

Table of Contents

1.6 Information for Newcomers.....	1
Contents.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Procedure for obtaining invitation letter for visas for Switzerland and France.....	2
Short Term Visa.....	2
Long Term Visa.....	4
Arriving at Geneva Airport (Cointrin) or Geneva Train Station (Cornavin).....	4
Taxi.....	4
Public Transport from the Airport and Train Station.....	4
Arriving at CERN.....	5
Accommodation.....	5
St. Genis Hostel.....	5
Meyrin Hostel.....	6
Accommodation Outside CERN.....	6
Insurance.....	7
Registering at CERN.....	7
Registering with CMS.....	7
Creation of Computer Account.....	8
Laptop Registration.....	8
CMS Safety.....	8
Dosimeters.....	8
Subsistence allowance and other payments.....	8
Other Useful Information.....	10
Cost of living.....	10
Bringing pets.....	10
Bringing pets to Switzerland.....	10
Bringing pets to France.....	10
Phoning.....	11
Plugs.....	11
Language and Currency.....	11
Getting Around.....	11
Cinema.....	12
CERN Student Activities.....	12
Other Useful Links.....	12
Review status.....	12

1.6 Information for Newcomers

Detailed Review status

Contents

- Introduction
- Procedure for obtaining invitation letter for visas for Switzerland and France
 - ◆ Short Term Visa
 - ◆ Long Term Visa
- Arriving at Geneva Airport (Cointrin) or Geneva Train Station (Cornavin)
 - ◆ Taxi
 - ◆ Public Transport from the Airport and Train Station
- Arriving at CERN
- Accommodation
 - ◆ St. Genis Hostel
 - ◆ Meyrin Hostel
 - ◆ Accommodation Outside CERN
- Insurance
- Registering at CERN
- Registering with CMS
- Creation of Computer Account
- Laptop Registration
- Safety at CMS
- Dosimeters
- Subsistence allowance and other payments
- Other Useful Information
 - ◆ Cost of living
 - ◆ Bringing Pets
 - ◇ to Switzerland
 - ◇ to France
 - ◆ Phoning
 - ◆ Plugs
 - ◆ Language and Currency
 - ◆ Getting Around
 - ◆ Cinema
 - ◆ CERN Student Club
 - ◆ Other Useful Links

Introduction

Please visit also the CERN Guide for newcomers [for](#) more complete information.

The CERN facility spans two sites; Meyrin in Switzerland and Prévessin in France. The CMS detector is located in France, Cessy (Point 5), which is about 15 km from the CERN Meyrin site 'See map' [for](#). The facilities and offices that most CMS members will use when visiting CERN are all in the Meyrin (CH) site.

Procedure for obtaining invitation letter for visas for Switzerland and France

In accordance with the Status Agreement with CERN, Switzerland and France facilitate the entry of members of the Organization's personnel onto their territories. Where relevant, detailed procedures for obtaining visas apply. Please see: * [Visa Requirement and Procedure for Switzerland and France](#)

More information by nationality concerning the visa requirements can be found at [Swiss State Secretariat for Migration SEM](#)

Invitation letters request:

- please go to new invitation website [to fill in the invitation request](#). The request will be handled by the CMS Secretariat as soon as possible and the letter (and the relevant documents were applicable) will be sent back to you. On the main page, please read the instructions and select the invitation letter you need from the menu on the right. Please note that the website works only with an active CERN account. If you have a CERN account but you still cannot access the site, please contact the CMS secretariat. If you don't have a CERN account, please register your account as CERN Lightweight account following the instructions on the [CERN Account Management](#) main page and, once registered, send a confirmation to the CMS secretariat.

- if you have any questions, please contact cms-invitation@cernNOSPAMPLEASE.ch or cms.secretariat@cernNOSPAMPLEASE.ch

- collaborators from US CMS institutes, please go to [US CMS invitation website](#) OR contact Yasemin Yazgan.

Please contact the local consulate/embassy about 6-8 weeks before (but minimum 3 weeks) your projected travel date, especially in countries where appointments are required for the visa application. Although early applications are encouraged, they should not be made more than 3 months in advance. Original invitations aren't always requested by the consulates, that depends on the local authorities so you need to check that. You also need to make sure that you have a valid health insurance with 'rapatriement' that covers your whole stay.

IMPORTANT to know: You cannot apply to both Swiss and French visas (as both are Schengen) but you must choose depending on which country you are planning to live in. Especially for a long term visa, we encourage you to apply for the French visa D if you have at least 3-4 weeks time ahead and are not fully sure if you will install in France or Switzerland. The Users Office can apply for a Swiss "Carte de legitimisation" for the users having a French visa D with the intention of settling in France, but who are temporarily staying at the CERN Hostel in Switzerland, but one can also choose to live then in Switzerland without too much paperwork. Those who come to CERN with a Swiss visa D, and would then like to live in France, need to apply for a French visa D from the French consulate in Geneva BUT only after the "Carte de legitimisation" is delivered. It is obligatory then to stay in Switzerland during that time (at least one month). To apply for the visa in Geneva, note that also a Swiss local address is required (CERN hostel is not accepted).

Please takenote thatyour Team Leader has to approve your request for the invitation.

CERN associated personnel (users) is allowed up to 3 months' grace at the end of their functions to allow for removal and going back to home countries. The "Carte de legitimisation" can be mailed back to the Users Office after home country has been reached.

Short Term Visa

Given that the Organization is located on the border between France and Switzerland, we strongly recommend that you contact the relevant consulates for information on the entry conditions applicable to you in these two countries, specifying the **duration and nature of your work** at CERN. Where appropriate, you are invited to take the necessary steps to obtain the requisite documents, in particular a visa for entry to the Schengen member countries:

- **either by going to the Swiss Consulate competent for your usual place of residence, taking the CERN invitation letter with you**, explaining that you will become a member of the CERN personnel and that as such you will be entitled to freedom of access to, and residence on, Swiss territory under Article 12 of the Status Agreement between CERN and Switzerland dated 11 June 1955;

- **or by going to the French Consulate competent for your usual place of residence** as soon as you receive the CERN invitation, presenting the *convention d'accueil* and explaining that you will become a member of the CERN personnel and that as such you will be entitled to freedom of access to, and residence on, French territory (without visa charges and without delay) under Article XI § 2 of the Status Agreement between CERN and France dated 13 September 1965, as revised on 16 June 1972. It is **important that you sign this convention yourself before presenting it to any authorities**.

- Request a short term visa here

Data needed (as in passport) for the short term (less than 3 months stay) visa request:

1. Family name(s):
2. First name(s):
3. Civil Status (Ms/Mrs/Mr):
4. Date of birth:
5. Place of birth:
6. Nationality:
7. Complete current address of residence:
8. Telephone:
9. Email:
10. Academic title or status: (undergraduate, graduate, master, PhD, etc):
11. Employing institute or University:
12. Address of the institute/univ:
13. Foreseeable start date of the stay:
14. Foreseeable end date of the stay:
15. Date of last entry into Schengen Area (if applicable):
16. Number of foreseeable visits during one year:
17. Name of the requesting person (if applicable):
18. University and Department of the requesting person:

Important! Everybody coming to work at CERN with a Schengen visa issued by the Swiss authorities for any period of time less than 3 months and needing to go to France for any reasons are requested to have an official CONVENTION D'ACCUEIL document that they must keep with them together with the passport at all times and show at the Users Office when registering.

This document is prepared at CERN, signed by the person coming to CERN then sent for approval to the Sub-Prefecture in Gex, France and then returned to CERN.

The Convention d'accueil covers normally only the duration of the stay in question. A new one must be requested for every new stay. However, for the persons coming regularly to CERN (and who are registered at the users office for less than 51%), it is proposed to issue it for a period of 2 years if the stay does not exceed 90 days at one time.

In most cases you can collect the Convention from the Secretariat.

[back to top](#)

Long Term Visa

Given that the Organization is located on the border between France and Switzerland, we strongly recommend that you contact the relevant consulates for information on the entry conditions applicable to you in these two countries, specifying the **duration and nature of your work** at CERN. Where appropriate, you are invited to take the necessary steps to obtain the requisite documents, in particular **multiple-entry long-stay visas**:

1. a Swiss D+C type visa if you are establishing your place of residence in Switzerland, or
2. a French D type visa if you are establishing your place of residence in France **or** if you have not yet decided where to establish your future place of residence.

For Switzerland: you must go to the Swiss Consulate competent for your usual place of residence, **taking this letter with you**, and request a visa bearing the words *prise de fonctions au CERN* , explaining that you will become a member of the CERN personnel and that as such you will be entitled to a legitimation card issued by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and to freedom of access to, and residence on, Swiss territory under Article 12 of the Status Agreement between CERN and Switzerland dated 11 June 1955.

For France: you must go to the French Consulate competent for your usual place of residence and request a visa bearing the words *carte PRO-MAE à solliciter dès l'arrivée* , **making reference to CERN's Note Verbale** to the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and to the agreement that the Ministry has addressed to the above-mentioned Consulate in your favour, and specifying that you are entitled to freedom of access to, and residence on, French territory (without visa charges and without delay) under Article XI § 2 of the Status Agreement between CERN and France dated 13 September 1965 as revised on 16 June 1972.

As mentioned before, if you get the French long-term visa D, you do not need to have the Swiss visa D as you will receive the Swiss legitimation card at CERN. However, the Swiss visa D is not enough to be able to live in France.

- [Visa Requirement and Procedure for Switzerland and France](#)
- [Relations with the Host States Service](#) and more specifically at: [Visas and Residence](#)
- [Federal Office for Immigration, Integration and Emigration](#)
- [French Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

[back to top](#)

Arriving at Geneva Airport (Cointrin) or Geneva Train Station (Cornavin)

Taxi

A taxi to CERN Reception, building 33 from the airport will cost approx. 35 Swiss francs, from the railway station approx. 70 Swiss francs. The journey takes about 10 minutes from the airport and 20 minutes from the train station.

Public Transport from the Airport and Train Station

On arrival by air, take a free ticket from the ticket machine (baggage claim area). The Unireso ticket, issued free of charge by Geneva International Airport, enables you to use public transport in Geneva public

transport in Geneva [↗](#) for 80 minutes. This ticket is only valid with your flight ticket to prove that you have arrived on that day.

Otherwise you will need 3 CHF (or equivalent in EUR) to buy a bus ticket from the ticket machine at the bus stop.

See: [How to get to CERN](#) [↗](#) and [Geneva transport website TPG](#) [↗](#)

There is a regular shuttle service between CERN (building 500) and the Geneva Airport every hour from 08:00 to 19:00, from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays and CERN end of year closure). Shuttle bus No 4 [↗](#)

Note that continuing roadwork at the airport requires frequent change of the shuttle stop location. Please consult the web site before your arrival.

To get to CERN from the Train station take the tram number 18 (marked with terminus "CERN" in front) to CERN directly.

Arriving at CERN

CERN Reception is open from 8.00 a.m. to 5.45 p.m. (Monday – Friday) and from 8.30 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. (Saturday).

If you arrive during working hours, your first stop should be the CERN Reception in Building 33 [↗](#). . You will receive a temporary visitor pass from the reception. They will indicate to you where to go e.g. to the CMS Secretariat in bldg 40-5-B01 [↗](#).

[back to top](#)

Accommodation

Be fairly quick with a hostel reservation [↗](#) as they are often very full, but they only take reservations two months in advance. It is a bit cheaper to live on the French side of the border.

You can consult the [CERN Housing Service](#) [↗](#) website which includes information relating to the CERN hostel booking rules, special negotiated rates for hotels in the local area, rental offers from the local private sector, etc. Or the CERN Housing Service team can be contacted directly in case you have any queries (reception in Building 39 [↗](#), tel. 74481).

The easiest and quickest way to reserve rooms at CERN is via the [web booking tool](#) [↗](#). Please note that **any reservation canceled less than 48 hours in advance will incur a one-night payment penalty** - if you change plans please inform the hostel as soon as possible so that the room can be re-allocated.

Please note that some websites (e.g. CERN market) are only accessible to CERN users. You can therefore create a lightweight account prior to your arrival: [External Account](#) [↗](#)

St. Genis Hostel

Address: Foyer Résidence Schumann, 340 rue de l Europe F-01630 Saint Genis Pouilly, France Tel: 00 33 (0) 450 42 13 66

The reception desk at the St. Genis hostel is open from 16h00 to 19h00 for check-in, but you can leave luggage at the reception desk from 8h00 to 12h00. You have Wi-Fi connection in the hostel.

Transport to the Hostel from CERN

At CERN you can get a shuttle bus [↗](#) to the hostel **during the opening hours of CERN**. Outside opening hours you can take the Y bus or ask for a taxi from the Guard at gate B.

Equipment in kitchen

The kitchens are equipped with a fridge, hot plate, hot and cold water. There is **no equipment for cooking** like pots, pans, plates, cups, knives, spoons, etc. The supermarket is close by for buying all kinds of food and essential cooking equipment.

Meyrin Hostel

Address: CERN Meyrin site, Building no. 39 [↗](#), Meyrin, Switzerland Tel. 00 41 (0) 22 767 44 81

The reception desk is open from 7h30 to 00h30. You have Wi-Fi connection in the hostel.

Late arrival If you arrive after opening hours, **go to the Entrance gate B** and announce yourself to the Guard. He will give you your room key and show you where the hostel is, just a short walk on foot from entrance B.

Accommodation Outside CERN

There are many hostels in or around Geneva center which will take people for anything from a night to several years. However there are always long waiting lists and you must almost always reserve a room long in advance.

Hostels

Geneva University [↗](#)

EasyExpat.com [↗](#)

Foyer George Willimas [↗](#)

Hostels with Dorm-Rooms

Home Saint Pierre [↗](#)

City Hostel Geneva [↗](#)

Hotels

Reasonably Cheap Hotels [↗](#)

Hotels in the Area [↗](#)

back to top

Insurance

In accordance with the CERN Staff Rules and Regulations, your social insurance cover, as well as that of any accompanying family members, is the responsibility of your home institute or, failing that, is your own responsibility. It must comprise health insurance covering the financial consequences of illness and accidents at a level adequate for both France and Switzerland. In particular, kindly note that: – at the time of completing the CERN arrival formalities at the latest, you will be required to supply proof of health insurance cover for yourself and any accompanying family members;

For updated information, please refer to Users Office -Health Insurance Information [↗](#)

Other insurances but be careful what they cover: Golden Care [↗](#) and Swiss Care [↗](#)

[back to top](#)

Registering at CERN

Before coming to CERN, you must make sure you have all the required documents. You should work your way through the correct registration form. **You should get the registration form signed by the authorized person before you come to CERN**, this will make the procedure much faster. Please have a look at the Users Office Homepage [↗](#). These pages contain most of the information you need for coming to CERN.

Find out who your Team Leader is since you will need his/her signature on the Users Office registration form. Team Leader can also pre-register a new user: Pre-Registration Tool [↗](#).

Note that you will need a copy of the invitation letter(s), your passport, proof of your medical insurance including death and disability (an insurance card is sufficient), and a Home institution declaration, to be completed by an authorized representative of the candidate's home institution for the purpose of issuing the candidate a contract of association with CERN. As of now, **only a Home institution declaration signed by a person from the administration is acceptable**, not one signed by the Team Leader (unless a letter from the administration has been sent to the Users Office indicating that the Team Leader has the right to sign such attestations on behalf of the employer).

On your first full working day, you will need to visit the Users Office. It is located near the restaurant, bank, and the post office in building 61 [↗](#). Take all the documentation mentioned above. You will then be asked to go to building 55 [↗](#) to collect your CERN access card.

Registering with CMS

Once your CERN registration is done, please pass by the CMS Secretariat in bldg 40-5-B01 to register in the CMS database. To be officially registered in the CMS people database, please send an email to the CMS secretariat.

After the form has been submitted, an email is sent to your Institute Representative (Team Leader) for approval.

Upon arrival, please have a look at the Twikipages of Welcome to CMS [↗](#)

[back to top](#)

Creation of Computer Account

Before you get a Computer Account on the IT-CMS server, you must be registered both in the CERN Database and as a collaborator in the CMS database. Then follow the instructions given in section Getting a Computing Account.

Laptop Registration

The NICE account is needed (and activate at least one day earlier) for the registration of a laptop. Open the wireless, search for the CERN network and follow the instructions.

In case you need Ethernet, it has to be registered separately as well as the wall plug. For details, see: [Network](#).

CMS Safety

Please read carefully the Safety at CMS web pages [for information](#) e.g. about Safety Training and Awareness, Internal Accident report and the FAQ [which contains](#) lot of useful information on safety but also about how to organize a private visit to CMS or how to become a CMS guide.

Dosimeters

Please read carefully the Dosimetry Service web pages [for information](#) about getting a dosimeter (and note the medical certificate requirements that exist in some cases). You should wear a dosimeter when at CERN unless you are working only in offices. It is compulsory if you are in a radiation controlled area, e.g. a radioactive source in a laboratory. In view of the significant increase in the number of CERN users, the CERN Medical Service is unfortunately no longer able to deliver these certificates. They kindly ask you to provide a new medical certificate delivered by a doctor designated by your home institute or, if your home institute agrees, a local doctor. A list of local doctors able to provide such a certificate is available on the Medical Service website [Medical Service](#).

[back to top](#)

Subsistence allowance and other payments

If you are entitled to receive payments from CERN during your stay at CERN, please make sure that your bank details are properly registered by filling out this EDH form [once you have a CERN Computing Account](#).

More information can be found in the CERN Admin guide:

[Registration of bank details](#)

[Payment and reimbursement forms](#)

As CERN payments are in Swiss Francs, it is important to make sure your bank will be able to receive this currency.

For payments initiated by the CMS collaboration, please contact Ani Yaneva (in 40-5-B05) or Kirsti Aspola (in 40-5-A24).

[back to top](#)

Other Useful Information

Cost of living

It is important to compare the cost of living in Switzerland and France [as the prices of accommodation, food, leisure activities, etc. do vary from one to the other.](#)

[back to top](#)

Bringing pets

We keep pets out of interest in the animals or as household companions. They accompany us and are not intended for sale. Special import regulations apply for dogs, cats, ferrets and birds as pets. Pets are animals of the species, which are kept out of interest in the animals or as household companions. They accompany their owners or persons acting on behalf of the owners. Pets are not to be sold or passed on to new owners. See the links below:

Bringing pets to Switzerland

Federal veterinary office FVO [FVO](#)

[Bringing pets to Switzerland](#)

[Dogs, cats, ferrets from the EU](#);

[Dogs, cats, ferrets from third countries](#);

[Special case birds. Pet birds from third countries](#);

[Restrictions on import: Import bans / Temporary restrictions / Special conditions](#)

* The import requirements arising from the laws on conservation on species apply for protected or non-domesticated species even if those are deemed pets. See link "[Wild Fauna and Flora / CITES](#)".

Bringing pets to France

[Conditions for importation into France of pets, from countries not members of the European Union](#)

Animals may carry serious diseases such as rabies or bird flu. Customs contributes to the protection of national territories and community health monitoring including documents and support of these animals.

European legislation regulates the movements of domestic carnivores (cats, dogs and ferrets) to limit the risk of introducing animal diseases, including rabies.

[You want to bring to France a cat, dog or ferret](#)

[More information is available on the website of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries.](#)

[back to top](#)

Phoning

To make local calls, you can purchase cheap SIM cards at the general store in the main building [for 20 CHF](#). You get a SIM card with 20 CHF credit and cheap local calls and texts and good rates for texting overseas. The drawback is that all the instructions are either in French, Italian or German! For international calls you should investigate the calling cards, which are available in many shops.

[CERN Phone and Email Directory](#)

Plugs

A universal plug adaptor will be useful, as Swiss and French electric plugs [are different](#). Warning: Electricity at Europe is distributed as: Voltage 220 Volts and 50Hz (USA 120 Volts and 60Hz). Before connecting anything to electricity, please verify that your device works under European Voltage & Frequency, or get a proper transformer

Language and Currency

CERN is a bilingual international organization (French/English).

In Switzerland, Swiss Francs (CHF) [are the local currency](#), while in France the Euro is used, and there are few places that will take either currency. The automatic teller machines in the main building [on the Meyrin site](#) provide cash in either currency (though for foreign cards they will provide only Swiss Francs).

Should you need to open a bank account in Switzerland, you can open an account with the UBS bank which has a branch [in the main building \(building 500\)](#), but you need to stay at CERN more than 6 months. You can also open one at the Post Office also located in the main building once you have obtain a local address either in Switzerland or in France.

[back to top](#)

Getting Around

The tram 18 takes you to the center of Geneva. The ticket costs 3 CHF and it can be bought from a ticket machine at each bus stop. There are two types of machines and the new ones give change. You can also buy 20, 30 or 50 CHF bus cards ("cartabonus") at the news stand in the main building but only the old ticket machines accept these cards.

A recommended point to get off for your first trip into town is the train station, Gare Cornavin. This puts you essentially in the centre of town, and it is very easy to find the tram back to CERN.

Note that you can also borrow bikes from CERN [for free](#) during your stay. A refundable deposit of 450 CHF is required (can be backed up by Team Account) and lights and a lock are provided, as well as servicing for punctures and other problems.

[Geneva Public Transport \(TPG\)](#)

[back to top](#)

Cinema

There are plenty of cinemas with English- and French-language viewings of films in Geneva. You should check in advance to determine the schedules and languages of the presentations.

[back to top](#)

CERN Student Activities

CERN's student activities for all young people coming to CERN for any length of time may be found at LPCC [page](#).

Other Useful Links

[CERN Welcome Centre](#)

[CERN Buildings and Sites](#)

[CERN Guide for Newcomers](#)

[CERN Health Insurance Scheme-CHIS](#)

[CERN Users Office FAQ](#)

[Shuttle Service](#)

[USCMS Guide to Coming to and Living at CERN](#)

[CERN Clubs](#)

[CERN Market \(vehicles, housing, furniture, etc.\)](#)

[Swiss Info](#)

[Anglo Info](#)

[back to top](#)

Review status

Reviewer/Editor and Date (copy from screen)	Comments
KirstiAspola - 2019-10-15	updated how to getto CERN info
KirstiAspola - 2019-04-12	added link to CMS Welcome Twiki page to registering with CMS
AniYaneva - 2019-03-29	updated the Subsistence allowance and other payments information and links
KirstiAspola - 2018-06-13	updated the visa information links

WorkBookComingToCERN < CMSPublic < TWiki

YaseminYazgan - 2018-01-24	added US CMS invitation website and modified wording to make sure all US CMS collaborators can contact me
KirstiAspola - 2017-02-10	updated and added some links
KirstiAspola - 05-Nov-2015	added new invitation website information, general editing
KirstiAspola - 26-Jan-2015	updated insurance info
KirstiAspola - 08-Jan-2015	updated insurance info
KirstiAspola - 17 Nov 2014	updated insurance info for frontier workers who are family members of a CHIS main member
KirstiAspola - 06 Nov 2014	updated insurance and dosimeter info
KirstiAspola - 09 Sep 2014	updated and added some Useful information links, modified insurance info
KirstiAspola - 01 Sep 2014	updated CERN and CMS registration information
XuanChen - 16 Jul 2014	replaced the links of "hostel reservation", CERN Housing Service and Summer Students Information Page
KirstiAspola - 02-Jul-2013	added info about invitations and added lightweight account to accommodation section
KirstiAspola - 18-Jun-2013	added info on CMS Safety
AnastasiaDolya - 25-April-2013	updated Tram info, Registration at CERN - home declaration
KirstiAspola - 07-May-2012	added Civil Status for information needed for visas
KirstiAspola - 19-Jan-2012	general updating, P5 map, insurance, invitations
KirstiAspola - 08-Jul-2011	EPLANET, updated links
KirstiAspola - 23-Jun-2011	minor general editing
PolinaMorozova - 26-Oct-2010	general editing
KatiLassilaPerini - 25-Nov-2009	updated links
KatiLassilaPerini - 08 Dec 2008	updated users office links
KatiLassilaPerini - 24 Jan 2008	minor edits
KatiLassilaPerini - 28 Nov 2006	Implemented comments from Marie-Claude
JennyWilliams - 07 Oct 2007	General editing, and added comments about cell phones and bikes

Detailed comments 18-Sep-2012 [▢](#) [Hide ▾](#)

Responsible: KirstiAspola

Please send comments to Kirsti Aspola

This topic: CMSPublic > WorkBookComingToCERN

Topic revision: r111 - 2019-10-15 - KirstiAspola



Copyright &© 2008-2020 by the contributing authors. All material on this collaboration platform is the property of the contributing authors.

Ideas, requests, problems regarding TWiki? Send feedback