



resident card municipality registration
administrative formalities
documents understanding your status in Belgium

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Administration



I have just arrived in Belgium. What do I have to do first?

The most important thing is to understand what your status in Belgium is and to determine if you can get a residence card and under what conditions.

Each situation is unique, and procedures can be complicated.



Get advice as quickly as possible

by explaining your situation to a new immigrants' support service (see "Information & Advice" chapter).

Who will decide whether to issue me a residence card or not?

In most cases, it's the *Office des Etrangers* (which is part of the *Service Public Fédéral Intérieur*, or Federal Interior Ministry) that will make the decision authorizing you to stay in Belgium or not. Sometimes, the Municipality will be your primary contact, and you will have to deal with them when you request a residence card. Other times, your request will be submitted directly to the Office des Etrangers.

In all cases (except as defined otherwise by the law), you will have to present documents proving who you are (identity card, passport or other).



How long is a residence card valid? When do I have to renew it?

If you are authorized to stay in Belgium, the card you receive will usually be for a limited period of time (with possibility of renewal).



Important! Contact your Municipality to renew your residence card at least 45 days before its expiry date.



Note: In most cases, the first documents that will be issued to you do not give you the right to travel outside of Belgium. A valid passport will be necessary for any travel outside Belgium's borders. Please remember to obtain further information before travelling.

Do I also have to register with the municipality?

Yes, in all cases, as soon as you have taken up residence, you must go to your municipal government to register.

This must be done no later than eight days after your arrival in the country.

Once your request for registration has been entered, a neighbourhood officer will stop by to check that you actually live at the address you have given.

➔ Most municipalities have a website that provides useful information. You may also telephone the municipality to verify practical information and possibly give some information before attending in person.

Are administrative formalities really so important?

You must respond to summons, letters and/or calls from government agencies and public authorities.

The final date by which you must complete a formality will be indicated. You must comply with this date and attend in person if you are summoned to an agency. If you do not do this, you may be penalized. You may also be **struck off**  from the municipal registers, and lose your residence card or even your right to remain in the country.



It is recommended that you send important documents by **registered letter** 

Hôtel de Ville / Stadhuis

Bienvenue / Welkom

Entrée / Ingang

Heures d'ouverture

Openingsuren:

08.00>12.00 - 13.00>16.30

État civil / Burgerlijke Stand:

Du lundi au vendredi /

Maandag tot vrijdag:

08.00>13.00

Mardi / Dinsdag:

08.00>13.00 - 14.00>19.00

Caisse Communale /

Gemeentekas:

Du lundi au vendredi /

Maandag tot vrijdag:

08.00>12.00

Étrangers / Vreemdelingen:

Du lundi au vendredi /

Maandag tot vrijdag:

08.00>13.00

Mardi / Dinsdag:

08.00>13.00 - 17.00>19.00

Urbanisme / Stedenbouw:

Du lundi au vendredi /

Maandag tot vrijdag:

08.00>12.00

Mardj / Dinsdag:

08.00>12.00 - 14.00>20.00



Entrée rue de Savoie /

Ingang Savoiestraat



What important documents am I going to need?

In Belgium, there are many administrative documents. Some are mandatory, while others are necessary for access to certain services or actions.



We recommend that you keep your original documents and make photocopies of them: identification documents, residence card, family status certificates, contracts, letters, invoices and receipts relating to work, health care, housing, etc.

Document	Where can you obtain them?
Identity card	Municipal government
Birth certificate	Municipal government of the town or city where you were born
Passport	Embassy or Consulate of your country of origin
<i>Certificat de bonne vie et mœurs</i> - copy of criminal record (as requested in particular for a job)	Municipal government
Household composition (as requested in particular for school registration)	Municipal government
Carte SIS (social identity card)	"Mutuelle" health insurance fund (of the user's choice), see "Health Care" chapter
Work permit	Regional government (Brussels or Wallonia), see "Jobs" chapter

And what if I don't agree with a decision the government makes?

There are often possibilities for appeal in administrative proceedings. These possibilities are specified in the letters informing you of the decisions (on the back).

There are also **mediation**  services in many municipalities and government agencies.

→ For more information:
www.ombudsman.be



See glossary on page 67