.

Cartaya District Council (Ayuntamiento), Social Services, Migrant Workers and Immigrants Office:

Barriada Blas Infante nº 6. 21450 Cartaya - Huelva-

Tel.: 959 392 477 478

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Lepe District Council (Ayuntamiento), Social Welfare Department (Bienestar Social):

Avda. Arboleda, 7. 21440 Lepe - Huelva -
Tel.: 959 64 52 80

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm.



Moguer District Council (Ayuntamiento), Social Services (Servicios Sociales), Municipal Immigration Service:

c/ Daniel Vázquez Díaz, 4. 21800 Moguer - Huelva -

Tel.: 959 37 18 37

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.
(Wednesdays in Mazagón)



Mojón District Council (Ayuntamiento), Social Services Centre:

C/ Olivos 28. 04745 La Mojón - Almería-
Tel.: 950 330 505

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.



Roquetas de Mar District Council (Ayuntamiento), Municipal Immigration Office:

Pza. de la Constitución, 1. 04740 Roquetas de Mar - Almería-

Tel.: 950 339 717
950 338 542

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.



Vical District Council (Ayuntamiento). Las Cabañuelas Social Centre:

Pza. de Cervantes, s/n
04738 Vical - Almería-

Tel.: 950 555 333

Opening hours:
Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.



Fundación Municipal de Igualdad y Bienestar Social
Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Algeciras



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