



HAMILTONS
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An essential guide to relocating in

France

Our guide provides additional information on choosing schools, obtaining visas, starting a business and more. Please note this information is believed to be accurate at the time of printing. Please check with our European removals department prior to your departure.

We offer three main types of removal services to France - a dedicated service, which means that you have sole use of a vehicle, a special service, which allows you to specify collection and delivery dates and a part load/groupage service. Part load/groupage means that several loads are grouped together and share the same vehicle. Please note delivery times for this service vary depending on how quickly consignments are consolidated.

France, officially known as the French Republic is a country whose metropolitan territory is located in Western Europe and is bordered by Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Andorra, and Spain. It also includes a number of islands and overseas territories.

France is the most visited country in the world, receiving over 79 million foreign tourists annually. It is easily accessible from the UK via the Channel Tunnel. France is a founding member of the European Union and it has the fifth or sixth largest economy in the world.

The capital of France is Paris, and this beautiful, romantic city is situated on the River Seine, in the North of the country. Well known city landmarks include the Eiffel Tower - an iron tower built on the Champ de Mars and the Arc de Triomphe - a monument that stands in the centre of the Place Charles de Gaulle, at the western end of the Champs-Élysées.

Visa and Work Permits

There is a high unemployment rate in France, and because of this, the French Immigration authorities have historically made it difficult for companies to employ foreign workers. France gives first priority for jobs to French nationals, then to EU nationals and then to the rest of the World. It is therefore hard for non-EU nationals to obtain jobs in anything other than specialised fields. France currently has skill shortages in the area of Information Technology.



EU citizens can legally live and work in France without the need for a visa or work permit. Non-EU nationals who wish to work in France must use the following process:

- Find a job
- Apply for a work permit
- Obtain a visa de long séjour
- Go to France
- Obtain a carte de séjour

EU countries include: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Setting up a Business in France

If you are planning to set up your own business in France, and you are an EU national, then you will not require a visa. However it is important to note that Government business charges are high and the tax and social system is complex. Also some industries are regulated which means that there are controls placed on access into the profession or activity. To get regulated, all that may be required is to register with the Chambre de Commerce/Metiers. Other times, you will need a licence, certain qualifications and experience or the lack of a criminal record.

These rules apply to many types of businesses including running a bar, hotel, campsite or holiday rental company.

A new business must be registered with the French authorities before you start to trade.

Schools

Schooling in France is of a good to high standard in comparison to other EU countries. It is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16. In addition, many children attend nursery school between the ages of 3 and 5.

At the age of 15, the next year or more of education is determined by the student's examination results. Top students can go on to attend a lycée until the age of 18, where they study for the baccalauréat. Other students may study a vocational course, which can lead on to a baccalauréat professionnel.

Schooling options available include state schools, private schools, international schools, religious schools and boarding schools. It is possible for UK children to be taught within schools employing an English type curriculum in areas where there are large concentrations of foreign nationals such as Paris.

Children can attend the school nearest to their parent's home by contacting the nearest Academie. They also have the choice to attend any other school, providing there is a place for them available.



Healthcare

Healthcare in France is one of the best systems in the World and an excellent quality of treatment is available. It is funded by the working population and costs each employed person around 20% of their income. Self employed earners pay even more.

When a person uses the state health care system, they pay part towards the cost of the treatment. For example for a GP visit, they will pay around 30% of the total cost and the rest is reimbursed by the Sécurité sociale. Most people in France take out top up health care insurance to cover the difference between the full bill and the amount they are reimbursed.

In France, when you receive minor health care or buy prescriptions, you generally pay the bill in full and are then reimbursed around ten days later. For major procedures and hospitalisation, the bill is usually paid directly by CPAM and your top-up insurer.

People moving from the UK or another EU country, who are not planning to work, will need to take out private health care insurance for the first five years of their stay. Following this, or when they reach state retirement age in France, they will be allowed to join the public health care system.



Driving in France - regulations

- You must carry a high visibility jacket and a warning triangle at all times. If you do breakdown, the high visibility jacket must be worn if you leave the vehicle on the carriageway of a motorway or highway at any time of the day or night. The warning triangle must be positioned in front of the car to alert passing traffic of your presence.
- Headlamp beams must be adjusted for driving on the right hand side of the road.
- You are advised to carry a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher and replacement bulbs for your car when driving in France.
- All UK vehicles must display a GB sticker.
- Children under ten years of age are not permitted to travel in the front seat of the car.
- The alcohol limit in France is 0.25mg/l and random breath tests are carried out frequently.
- Mobile phones may not be used while driving.
- You must carry your driving license, vehicle registration document (V5) and insurance documents with you at all times when driving in France.

- Your UK insurance may only cover you for third party, fire and theft whilst driving in France. It is therefore important to check with your insurance company prior to departure to check your level of cover. Similarly your UK breakdown cover may not cover your journey, unless a supplement is paid.

Speed Limits

The speed limit on some roads will vary in France, depending on the weather conditions. Speeding in France can incur a heavy fine and any driver caught exceeding the speed limit by more than 25mph can lose their license on the spot. Current speed limits are as follows:

- 50km/h in built up areas
- 90 km/h on roads outside of built up areas (80 km/h in wet weather)
- 110 km/h on dual carriage ways and motorways without tolls
- 130 km/h on toll roads (110 km/h in wet weather)



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