



Reception Centre House Rules for Asylum Seekers and Persons in Need of Protection

These house rules, issued by the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), govern the stay of asylum seekers and persons in need of protection at a reception centre.

1. Management and responsibility

The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) operates reception centres, where the personal data of asylum seekers are registered and their fingerprints and photos taken (Art. 26 Asylum Act; SR 142.31). In a first interview, asylum seekers and persons in need of protection are questioned on personal data, their itinerary, and the reasons they left their native country or the country of provenance, that is, the country in which they resided before coming to Switzerland. In appropriate cases an accelerated asylum procedure is applied at the reception centre (Art. 29, para. 1, let. a Asylum Act).

The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) is responsible for sanitary precautions at the centres to ensure public health safety (Federal Department of Home Affairs Regulation on Border Sanitary Border Examination; SR 818.125.11).

2. Opening hours and admission

Reception centres are open on workdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside of these hours, at weekends, and on national or cantonal holidays reception centres are closed.

No asylum seeker will be newly admitted outside of opening hours. Exceptions are made for emergencies, women, and children. Furthermore, persons who have applied for asylum at the Swiss border and have been authorised to enter Switzerland may be admitted to a reception centre at any time.

The reception centres are not open to the public, but are reserved for asylum seekers and persons in need of protection.

3. Admission

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection are provided with a leaflet written in a language they understand, informing them of their rights and duties in the asylum procedure.

3.1. Upon registering with a reception centre, asylum seekers and persons in need of protection are required to deposit at the reception gate any travel and identity documents they carry (Art. 8, para. 1, let. b Asylum Act).

3.2. Electrical appliances such as photo, film and video cameras, radios and tape recorders, and valuables must be deposited with the reception centre staff. Owners will be given a voucher acknowledging receipt of such objects for safekeeping. These objects will be returned when the owner eventually leaves the reception centre.

3.3 The use of mobile phones is basically permitted in reception centres and in satellite centres. SEM may restrict the use of mobile phones if this becomes necessary for operating the centre.

3.4. It is not permitted to make any kind of audio, visual or video recordings.

3.5. During the night-time quiet period from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. the use of mobile phones is not permitted (Art. 8 para. 3 Ordinance of the Federal Department of Justice and Police on Operating Federal Asylum Accommodation). When using mobile phones at other times, consideration should always be shown to others.

3.6. Before official appointments at SEM, such as interviews on personal data or on the reasons for claiming asylum, mobile phones must be handed in or turned off.

3.7. If a person fails to comply with the rules on using mobile phones, SEM may confiscate the device.

3.8. Any kind of weapon, hazardous objects, and narcotics must be deposited with the centre staff. These objects will be handed over to the police. Return of such objects is at the discretion of the cantonal and local police authorities.

3.9. Upon entering the reception centre, baggage will be checked for travel and identity documents, weapons, hazardous objects, narcotics and valuables. Any such objects will be confiscated. A body search will be carried out by a person of the same gender (Art. 9 para. 2 Asylum Act).

3.10. Persons who try to conceal the possession of objects listed in section 3.2 and take them into the reception centre are liable to sanctions (for example, refusal to leave the centre or criminal prosecution). Possession of weapons, hazardous objects, or narcotics will be reported to the police immediately. Any such object will be confiscated.

4. Staying at the reception centre

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection staying at a reception centre are to be available to the asylum authorities, for example for sanitary examination, fingerprinting, interviewing, or notification of decision. Absence from the reception centre is subject to the provisions under section 4.1 of the house rules. Disregard of these rules may result in administrative sanctions such as confinement to the centre. The stay at the reception centre is temporary.

The duration of stay depends on the stage of procedure, but should not exceed 90 days.

4.1. Going out and leave

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection are free to go outside the centre from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., provided their presence at the centre is not required. SEM reserves the right to change this rule for administrative reasons.

Permission is required to go outside the centre and valid during the time of stay at the centre. The leave permit shows the time allowed out. Permission will be granted only after those admitted to the centre have been fingerprinted and photographed. Provided the proper functioning of the centre is ensured, asylum seekers and persons in need of protection may stay outside the centre from Friday 9 a.m. to Sunday 7 p.m. The same rule applies to leave on public holidays. On public holidays, leave begins at 7 p.m. on the evening before a holiday begins.

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection must pay their own fares for public

transportation.

On returning to the centre, leave permits must be handed in again.

4.2. Meals

Meals are taken in the dining hall. For reasons of hygiene, food may not be taken to, nor consumed in the rooms. Meals are served at the following hours:

Breakfast from 7 a.m. to 7.30 a.m.

Lunch from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Dinner from 5 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

No meals are served outside these hours. For administrative reasons, SEM or the centre staff may regulate hours differently.

4.3. Accommodation

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection are each assigned a place to sleep in gender separated rooms. Places may not be changed without prior approval from the staff. Circumstances allowing, family members share rooms.

Bathrooms and premises reserved exclusively for males or females are strictly off-limits to the other gender.

There is a day room equipped with a TV set.

Staff premises as well as kitchen, storerooms, and engine rooms are off-limits to unauthorized persons unless entry is authorised or ordered by the staff.

4.4. Tobacco, alcohol, and drugs

For security reasons, smoking is not allowed in any of the rooms of the centre or the emergency overnight accommodation.

Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed nor kept at the reception centre. Possession and consumption of illegal drugs is against the law. Non-compliance is subject to criminal prosecution.

4.5. Maintaining peace

Care is to be taken to avoid noise constituting a nuisance within the reception centre and in its nearby surroundings. In addition, local regulations apply outside the centre. Everyone residing at the centre is required to behave correctly and thoughtfully and not to disturb others at the centre. The day room and the TV may not be used after 10 p.m. Night's rest must be respected from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

4.6. Housework

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection are obliged to assist in housework duties at the centre (for example, cleaning, serving meals). The centre staff have authority to assign such work if need arises. Residents at the centre are to ensure that the rooms assigned to them and those used by them are kept tidy. Furthermore, residents are responsible for hygiene in sanitary installations. It is forbidden to discard waste on the floor or to soil walls.

4.7. Medical care

Diseases or signs thereof must be reported immediately to the centre staff, who will take appropriate precautions. Patients will be assigned to any of the hospitals of the canton in which the reception centre is located.

4.8. Accidents and disputes

Accidents and disputes in the centre must be reported to the care staff immediately.

5. Visitors and communication

Visitors are allowed into the centre with the permission of the centre management. Visitors are required to report the reception office on entering and leaving the centre, and present an identity document. For security reasons, visitors will be checked by reception staff. As a rule, visitors may only be met at the assigned premises.

The centre management sets visiting times. Minimum visiting time is 2½ hours a day. SEM reserves the right to change visiting hours for administrative reasons.

Public telephones are available at the centre. Fax machines may be used to contact legal advice or legal representation. Messages from legal advice and legal representation will be forwarded.

6. Damage und liability

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection must treat with care objects and furnishings entrusted to their use during their stay at the centre. Any damage to furnishings or buildings must be reported to the centre staff on duty. Persons responsible for damage may be held liable. In cases where minors have caused damage, their parents are held liable.

SEM accepts neither responsibility for the belongings of those residing at the reception centre, nor for damage that asylum seekers or persons in need of protection staying at the centre may cause to third property. The centre does not safeguard valuables, except substantial amounts of cash (Art. 86f Asylum Act, Art. 16ff Asylum Ordinance 2, Directive on Asylum No. 18).

7. Leaving the reception centre

Before leaving the reception centre, asylum seekers and persons in need of protection are required to tidy the room they were assigned to and return the bedclothes. Persons, whose application for asylum has been denied, are issued a train ticket on leaving the centre. All other asylum seekers are issued a train ticket, the allocation decision, and a laissez-passer. Any objects deposited against receipt will be returned to them.

8. Other information and regulations

Important information and regulations are put up on the centre bulletin board.

Unaccompanied minors are subject to separate regulations which are contained in the 'Guidelines on How to Take Care of Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Minors at Reception Centres'.

9. Contacts

In case of problems, care staff should be contacted first. If not available, reception staff is responsible

Complaints about care staff or supervisory staff are to be lodged with the centre management. Complaints about the centre management can be lodged with SEM by

petitioning for administrative review (SEM, Leitung Abteilung Empfangs- und Verfahrenszentren, Quellenweg 6, 3003 Bern-Wabern).

10. Disciplinary measures

Asylum seekers and persons in need of protection staying in federal accommodation may be subject to disciplinary measures if they fail to meet their obligations according to Article 16a to 16c FDJP Ordinance or if they endanger public order and security.

The following disciplinary measures may be imposed:

- a. A ban on entering certain rooms that are normally accessible to asylum seekers and persons in need of protection;
- b. Refusal of permission to leave the centre;
- c. Refusal of public transport travel permits;
- d. Non-payment of pocket money;
- e. Expulsion from the premises for a maximum of 24 hours;
- f. Allocation to a special centre.

Internal appeals procedure:

Appeals against disciplinary measures under letters a-d and e (up to a maximum of 8 hours) can be made by completing a form and submitting it to the centre not later than three days after the person has been informed of the disciplinary measure.

External appeals procedure:

Expulsion from the premises for more than 8 hours, up to a maximum of 24 hours (letter e), and allocation to a special centre (letter f) by means of a disciplinary ruling can be contested by appealing to the Federal Administrative Court.

11. Validity

These house rules are effective from 1 December 2017. They supersede previous house rules.

These house rules are to be made readily visible to everyone concerned at the reception centre.

State Secretariat for Migration

Mario Gattiker
State Secretary