

Moving to France.

Make sure everything goes smoothly!

You're relocating to France and moving day is just around the corner, you've thought of everything and got everything to hand. Are you sure? Zebrabox has compiled a list of the most important things to remember when moving to a new country!

What to remember when relocating to France.

Bonjour – I'm on my way!

A couple of weeks BEFORE relocating!

Moving to France

As a citizen of the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA), settling, studying, or working in France is easy thanks to free movement. Citizens of other countries should check entry requirements with the consulate or embassy.

Important: You need a valid identity card or passport, a work contract, or a rental agreement! Self-employed individuals must prove they can support themselves (income, etc.). Others require a residence permit. Citizens of Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania may face access restrictions.

Useful tips: Check and renew all identity documents if needed (ID card, passport, child's ID card) and other important documents (driver's license, birth certificate). Obtain a work permit from your French employer and ensure you have an employment contract (fixed-term or permanent). If you're bringing a pet, ensure it has the required vaccinations and necessary documents.

Zebrabox tip: Before registering in your new country (see previous point), remember to deregister and cancel your old contracts. Already thought of everything?

- Health insurance
- Car insurance
- Newspaper subscriptions, telephone, mobile, internet and TV contracts

Just before and on moving day

Moving belongings and customs

If you're moving to France from a non-EU country, you must present a list of all items you wish to import at customs, including furniture, vehicles, and pets.

From an EU country: No specific customs formalities are required for personal belongings.

From a non-EU country: You may qualify for duty-free and tax-free import of personal belongings if you meet specific conditions:

- You have owned the items for at least six months before moving.
- You are transferring your main residence to France.
- You do not sell the imported goods within a year of arrival.

Important: All personal belongings must have been in your possession for over six months to be tax-exempt, including vehicles. Keep all receipts!

Useful tips: At customs, you will need to provide:

- A detailed and estimated inventory of your belongings in two copies.
- The CERFA 10070*03 form titled "Declaration of Entry into France Duty-Free for Personal Belongings from Non-EU Countries."
- Any document proving your relocation (e.g., work or rental contract).

For more information, visit the French Customs website: douane.gouv.fr

Zebrabox tip: In France, a moving vehicle weighing more than 3.5 tons is also considered a truck. Be aware of traffic

restrictions! Trucks are not allowed to drive on national roads and highways from Saturday 10 p.m. to Sunday 10 p.m., as well as on public holidays. During the summer, these restrictions may be extended, especially on roads leading to tourist areas. Make sure your vehicle does not exceed the maximum allowed weight, or you may be required to unload part of your belongings if checked. It's best to consult a moving company before departure. Also, check the opening hours of customs offices if you're transporting goods subject to customs procedures.

Staying in France (for housing searches, etc.)

There are three different residency options: short-term residence permits for stays up to a year, time-limited residence permits and settlement permits.

Important: To enter France, you must have a valid passport (or an EU/EEA identity card for European citizens).

Useful tips: For stays longer than three months, non-European citizens must apply for a long-stay visa, then obtain a residence permit suited to their situation once in France. This application is made at the prefecture of their department of residence.

Zebrabox tip: Students must provide proof of enrollment in a recognized French institution to obtain a student visa, followed by their residence permit in France.

Working in France

Employees in France need a residence permit, which is generally issued along with their work contract through their employer.

Important: The employer (or you, if you already have a work contract) must apply for a work permit from the competent local authority. The job can only start once this permit is issued. The residence permit is linked to the work permit, usually valid for five years, and can be renewed.

Useful tips: French companies typically have a flat hierarchy, meaning employees communicate directly with their superi-

ors and HR about important matters. This could explain why union membership is relatively low, strikes are rare, and they often face resistance.

Zebrabox tip: If you're looking for seasonal work in France, check out jobs in the hospitality, events, and tourism sectors—whether in big cities or seasonal locations (ski resorts in winter, coastal towns in summer).

Self-employed work in France

Anyone wishing to establish themselves as a self-employed worker in France must obtain a residence permit that allows independent work before starting their activity.

Important: A residence permit for self-employed workers is granted only if the project has economic value for France and the applicant meets specific personal and financial criteria. The decision to issue this permit lies with the prefecture administration.

Useful tips: Spouses of French citizens or those married to a resident permit holder in France do not need additional authorization to work as self-employed.

Zebrabox tip: Self-employed workers can voluntarily contribute to a retirement fund to ensure social security coverage in France.

Living in France

What are the nighttime quiet hours in France? How does waste collection work? What does a concierge do, and what are the responsibilities of a property management company (syndic de copropriété)? Daily life is easier when you understand and follow local rules.

Important: To rent a home in France, you must prove you can afford the rent. A strong application, including proof of income and possibly a guarantor, increases your chances of securing a rental.

Useful tips: Both tenants and landlords must follow certain rental regulations. To avoid disputes, the official French

government website [Service-public.fr](https://service-public.fr)^{GO} provides detailed information on tenant rights and responsibilities, including co-ownership rules and quiet hours when noise disturbances are prohibited.

Zebrabox tip: Make copies of all important documents, such as your rental contract and ID, and store them in our smallest storage unit (XXXS – 1m³). In case of fire or theft, having copies will help you recover quickly and avoid unnecessary hassle.

Health insurance

Anyone residing in France on a long-term basis must register with French health insurance (Sécurité Sociale). This registration should be completed within the first few months of arrival to ensure medical coverage from the beginning of the stay.

Important: Basic coverage includes doctor consultations, hospitalizations, and prescribed medications, but dental and optical care are often only partially reimbursed. For more comprehensive coverage, you can subscribe to a complementary health insurance (mutuelle), with varying costs and benefits depending on the provider.

Useful tips: Health insurance contributions in France are income-based. Additionally, some services may require an annual deductible or co-payments. Employees working at least eight hours per week also receive workplace accident coverage as part of their job.

Zebrabox tip: Even though basic health coverage is the same for everyone, it's wise to compare different complementary health insurance plans, as prices and coverage levels vary! For more details and to register, visit the official French Health Insurance website: ameli.fr^{GO}.

Car

Anyone wishing to import and drive a vehicle in France must follow specific administrative rules. Only the vehicle owner is allowed to import it.

Important: If you are bringing a used vehicle from outside the EU, you must declare it at customs as a “moving item”. The vehicle must have been in your possession for at least six months (make sure to keep the registration certificate and purchase contract). Keep all stamped customs documents, as they will be required for registration in France. Company vehicles registered abroad are subject to specific regulations, and a customs declaration is mandatory.

If you are importing a new car, check for applicable taxes and fees, including the tourist vehicle tax and the Crit'Air environmental sticker, required for driving in low-emission zones such as Paris.

Useful tips: Once you are in France, you have one month to register your vehicle with the registration office (Agence Nationale des Titres Sécurisés, ANTS). A foreign driving licence is valid for up to a year after you move to France, after which it must be exchanged for a French licence if you are from outside the EU. To do this, bring proof of identity, your current driving licence, a residence permit and, if necessary, a vision test.

Zebrabox tip: If you're driving an imported vehicle in France, make sure to exchange your license on time to avoid fines. If you're leasing a vehicle, check with your financing provider to confirm whether it can be imported into France. For vehicle registration procedures, visit the official website: ants.gouv.fr^{GO}.

AFTER relocating

Registering

Once your move is complete, a few administrative formalities remain to finalize your settlement in France.


Important: Your first obligation after arrival is to declare your new address at the town hall (mairie) of your place of residence, usually within a few days. This step is essential for officially registering your residence in France. If you have a pet, registration may also be required.

Useful tips: To register, you will need:

- ID card or passport

- Recent passport-size photo
- Copy of your rental lease or property title
- Employment contract / enrollment confirmation (for students)
- Proof of health insurance enrollment (Sécurité Sociale or private insurance)
- Birth certificate, marriage certificate (if applicable)
- Proof of professional activity (employment certificate or self-employment proof)

Zebrabox tip: If you plan to settle permanently in France, explore naturalization options. Naturalization through marriage is possible after four years of marriage to a French citizen. Ordinary naturalization generally requires at least five years of continuous residence in France.

For more details, visit the official government website:
[Service-public.fr](https://service-public.fr) .