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## RIGHT TO WORK IN DENMARK – GUIDE FOR REFUGEES



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# | RIGHT TO WORK IN DENMARK – GUIDE FOR REFUGEES

## Introduction

This guide explains who can work in Denmark, which documents you need, how to check your rights, and what steps you must take before starting a job. It is written for people who have recently arrived in Denmark and are under international protection, temporary protection or are still waiting for a decision on their asylum application. Its purpose is to give clear, practical information so that you can understand your work rights and begin employment legally and safely.

Denmark offers several forms of protection to people fleeing conflict, persecution or serious harm. Each protection category comes with different rules for accessing the labour market. Some people have an immediate right to work once they receive their residence permit, while asylum seekers must meet specific conditions before being granted permission. Understanding your exact status and the related documents helps prevent delays, ensures you comply with Danish law and supports you in finding work more easily.

Your right to work in Denmark depends on the documents issued to you by the Danish Immigration Service or the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI). Employers must check these documents before hiring you, so knowing which permissions you hold—and making sure they are valid—will help you start work smoothly and avoid legal problems. Official guidance: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB>

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# Understanding the different types of legal protection in Denmark



## | Understanding the different types of legal protection in Denmark

To work legally in Denmark, you must understand which protection status you hold and what rights it provides. Denmark recognises several forms of protection for people fleeing conflict, persecution or harm. Each category gives different rights, and your access to the labour market depends directly on the residence permit issued to you.

### Refugee status (Convention status)

If the Danish authorities recognise you as a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention, you receive a **residence permit with the right to work**. This permit allows you to take up employment immediately and work in any sector. Your residence card issued by the Danish Immigration Service confirms your identity, your legal stay and your work rights.

Official guidance on refugee status: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Convention-refugee>

### Subsidiary protection (protected status)

If you do not qualify as a Convention refugee but still face a real risk of serious harm in your home country, you may be granted **subsidiary protection**. This protection status also gives you the right to work in Denmark. You will receive a residence card confirming your permission to stay and work, and you may begin employment as soon as you receive it.

More on protected status: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Protected-status>

### Temporary protection (time-limited residence)

In certain situations, such as conflict or widespread danger in your country of origin, Denmark may grant **temporary protection**. People with temporary protection usually receive a **time-limited residence permit** that includes the right to work. This permit allows you to live and work in Denmark while the protection grounds continue to apply.

Guidance on temporary protection: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Temporary-protection-status>

### Asylum seekers waiting for a decision

If you are an asylum seeker and your case has not yet been decided, you do not have the right to work automatically. Asylum seekers may apply for a **work permit** only if certain conditions are met. One key condition is that the Danish Immigration Service must not expect your case to be processed quickly. You must also meet practical requirements such as staying in assigned accommodation.

If you receive permission, you may work only in jobs approved by the authorities, and you must follow the rules attached to your permit. Information about work for asylum seekers: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Asylum-centres>. Understanding which protection category you belong to helps you know whether you can work immediately, whether you need to apply for a permit, and what documents you must show to an employer.

## | The documents needed to work legally

The documents you must show an employer depend on the type of residence or protection status you hold. Your right to work is confirmed through the residence permit issued by the Danish Immigration Service or SIRI. Employers are legally

required to verify this permission before hiring you.

## For recognised refugees and people with subsidiary protection

If you have refugee status or subsidiary protection, your residence card confirms your identity, your legal stay and your right to work. This card is usually issued shortly after you receive your protection decision. You do not need a separate work permit, and employers only need to check that your residence card is valid and in date.

Official guidance on residence permits for refugees and protected persons: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum>

## For people with temporary protection

If you have temporary protection, your **time-limited residence permit** includes work authorisation. This document confirms that you may work in Denmark during the period of your temporary protection. Employers will check the expiry date and the conditions listed on your permit before hiring you. You do not need to apply for an additional work permit.

Temporary protection information: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Temporary-protection-status>

## For asylum seekers with a work permit

Asylum seekers do not have the right to work automatically. You may apply for a work permit only if specific conditions are met, including that your asylum case is not expected to be processed quickly. If permission is granted, you will receive a **work permit linked to your asylum status**.

To work legally, you must show employers:

- your asylum seeker documentation (issued when you registered your application)
- your valid asylum seeker work permit

Without the work permit, asylum seekers cannot work.

Guidance for asylum seekers: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Asylum-centres>

## Identification documents for all workers

All workers in Denmark must be able to prove their identity. Employers may ask to see:

- your residence card
- your passport or travel document
- your national ID (if accepted by Danish authorities)

Your employer must verify that your identity and work rights match the information on your residence permit.

## | How to check if you have the right to work

If you are unsure whether you are currently allowed to work in Denmark, you can confirm your situation by checking your documents and, if needed, contacting the authorities. Your right to work is always linked to your type of residence permit or, for asylum seekers, your specific work authorisation.

## Check your residence card if you have protection status

If you have refugee status, subsidiary protection or temporary protection, your **residence card** will state that you are permitted to work. This card is issued by the Danish Immigration Service and confirms both your identity and your right to work.

Look for information such as the validity period and the wording that indicates access to the labour market. If your residence card is valid and includes work authorisation, you may work without applying for anything further.

Official guidance on residence permits: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB>

## Check your asylum documents

If you are an asylum seeker, your right to work depends on whether you have been granted a **special work permit**. Asylum

seekers do not automatically have work rights. You may apply for permission if your case is not expected to be processed quickly and you meet the practical requirements set by the authorities.

If you have been granted a work permit, you should have:

- your asylum registration documents
- a valid work permit issued to you specifically as an asylum seeker

Without this permit, you cannot legally work.

Asylum work permit information: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Asylum-centres>

## Check the validity of your documents

Your right to work is only valid if your residence permit or work permit is in date. If your permit has expired—or is close to expiring—you must begin renewal as soon as possible. An expired permit can pause your work rights until a new document is issued.

## Ask the authorities if you are unsure

If you are uncertain about the meaning of your documents or whether you currently have permission to work, you can contact the Danish Immigration Service or the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI). They can confirm your status and explain what steps, if any, you need to take.

Contact information: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/Contact-us>

## | What employers in Denmark must do

Employers in Denmark must ensure that every worker has the legal right to work before employment begins. Their responsibilities vary depending on whether you hold a residence permit based on protection or are an asylum seeker with a specific work permit. Understanding what employers must check can help prevent delays or misunderstandings during the hiring process.

### If you have refugee status or subsidiary protection

If you hold refugee status or subsidiary protection, your employer must check your **residence card**, which clearly shows your right to work. No additional work permit is required. Once your identity and residence permit are verified, the employer may proceed with the standard hiring process.

Guidance on residence permits for protected persons: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum>

### If you have temporary protection

If you hold temporary protection, your **time-limited residence permit** includes permission to work. Employers must only check that your residence card is valid and in date. They do not need to apply for a separate work permit or seek special approval.

Information on temporary protection: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Temporary-protection-status>

### If you are an asylum seeker with a work permit

Asylum seekers may work only if they have been granted a **specific asylum work permit**. If you have this permission, employers must check two documents:

- your asylum seeker identification papers, and
- your valid asylum work permit

The employer must ensure that the job offered matches the conditions listed in your work permit, as some permits are restricted to particular workplaces or types of employment.

Asylum work permit guidance: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Asylum-centres>

### If you are an asylum seeker without a work permit

If you have not been granted a work permit, employers cannot legally hire you. Working without permission may affect

your asylum case and lead to legal consequences for both you and the employer.

### **General employer obligations in Denmark**

All employers must follow Danish labour laws regardless of your immigration status. This includes issuing a written contract, registering you for tax, paying at least the agreed sector wage, and providing safe working conditions. Employment terms are regulated by collective agreements and must be respected for all workers.

Information on Danish employment rules: <https://workindenmark.dk/>

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# Step-by-step guide to start working in Denmark



## Step-by-step guide to start working in Denmark

Starting work in a new country can feel overwhelming, but the process in Ireland is usually straightforward once you understand the steps. These steps apply to refugees, people with subsidiary or humanitarian protection, people under temporary protection and asylum seekers who have received the right to work after six months. Following this guide will help you prepare properly and avoid delays or misunderstandings with employers.

### **Step 1 – Confirm your status**

Identify whether you have refugee status, subsidiary protection, temporary protection or are an asylum seeker. Refugees, people with subsidiary protection and temporary protection holders have a residence permit that includes work rights. Asylum seekers may only work if they receive a specific asylum work permit.

General guidance: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB>

### **Step 2 – Gather your documents**

Prepare the documents you need to show an employer. This may include your residence card, your temporary protection permit, or—if you are an asylum seeker—your asylum documents and your work permit. Keep your passport or travel document available for identification.

### **Step 3 – Ensure your documents are valid**

Check the expiry date on your residence permit or asylum work permit. If anything is close to expiring, begin the renewal process as soon as possible, as an expired document may pause your work rights.

### **Step 4 – Apply for a tax card and CPR number if needed**

All workers in Denmark must have a CPR number and a tax card. Most people under protection receive a CPR number once registered in the system, but if you do not yet have one, you must apply. Your employer cannot pay you correctly without a tax card.

Information on CPR and tax rules: <https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/>

### **Step 5 – Provide your documents to the employer**

Your employer must check your identity and your permission to work. Refugees, subsidiary protection holders and temporary protection holders do not need an extra work permit. Asylum seekers must show their valid work permit.

### **Step 6 – Employer completes the registration process**

Before you start work, your employer must register your employment correctly for tax and payroll purposes. If your asylum work permit lists specific conditions—for example, a particular employer—they must follow those conditions exactly.

### **Step 7 – Start working legally**

Once your employer has verified your documents and completed the necessary registrations, you can begin working. You are then covered by Danish labour rules, including workplace safety, salary standards and employee protections.

## | Keeping your status valid

Your right to work in Denmark depends entirely on your residence permit or, for asylum seekers, your specific work permits remaining valid. If your documents expire or are lost, your work rights may pause until the issue is resolved. Checking your documents regularly and renewing them in time helps you avoid interruptions to your employment.

### **Check expiry dates regularly**

Look at the validity period on your residence card or, if you are an asylum seeker, your work permit. Start the renewal process early. Processing times vary, and waiting too long may lead to a temporary loss of work rights. It is a good idea to check your card every month, especially if it is due to expire within the year.

### **Renewing refugee, subsidiary protection and temporary protection permits**

If you hold refugee status, subsidiary protection or temporary protection, you must renew your residence permit before it expires. These permits confirm both your right to stay and your right to work in Denmark. If your new card has not yet been issued, your employer may ask for proof that you have submitted your renewal application.

Guidance on renewing residence permits: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB>

### **Renewing permission as an asylum seeker**

If you are an asylum seeker with a work permit, you must ensure that both your asylum documents and your work permit remain valid. If either expires, your right to work stops until you have received updated permission. If your asylum case progresses or your living arrangements change, you may need to update the immigration authorities to keep your permit valid.

Information on asylum work permissions: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Asylum/Asylum-centres>

### **If your documents are lost or stolen**

If your residence card, temporary protection permit or asylum documentation is lost or stolen, you should report it and request a replacement as soon as possible. Employers must be able to confirm your identity and work rights, so replacing lost documents quickly is important.

### **Keep digital and paper copies**

It is useful to keep clear digital photos or scanned copies of your residence card and other documents. Although copies cannot replace your original card, they can help with renewal, reporting a loss or explaining your situation to an employer.

### **Update your address if you move**

If you change address, you must update your information through the CPR system. Important letters about renewals and decisions may be sent to the address registered in the system, so keeping your details up to date prevents missed appointments or deadlines.

Address and CPR guidance: <https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/>

## | What to do if you change jobs

Changing jobs in Denmark is generally straightforward for people who hold a residence permit based on protection. Your right to work is connected to your residence permit, not to a specific employer, which means you can move from one job to another without applying for a new permit, provided your existing documents remain valid. If you are a recognised refugee, have subsidiary protection or hold temporary protection, your residence card already contains work authorisation. When you start a new job, you simply present your residence card and proof of identity, and your new employer completes the standard registration for tax and payroll.

For asylum seekers, the situation depends on the type of work permit issued to you. Some asylum seeker work permits allow employment only in a specific job or with a specific employer. If your permit has such conditions, you will need to apply for an updated permit before changing jobs. If your work permit is not employer-specific, you may change jobs as long as the permit remains valid, and your new employer checks your asylum documents and confirms that the work permit applies to the new position. It is important to read your permit carefully to understand what rules apply to you.

When you move to a new job, your employer must verify your identity and your right to work by checking your residence card, temporary protection permit or asylum work permit. They must then register your employment for tax purposes in the same way they would with any other employee. If you have recently renewed your documents or are waiting for a new card to be issued, your employer may ask for proof that your renewal application is in progress.

If you move to a new address while changing jobs, you should update your details in the CPR system, as all official correspondence, including renewal reminders, is sent to your registered address. Guidance on updating your personal details can be found through Life in Denmark: <https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/>

Understanding these steps helps you avoid delays when changing employers and ensures that you remain fully compliant with Danish law while working.

## | Common situations and how to handle them

People under protection in Denmark often face similar questions when preparing to work or changing jobs. One of the most common situations is when an employer asks for a work permit even though your residence card already includes the right to work. This can happen when employers are unfamiliar with the different protection categories. If you are a recognised refugee, have subsidiary protection or hold temporary protection, you can explain that your residence permit itself contains work authorisation and direct them to the official immigration website for confirmation. Showing your valid residence card is usually enough to resolve the situation.

Asylum seekers may face different challenges. Some employers are unsure how the asylum work permit system works or may not realise that only certain asylum seekers are allowed to work. If you have been granted an asylum work permit, you can show your asylum documentation and the permit itself, which confirm your right to take up employment. If your work permit is tied to a particular job or employer, you will need to follow the specific conditions listed. If your employer is still uncertain, you can refer them to the Danish Immigration Service for clarification.

Another common issue arises when documents expire during employment. Danish law requires employers to ensure that workers have valid permission, so your employer may pause your employment until you renew your residence card or asylum work permit. To avoid this, it is important to begin the renewal process well before the expiry date. If you have proof that the renewal application has been submitted, you can show this to your employer while waiting for the new card. People moving within Denmark also sometimes worry about whether they can continue working in a new city. As long as your residence permit or work permit remains valid, you may work anywhere in Denmark. However, you must update your address in the CPR system, as the authorities rely on your registered address to send letters about renewals or appointments.

Losing your documents is another situation that can cause stress. If your residence card, asylum papers or work permit are

lost or stolen, you should report this immediately and apply for a replacement. While waiting for the new document, it may be possible to obtain temporary proof of status, which you can show to your employer if needed. Information about replacements can be found on the official website: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB>

Finally, if you have any concerns about your working conditions, such as pay, hours or safety, you have the same employment rights as any other worker in Denmark. You can seek support from Danish labour authorities or from organisations that assist migrants and refugees. Knowing your rights and where to get help ensures you can work safely and confidently.

## | Where to get help or more information

If you need support with your documents, your work rights or your protection status in Denmark, there are several trusted organisations and official services you can turn to. These resources can help you understand your permits, solve problems with employers, renew documents and access your rights safely.

Denmark's official immigration website is the most reliable place to check rules, renewals and updates affecting refugees, people with subsidiary protection, temporary protection holders and asylum seekers. The site provides guidance on residence permits, work conditions and relevant procedures: <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB>

You can also contact the **Danish Immigration Service** and the **Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI)** for questions about residence permits, renewals and work permissions. Both agencies are responsible for confirming your legal status and can explain what documents you must hold to work.

For help understanding your rights at work, or if you experience problems such as unpaid wages, unclear contracts or unsafe conditions, the **Danish Working Environment Authority** and the **Danish labour unions** can provide advice. Trade unions in Denmark have strong protections for workers and can support you even if you are new to the labour market.

If you need independent advice or support, several organisations work with refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. These include groups that offer legal guidance, employment assistance and help with navigating the Danish system. They can help you understand letters from the authorities, prepare documents and resolve issues related to your protection status or your right to work.

Useful contacts include:

- **Danish Immigration Service (Udlændingestyrelsen)** – information on residence permits, renewal procedures and asylum matters.  
<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/Contact-us>
- **SIRI** – guidance on work-related permissions and documents for foreign nationals.  
<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/Contact-SIRI>
- **Life in Denmark (Borger.dk)** – information on CPR numbers, tax registration and everyday administrative steps.  
<https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/>
- **Danish Refugee Council (DRC)** – support with integration, legal advice and practical issues for refugees and asylum seekers.  
<https://drc.ngo/>
- **Work in Denmark** – guidance for jobseekers, labour market information and employment rights.  
<https://workindenmark.dk/>

These services can provide reliable information, help you solve practical problems and ensure that you understand and protect your rights while working in Denmark.

## | Frequently asked questions

Many refugees and people under protection have similar questions about working in Denmark. Below are answers to some of the most common concerns, explained in a simple and practical way.

- 1. Do refugees and people with subsidiary protection need a work permit in Denmark?**  
No. Your residence permit already includes the right to work, and employers only need to see your valid residence card.
- 2. Can people with temporary protection work immediately?**  
Yes. Temporary protection comes with a time-limited residence permit that includes work authorisation.
- 3. Can asylum seekers work in Denmark?**  
Only asylum seekers who have been granted a specific asylum work permit may work. Without this permit, asylum seekers are not allowed to take up employment.
- 4. How do I know if my residence permit includes the right to work?**  
Your residence card will state whether you are permitted to work. If it is valid and includes work rights, you can work legally.
- 5. Do I need to renew my documents to keep working?**  
Yes. If your residence permit or asylum work permit expires, your right to work pauses until renewal is approved. Always begin renewals early.
- 6. Can I change employers freely?**  
If you hold refugee status, subsidiary protection or temporary protection, you can change jobs freely. Asylum seekers may do so only if their work permit is not tied to a specific employer or job.
- 7. What happens if my documents expire while I am working?**  
Your employer may have to pause your employment until you provide proof of renewal or receive a new permit.
- 8. Do I need a CPR number to work?**  
Yes. A CPR number and a tax card are required for all workers in Denmark.
- 9. What should I do if my residence card or asylum documents are lost?**  
Report the loss and request a replacement immediately, as you must be able to prove your identity and your right to work.
- 10. Where can I check official information about my work rights?**  
All official updates and guidance are published by the Danish Immigration Service:  
<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB>

## | Practical checklist for refugees preparing to work

This checklist helps you prepare for legal employment in Denmark. You can use it before applying for jobs or starting a new role.

- Confirm your immigration status and whether it includes permission to work.
- Check your residence card or asylum work permit to ensure they are valid and in date.
- Prepare your identification, such as your passport, travel document or national ID.
- Gather the documents that confirm your right to work, including your residence card or asylum work permit.
- Ensure you have a CPR number and tax card. If not, apply through Life in Denmark:  
<https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/>
- Make paper and digital copies of all important documents for your own records.
- Update your address in the CPR system if you move, so you do not miss renewal letters or official notices.
- Be ready to show your documents to employers when applying for jobs.

- If you need help with your documents, work rights or employment problems, contact trusted organisations such as the Danish Refugee Council or Work in Denmark.