



Newcomers GUIDE – Welcome home to Åland!

In this guide, you'll find everything you need to settle into your new life in Åland – from practical information to helpful tips on how to quickly become part of the local community.

Welcome!

Dear reader,

Åland warmly welcomes you to your new home in the middle of the Baltic Sea! We have created this guide to support you in settling in and enjoying life in our unique island community.

In this guide, you will find practical information about moving to and living and working in Åland. It includes advice on handling both official matters and everyday life, along with useful contact information to public services and local networks you might need.

We hope this guide will be helpful as you plan and begin your life in Åland.

A warm welcome!

Sincerely,
Åland Living

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Discover Åland



Discover Åland

Åland is an island region located in the Baltic Sea, halfway between Sweden and Finland in Northern Europe. It is an autonomous region within the Republic of Finland, with Swedish as its only official language.

Around 30,000 people live in Åland, spread across 16 municipalities. One of them is Mariehamn, the capital and the only town, with about 12,000 inhabitants. The other municipalities are rural communities either on the main island (fasta Åland) or located in the eastern archipelago (skärgården).

[Learn more about Åland's municipalities at regeringen.ax.](#)

[Information about Åland's municipalities from Ålands kommunförbund \(information in Swedish\).](#)

[See a map of all 16 municipalities in Åland, including the capital Mariehamn \(Wikipedia\).](#)

[Mariehamn's map service with a base map and various options, including town districts.](#)

DEMILITARISED AND AUTONOMOUS

Åland has been demilitarised since 1856, which means that no military forces are allowed to be stationed on the islands. Åland is also a neutral zone and must remain outside of armed conflicts.

In 1922, Åland became an autonomous region within Finland, after having been part of Sweden for several centuries. On 9 June 2022, Åland celebrated 100 years of self-government.

Åland has its own flag, postage stamps, vehicle registration plates and its own internet domain (.ax).

GOVERNANCE IN ÅLAND AND IN FINLAND

Åland is an autonomous region within Finland. This means that many important matters are decided locally. Åland has its own parliament (Ålands lagting) and government (Ålands landskapsregering), which manages areas like education, health care, the environment, business and local transport.

The elected parliament (Ålands lagting) enacts the laws of the province. The parliament also appoints the Government of Åland (Ålands landskapsregering), which is responsible for the general management and administration of the province.

Some matters – like foreign affairs, defence and state taxation – are managed by the Finnish state. Åland also has one representative member in the Finnish Parliament.

Finland is a republic and a parliamentary democracy. The President of Finland is the head of state and handles foreign policy and national defence in conjunction with the government. Most political power lies with the Finnish Parliament (riksdagen) and the



government (regeringen), which are elected every four years.

[Åland Parliament \(Ålands lagting\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Government of Åland \(Ålands landskapsregering\).](#)

EVERYDAY LIFE AND CULTURE

Åland is a part of Finland, but with its own rhythm, tone and identity. Much of everyday life is shaped by Finnish customs – such as valuing honesty, personal space and being on time – but Åland also shares deep cultural roots with Sweden. Swedish is the only official language, and many Ålanders follow Swedish media, traditions and public debates.

At the same time, Åland is very much its own place. Living here means being part of a small, close-knit community with a strong local identity, shaped by the sea, the landscape and a spirit of practical independence. Things are often done in a straightforward, low-key way – and people value action over big words.

[You can read more about Finnish social norms in This is Finland's guide to customs and manners.](#)

People may seem reserved at first, but once you're part of the circle, you'll find warmth, humour, and a strong sense of belonging. Getting involved in local clubs, sports groups or community events is a great way to connect.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Åland is Swedish. Unlike the rest of Finland, which is bilingual with both Finnish and Swedish as official languages, Åland is monolingual Swedish. This means that all communication within the province, as well as between Åland and Finnish authorities, takes place in Swedish. Swedish is used in schools, workplaces, and everyday public life in Åland. You can also use Swedish when dealing with public services such as FPA (Folkpensionsanstalten, Social Insurance Institution of Finland), AMS (the Åland Authority for Labour Market and Student Services), and other government authorities.

Even though standard Swedish is used in schools and official settings, the local dialect adds personality to everyday conversations. Some common expressions you might hear include:

- JÅLA =**
talk nonsense, fool around
- KLOTTA =**
spill, get dirty
- NOJSA =**
nag, quarrel
- VILIG =**
good, excellent

Most Ålanders, especially younger generations, speak English, but many also can speak and understand Finnish to varying degrees.

Learn Swedish

Swedish is the official language of Åland, so learning Swedish is very useful. Medis (The Citizens' Institute in Mariehamn) organizes courses in Swedish for newcomers (SFI).

[Swedish language courses in Åland \(SFI\).](#)

[Information on integration training and courses at regeringen.ax.](#)

[Information on courses \(SFI and SIA\) at ams.ax.](#)

If you want to start learning Swedish on your own before your move, you can search for digital courses and resources online:

[Yle Nyheter på lätt svenska, daily news in easy-to-understand Swedish.](#)

[www.hejsvenska.se](#)

[www.uttal.se](#)

Useful Swedish phrases for newcomers

Greetings and polite phrases

Hello! – Hej!

Good morning! – God morgen!

Good evening! – God kväll!

Bye! – Hej då!

See you! – Vi ses!

Thank you! – Tack!

Thank you very much! – Tack så mycket!

You're welcome / Here you go. – Varsågod.

Excuse me. – Ursäkta mig.

Sorry. – Förlåt.

No problem. – Inga problem.

Questions and everyday conversation

How are you? – Hur mår du?

I'm fine, thank you. – Jag mår bra, tack.

What's your name? – Vad heter du?

My name is [name]. – Jag heter [namn].

Where are you from? – Var kommer du ifrån?

I'm from [country]. – Jag kommer från [land].

I speak a little Swedish. – Jag talar lite svenska.

Can you speak slowly, please? – Kan du prata långsamt, tack?

What does that mean? – Vad betyder det?

Can you repeat that? – Kan du upprepa det?

Asking for directions

Where is [place]? – Var ligger [plats]?

How do I get to [place]? – Hur kommer jag till [plats]?

To the left – Till vänster

To the right – Till höger

Straight ahead – Rakt fram

Next stop – Nästa hållplats

I'm lost. – Jag är vilse.

In shops or restaurants

How much does it cost? – Hur mycket kostar det?

Can I have a cup of coffee, please? – Kan jag få en kopp kaffe, tack?

I would like [food/drink]. – Jag vill ha [mat/dryck].

Do you have vegetarian food? – Har ni vegetarisk mat?

The bill, please. – Notan, tack.

Practical phrases

I don't understand. – Jag förstår inte.

I understand. – Jag förstår.

I need help. – Jag behöver hjälp.

Where is there the bathroom? – Var finns toaletten?

I'm new here. – Jag är ny här.

Can you show me? – Kan du visa mig?

NATURE AND CLIMATE

Åland is one of the sunniest places in the Nordic region and has a mild, maritime climate with four distinct seasons. One of Åland's greatest advantages is its closeness to nature and the sea. Locals enjoy outdoor activities all year round – from swimming and island hopping in summer to peaceful seaside walks in winter.

- **Spring** begins slowly in April, with temperatures between 3–7°C and melting snow in March making things wet and muddy.
- **Summer** brings long days and lush landscapes. The average temperature is around 18°C, but days can reach 30°C. July is the main holiday month.
- **Autumn** (September to early November) offers colorful forests and mild weather early on. November is often dark and rainy.
- **Winter** usually starts in December or January, with temperatures ranging from -7°C to +2°C – though it can drop as low as -20°C. Some winters are snowy, others are wet and grey.

The natural environment is rich and diverse, with red granite cliffs, heathlands, deciduous forests and large areas of coniferous woodland. Åland is also home to a wide variety of birds and a rich flora that includes several species of wild orchids.

Be prepared for winter

Because Åland is an island, surrounded by the sea, winters are often milder than in surrounding areas, but still cold and dark – especially in December and January. Warm winter clothing is essential: a good coat, winter boots, gloves, a scarf, and a hat that covers your ears.

Homes and buildings are well-insulated and heated, so you'll stay warm indoors even on the coldest days.

A NORDIC QUALITY OF LIFE

Åland offers a peaceful and balanced lifestyle based on Nordic values: equality, respect for nature and strong community. Life here reflects a healthy work-life balance, with space for family, nature, and well-being. Whether you move to Åland for work, study, or a new beginning – you'll find a safe, supportive and welcoming environment.

SPECIAL RIGHTS AS AN ÅLANDER

Åland regional citizenship (hembygdsrätt)

Åland regional citizenship, the right of domicile, regulates who can own land or real estate and conduct business in Åland. You can apply for Åland domicile if you have moved to Åland, have lived in Åland continuously for more than five years and are a Finnish citizen.

The Åland regional citizenship gives you the following rights:

- unrestricted ownership and possession of real estate
- voting and standing for election in parliamentary elections
- to engage in economic activity.

[Note: With the property acquisition permit \(jordförvärvstillstånd\) you can buy a house for permanent residence.](#)

Buying an apartment does not usually require a permit.

[You can read more about the right of domicile on the website of the Government of Åland.](#)

Voting rights in Åland

Åland has its own legislation on parliamentary and municipal elections.

The same rules apply to the European Parliament, parliamentary and presidential elections as in Finland.

In practice, this means Åland residents vote in elections for the Åland Parliament, the Finnish Parliament and the European Parliament. In Åland, people also vote in municipal elections. Presidential elections are held in Finland and Åland, and the president of Finland also serves as the head of state for Åland.

In municipal elections, you may vote already after living in Åland for one year. You must also be at least 18 years old on election day.

[Read more about voting rights in Åland at Info Norden.](#)

[More information on elections in Åland.](#)

Equality and diversity

Finland is a global leader in equality. In gender equality Finland was the first European country to grant women the right to vote and the first in the world to grant women full political rights in 1906.

Finland's laws prohibit discrimination and promote equality in all areas of life. The Non-Discrimination Ambassador works to ensure equal rights for all, including foreign nationals. Authorities also monitor workplaces to prevent discrimination and promote gender equality.

[The Åland Ombudsman's Office promotes equality, non-discrimination and the rights of children, patients, clients and consumers.](#)

EU portal: Your Europe

Your Europe is an official EU portal that provides practical information about your rights as an EU citizen. Here you'll find guidance on housing, moving, working, studying, travelling, and everyday life across borders. The portal also offers support for businesses that want to start up, establish themselves, or expand within the EU.

[Read more about your rights as an EU citizen.](#)

Quick facts about Åland

Discover Åland in figures (ÅSUB).

Population: approx.
30,000 residents

Number of municipalities: 16 (6 of which are in the eastern archipelago)	Capital: Mariehamn (approx. 12,000 residents)	Official language: Swedish
Land area: approx. 1,553 km² (more than 6,700 named islands)	Longest distance on the main island: approx. 50 km	Own legislation: Yes – the Åland Parliament (Lagtinget) first convened on 9 June 1922
National day: Autonomy Day is celebrated on 9 June	EU membership: Yes , since 1 January 1995, with special tax exemptions	Unemployment: Traditionally low , but can vary
Key industries: Shipping, public sector, trade and tourism, food production and construction. The tech and IT sector is growing.	Public transport: Limited but well connected by archipelago ferries and buses	Internet: Almost all of Åland has access to fibre-optic broadband

The Åland Welfare Society

Åland is an autonomous region of Finland. It shares many key features of the Finnish welfare state while also offering services tailored to local needs and the unique island environment. The goal is to create a well-functioning society where people of all ages can enjoy a high quality of life.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Public services in Åland are delivered through cooperation between the Government of Åland and the region's 16 municipalities. These services include for example:

- childcare and early education
- schools and higher education
- healthcare and elderly care
- employment assistance and social services

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT IN ÅLAND?

The municipalities are responsible for (among other things):

- Day care and pre-primary education
- Primary and lower secondary schools (grades 1–9)
- Local roads, water supply, and waste management
- Elderly care (partly, together with Kommunernas socialtjänst (KST))
- Immigration advice and integration policy.

Kommunernas socialtjänst (KST, the Municipal Social Services) is responsible for (among other things):

- Social welfare and income support
- Child protection services
- Disability services and support for informal carers
- Elderly home care and institutional care (partly, together with municipalities)
- Social services for all Åland municipalities.

The Government of Åland is responsible for (among other things):

- Public healthcare (through ÅHS – Åland Health and Medical Care)
- Upper secondary schools and vocational training
- Police authorities
- Environmental and cultural affairs
- Handling applications for the right of domicile (hembygdsrätt) and for permits to acquire real estate (jordförvärvstillstånd)
- Immigration advice and integration policy (on a regional level)
- Labour market services, including unemployment benefits and study grants.

The Finnish state (national authorities) is responsible for (among other things):

- FPA (KELA): Social security, parental allowances, pensions, National social security coordination
- Tax Administration: Tax cards, income declarations
- Police, Border Guard, Customs
- The judicial system including the courts, prosecution services, enforcement authorities, and legal aid.
- Migri (Finnish Immigration Service): Residence permits, citizenship
- Population registration and ID cards (via the Digital and Population Data Services Agency).

SOCIAL SECURITY AND ELIGIBILITY

Your access to the Finnish social security system depends on why you are living in Finland and how long you plan to stay.

- If you are a permanent resident, you are usually entitled to the same benefits as Finnish citizens.
- Temporary residents may have limited access.
- EU citizens may retain coverage under their home country's system.

Even if you are not eligible for full benefits, you may still have access to healthcare and certain reimbursements.

Many services are provided locally in Åland, while others come through the national Finnish system.

TAXES AND THE WELFARE SYSTEM

Taxes are the foundation of the welfare society. They fund public services such as:

- healthcare and education
- cultural activities and infrastructure
- safety, innovation and environmental care.

Suomi.fi

Suomi.fi is a digital service platform where you can find important information and e-services from Finnish authorities. You can handle many official matters online – such as applying for permits and benefits, or finding information about taxes, social security, and healthcare. The service is available in Swedish, Finnish, and English, and helps you navigate life in both Finnish and Åland society.

Note that not all matters can be handled online.

For certain services, such as Migri matters or some tax issues, you may need to visit the State Department of Åland (Ämbetsverket) in person.

Visit Suomi.fi for information and services at different stages of life.

Some official messages and documents are delivered via the digital mailbox Kivra.fi.

Moving

MOVING

When you move to a new country, there are many tasks to complete and the order you tackle them matters. Taking care of the essential formalities ensures that you meet all legal obligations for entering, living, studying, or working.

Among the first and most important steps are applying to the immigration authorities, gathering the right documents, obtaining a social security number, and registering your place of residence. Once these essentials are in place, completing the remaining steps will be much easier.

Good to know before you move

There are some things you should do before your move and other things you should think about and prepare before the actual moving day.

APPLYING TO THE IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES

Start by contacting the authorities in your home country to find out what information they need from you before you move.

Register your right of residence if you are moving from an EU country, Liechtenstein or Switzerland

If you are moving to Åland from an EU country, you should first inform the population register authority in your home country that you are moving abroad permanently.

On arrival in Åland, you need to register your right of residence with the State Department of Åland (Statens ämbetsverk på Åland).

Statens ämbetsverk på Åland

Torggatan 16B, Mariehamn
info@ambetsverket.fi

Right of residence applies to citizens of EU countries, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

If you intend to stay in Åland for less than 90 days, registration is not required. If you plan to stay longer than 90 days, you must register your right of residence within three months after your arrival.

Note: Registration for EU citizens in Åland is handled locally by the State Department in Åland, not through the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) or Enter Finland.

After registering your right of residence with the State Department of Åland, you also need to **register your address and personal information** in the Population Information System.

This means that you become officially registered as a resident and are assigned a municipality of residence in Åland.

At the same time, you can apply for a **Finnish social security number** if you do not already have one. The



social security number is necessary for accessing services such as healthcare, social security, and banking. You will receive a certificate confirming your registered right of residence.

Apply for a residence permit if you are moving from a non-EU country

If you intend to stay in Finland or Åland for less than 90 days, you usually only need a valid tourist visa – depending on your nationality. Please check the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' visa requirements to see if you need a visa.

If you are a citizen of a non-EU country and plan to stay for more than 90 days, you must apply for a residence permit before arriving in Finland. When applying, you must state the purpose of your stay (such as family, work, or studies) and demonstrate that you can financially support yourself.

In most cases, residence permit applications must be submitted before entering the country. Applicants are required to visit a Finnish embassy or consulate abroad in person within three months of applying, in order to verify their identity and provide supporting documents. This also applies to any accompanying family members.

You can apply for a residence permit either by submitting a paper application or digitally via the Enter Finland service managed by the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri).

Information on residence permits via the Migration Agency (Migri).

What applies when you move from outside the EU to Åland? See the latest information from the Finnish Immigration Service.

Read more about moving to Finland for non-EU citizens at InfoFinland.fi.

Summer job or temporary move

For stays of 3–12 months, you must report a temporary move. If you move to Åland for less than a year, you will get a temporary social security number, and your municipality of residence will not change.

If you work in Åland for less than 3 months, you do not need to submit a notification of move.

[Read more about how to register your move at DVV - Digital and Population Data Services Agency.](#)

PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTATION BEFORE MOVING

It is important to organize your documents before moving to Åland. This will make it easier to handle immigration matters, register your address and municipality of residence, manage tax issues, arrange housing, and more.

If you are moving with family members (spouse, registered partner, or children), you need to bring:

- Original marriage certificate or certificate of registered partnership
- Original birth certificates of the children
- Authorized translations into Swedish, Finnish, or English if the originals are in another language.

Please note that if the documents are issued outside the EU, they must be legalized, either with an Apostille certificate or with stamps from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Finnish diplomatic mission in the issuing country.

NOTIFICATION OF MOVE TO THE POPULATION REGISTER

The Finnish population register, or the Population Information System, is a national electronic basic register that contains up-to-date personal data on Finnish citizens and foreigners residing permanently or temporarily in Finland.

After your residence permit is approved and you arrive in Åland, you must register your address and personal information within one week in the Population Information System through the State Department of Åland (Statens ämbetsverk på Åland), Torggatan 16 B, Mariehamn. This is necessary to gain access to local services and social benefits.

The notification of move must be made in person. Bring a valid document of identification. If you are moving with a minor child, the child's parents/guardians must be stated on the child's identification document, or the child must have their own identification document.

[Read more about how to register your move at DVV - Digital and Population Data Services Agency.](#)

Remember that some benefits, such as social security through FPA (Kela, the Finnish social insurance institution), may require a qualifying period after your arrival.

You must also submit a notification of move (address notification) when you settle permanently in Åland.

NEW SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Once you have submitted your notification of move, you will receive your Finnish social security number. At the same time, you will be registered in the Population Information System. The social security number is a means of identification that individualizes citizens in a way that is better than by name alone.

The social security number has eleven characters that are formed based on a person's date of birth and gender. The first six digits are the date of birth (DDM-MYY). You need a social security number to deal with authorities, banks and your employer.

When you get a Finnish social security number, it does not affect social security numbers you have received in other countries. You use the Finnish social security number in Finland and the social security number valid in other countries in those countries.

[Read more about how to get a social security number in Åland at Info Norden.](#)

REGISTERING A CHILD BORN IN ÅLAND

When a child is born in Finland, their details are entered into the Population Information System directly from the hospital. Citizenship depends on the parents' nationality.

Only one native language can be registered, but it can be changed later. If the language is not Swedish, the child can study Swedish as a second language. It is also possible to study the registered native language at school, though this is optional for the municipality to provide.

MUNICIPALITY OF RESIDENCE

If you plan to live in Åland for at least one year and your stay is legal, you may be eligible to register a municipality of residence. This registration grants access to local services such as healthcare, education, and social benefits. Eligibility depends on factors like citizenship, type of residence permit, and family ties. For instance, citizens of EU/EEA countries must have their right of residence registered, while non-EU citizens typically need a continuous or permanent residence permit.

Note that a temporary address notification does not suffice for registering a municipality of residence.

[For detailed information and application procedures, please visit the Digital and Population Data Services Agency's website.](#)

Checklist after moving:

1. Register your right of residence (EU citizens) or validate your residence permit (non-EU citizens).
2. Register your address.
3. Apply for a social security number.
4. Open a bank account.
5. Apply for social security benefits.

Other necessities

TAXATION

All individuals working in Finland are required to pay income tax. The Finnish tax system is progressive, meaning that your tax percentage increases with your estimated income. In addition, the amount of municipal tax you pay depends on the tax rate in the municipality where you reside.

To get an estimate of your income tax in Åland, you can use the Tax Percentage Calculator.

[Use the Tax rate calculator at Skatt.fi.](#)

The following taxes are deducted from your salary in Finland:

- municipal tax
- church tax (if you are a member of a parish)
- health insurance premium
- income tax to the state (state tax is progressive and increases with income)
- compulsory pension and unemployment insurance contributions.

If you are living temporarily in Åland

If you work in Åland for less than six months, there are two options for taxation:

- 1) You pay tax at source. It is final and always 35% regardless of what you earn.
- 2) You can apply to have your income taxed on a progressive scale. The progressive tax is based on your total income.

For more detailed information on taxation, contact the Tax Office in Mariehamn, tel. +358 29 512 001.

[Read more on the Tax Administration website, Åland Tax Office.](#)

[Tax information in English: Contact the Finnish Tax Administration \(Vero\) with questions about taxation.](#)

[Visit The Tax Campus \(Verokampus\) website – aimed at everyone needing help with managing their taxes or understanding the Finnish tax system.](#)

[Are you going to work remotely? Read more about taxation of remote work in Åland Living.](#)



ENTITLEMENT TO SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

The right to social security benefits is based on whether you live or work in Åland. Social security for persons living in Åland is administered by FPA, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela).

Social security benefits include:

- FPA card (may be needed if you need to use health care services or pharmacies)
- child support
- general housing allowance
- sickness benefit
- drug reimbursement
- pension.

When applying for a benefit, you must also report your move to Åland using form Y77e, Moving to Finland.

[Download the form from FPA's website.](#)

What is the FPA card?

The FPA card is a personal health insurance card issued by Finland's Social Insurance Institution (FPA). It is available to those covered by the National Health Insurance scheme, typically permanent residents. The card provides partial reimbursement for private healthcare and discounted prices on prescription medicines. However, access to public healthcare in Finland, including in Åland, is based on municipal residency – not on having a FPA card. You can apply for the card online or at the local FPA office.



Contact details for FPA Åland:

Visiting address: Nygatan 7A in Mariehamn.
Postal address for submitting documents: FPA, PB 10, 00056 FPA.

[If you have the bank codes/BankID of an Åland/Finnish bank, you can apply through FPA's e-service.](#)

More information:

[For more information on applying for and receiving social security benefits, see "From abroad to Finland".](#)

You can also contact FPA's service number for relocation issues at +358 (0)20 634 0200.

[See the Centre for International Affairs.](#)

[See Call FPA \(Kela\).](#)

INFORMATION MATERIAL FOR FAMILIES

Childcare, schools, family benefits and other information for parents can be found on our family life webpages.

In Finland and Åland, all mothers who give birth receive a free maternity package from the government. This special box contains essential items for newborns, such as clothes, diapers, and baby care products. The maternity package has been provided for decades and is a unique symbol of Finland's support for families and child welfare.

[Read more about family life in Åland Living.](#)

[Download the Children's Rights Manual and find out more about laws and policies affecting children at \[www.ombudsman.ax\]\(http://www.ombudsman.ax\).](#)



PASSPORTS, ID CARDS AND IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

You need to be a Finnish citizen to apply for a passport in Åland and in Mainland Finland.

If you are a foreign national, you may be granted an identity card if:

- you live permanently in Finland,
- your personal data and information on your Finnish municipality of residence are entered in the Population Information System,

- you have a valid residence permit, residence card or your right of residence is registered.

When applying, you must present a valid passport or identity card to apply for a Finnish identity card. If you do not have one, you must present a valid residence permit card or residence card.

[You can renew or apply for a passport, ID card or ID card via the police's e-service or in person at Strandgatan 27 in Mariehamn \(in Swedish\).](#)

If you are not a Finnish citizen, you will need to contact the embassy or passport-issuing authorities of the country of your citizenship.

FOREIGNER'S IDENTITY CARD

Foreign citizens who live permanently in Finland can apply for an identity card from the Finnish police. It is useful if you don't want to carry your passport. Driving licenses are not accepted as valid ID in Finland.

Banks may require a Finnish identity card to provide strong electronic identification, especially for non-EU/EEA citizens. You can apply for the card online or at a police station.

Note: this card cannot be used for travel.



BANK ACCOUNT

You need a bank account to enable your employer to pay your salary. Check with your employer whether the account you already have will work or whether it is better to open an account with a bank in Åland. This applies to persons moving to Åland from a country other than Finland.

Most major banks in Finland offer services in English, and online banking is the standard. To open an account, you need to book an in-person appointment and provide identification documents — requirements vary, so it's best to check with the bank beforehand.

When opening your account, ask for online banking codes, a bank card, and access to strong electronic identification. Banks are usually open Monday to Friday, 9:00–16:00, and appointments are often required. Many banks no longer handle cash, so check in advance if you need to make deposits.

ATMs (bankomat) are available in Mariehamn and Godby and accept major credit cards (Otto); only TalletusOtto machines allow cash deposits.

The following banks have offices in Åland:

- [Andelsbanken](#)
- [Ålandsbanken](#)
- [Nordea](#)
- [S-banken](#)

[Read more about bank accounts in Åland at Info Norden.](#)

STRONG IDENTIFICATION

Strong identification is a secure way to prove your identity online in Åland. Most people use either online banking codes or a Mobile ID.

- Online banking codes are provided by Finnish banks when you open an account. You will receive a user ID and need special access codes or a mobile app.
- Mobile ID is activated by a Finnish mobile operator on your phone's SIM card.

Note: Not all newcomers have access to strong identification right away. You can find more options on Suomi.fi.

WORKING AND EARNING A PENSION

When you work or run a business in Åland (and in Finland), you earn a pension based on your income. This pension stays in the Finnish system, even if you move to another country. You can receive your Finnish pension anywhere in the world once you reach retirement age.

If you are an employee, your employer handles the pension payments. If you are self-employed, you must arrange pension insurance yourself.

[For more information, visit the Finnish Centre for Pensions.](#)



Common relocation expenses to prepare for

When moving to Åland, you may need to cover some of the following one-time costs:

- Temporary accommodation (such as a hotel or short-term rental) during your first days or weeks
- Security deposit for your apartment or house (usually 1–2 months' rent)
- Home insurance, often required before signing a rental contract
- Basic furnishings and household items, if your home is unfurnished
- Seasonal clothing, especially for cold and wet winters
- Public transport card, bicycle, or other means of getting around. Note: Having a car may be necessary if you live outside Mariehamn.
- Application fees or documents, such as for residence permits or identity cards

These costs vary depending on your personal situation, but planning can make your move smoother.

Document checklist

When relocating to Åland, it's helpful to prepare a folder with key documents for you and your family. Here's a checklist to help you stay organized:

Identity and residence

- Passport(s)
- Residence permit (if required)
- Driving licence and international driving permit
- Marriage certificate
- Divorce papers or child custody decisions
- Adoption papers
- Power of attorney and/or living will.

Health and insurance

- Health insurance certificate
- Immunisation records for all family members
- List of regularly used prescription medicines
- Medical records (especially for chronic conditions)
- Pet documentation, including vaccination records
- Insurance policies (home, travel, health, etc.).

Education and qualifications

- Diplomas and professional certificates
- Children's school records.

Family and legal documents

- Children's birth certificates
- Property deeds or ownership papers in your home country.

Tip: Make copies (paper and digital) of all important documents and keep them safely stored when travelling and after arrival.

TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Ålcom and Midax offer mobile and internet subscriptions and broadband.

Finland's country code is 358 and Åland's area code is 018. So, when calling Åland from abroad, for example, you would dial +358 18 12345.

Mobile phone numbers in Åland usually start with +358 457, +358 40 or +358 50.

(Example: +358 457 123 4567)

To call abroad, dial 00 (or + if you are using a mobile phone) followed by the country code. For example, if you were calling Stockholm, you would dial 0046 8 123456.

MEDIA AND MEDIA FEE

A media fee is paid by everyone who is at least 18 years old, is a resident of a municipality in Åland and earns over €14,000 a year. The media fee is deducted in connection with income taxation.

[Read more about the media levy in taxation here.](#)

Media in Åland:

- [Ålandstidningen](#) (newspaper)
- [Nya Åland](#) (newspaper)
- [Ålands Radio and TV](#)
- [Steel FM](#) (radio).

Customs and tax border

TAX BORDER

Åland is part of Finland, but it has a special tax status. It is not part of the EU's VAT (value-added tax) or excise duty area. Therefore, goods trade with the rest of the EU, including the rest of Finland, is import and export and customs formalities are applied.

This means:

- Goods sent between Åland and other parts of Finland or the EU are treated like imports or exports
- You may need to fill out customs forms
- You may have to pay VAT at the border
- No customs duties are charged (Åland is still in the EU customs union)

Finnish Customs (Tullen) is the customs authority in Åland. Always check their website before sending or receiving packages across the Åland border.

[Declarations for goods sent between mainland Finland and Åland as well as between the EU and Åland – for individuals.](#)

[Declarations for goods sent between mainland Finland and Åland as well as between the EU and Åland – for businesses.](#)

POSTAL SERVICES AND CUSTOMS CLEARANCE

Åland Post manages postal services in Åland.

There are post offices or postal agents in most municipalities. As Åland is outside the EU's VAT, goods sent to Åland must be cleared through customs. This also applies to goods coming from EU countries.

[Here you can read more about postal services and other things that concern you as a recipient \(in Swedish\).](#)

IMPORT OF REMOVAL GOODS

[Read more about importing removal goods before moving in at Customs.](#)

IMPORT OF A CAR

Bringing your car with you when you move to Åland involves a cost. This sum may vary depending on where you are moving from.



Step 1 – Contact Customs

It is best to contact the Finnish Customs authorities for more information on bringing a car into Åland before your move. Otherwise, you can contact Customs in Mariehamn upon arrival in Åland and inform them that you have a car with you. Åland Customs District, tel. +358 (0)295 5200 (Customs switchboard).

Step 2 – Contact the tax office

If you are moving from outside of Finland, you should also contact Skattebyrån (The Tax Office) for information on car tax.

[Service number for private individuals at the Finnish Tax Administration.](#)

More information:

[Read more about "Car tax - when entering the country or registering a vehicle not registered in Finland" at Skatt.fi.](#)

[You can use the car tax calculator at Skatt.fi to get an estimate of how much car tax you will have to pay when you import your car to Åland/Finland.](#)

[At Skatt.fi you'll find tables of the taxable values applied to cars that have previously been imported into Åland/Finland.](#)

Step 3 – Contact the vehicle authority

Remember to register your car with Fordonsmyndigheten (The Åland Vehicle Administration). This also applies to those moving from Mainland Finland.

[Detailed information on how to do this can be found on the website of the Fordonsmyndigheten under "Fordon" \(in Swedish\).](#)

More information:

[Importing vehicles from Mainland Finland.](#)

[Importing vehicles from abroad.](#)

[Read more about the rules that apply to you if you work remotely and drive a foreign-registered car in Åland.](#)

[See also Info Norden for more information on bringing cars, vans and motorcycles into Åland.](#)

ARE YOU MOVING WITH PETS?

Find out what rules and vaccinations apply to you if you are moving with your pet.

Contact the small animal clinic Zoodiaken at the Åland Environmental and Health Protection Authority (ÅMHM) tel. +358 18 21000 for more information about importing pets (in Swedish).

Please also visit the Finnish Food Authority for more information on importing pets.

Remember!

Personnel at Åland Living can help you find answers to any questions you may have about taxes, pensions, and social security in Finland.

Visit alandliving.ax for more information.



Living

LIVING

Finding a home: rent, buy or build your own?

Wherever you live in Åland, you'll be near the sea, your workplace, school and friends. Distances are short and traffic jams are rare. Whether you want to rent or own your home, the options are many: from houses with private gardens to semi-detached houses and modern apartments.

Some employers may help arrange accommodation. When you are searching for accommodation, you can advertise free of charge on the local newspaper's advertising website, www.marknaden.ax (in Swedish). There, you can also find the rental ads.

THE REAL ESTATE MARKET

Åland's housing market is relatively small and stable. In Mariehamn, you'll find both apartments and houses, while houses are more common in the countryside and in the archipelago.

Renting is common, especially in Mariehamn. Rental prices are moderate compared to major cities in Finland and Sweden but can be higher in the town centre. Housing ads are usually posted in Swedish.

[Visit Fastigheter.ax to see properties for sale in Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

The Facebook groups "[Bostäder på Åland](#)" and "[Inflyttade ålänningar - New in Åland](#)" can be helpful as well when looking for rental or owner-occupied housing.

HOUSING – FOR RENT

Rental housing in Åland mainly consists of apartments owned by large Åland companies such as banks, insurance companies and shipping companies. The City of Mariehamn, through its real estate company Marstad, owns many properties in Mariehamn. There are also rental properties located in smaller buildings of only 4–5 apartments. These properties are often owned by private individuals or small real estate companies.

[Here we have gathered information for those who are looking to rent accommodation.](#)

Viewing and renting a home

Always visit the property before signing a rental agreement. If you can't visit in person, ask someone you trust to check it for you. It's also wise to investigate the background of the landlord or housing company.

During the viewing:

- Be on time
- Check for damage or problems
- Ask about renovations, utility costs, house rules,

or anything unclear

- Let them know quickly if you're interested – the rental market can be competitive.

Signing a rental agreement

When you find a home to rent, you will sign a rental agreement with the landlord or housing company. Almost all rental contracts are indefinite-term agreements. In some cases, the agreement can be written in English. If the contract is in Swedish, make sure to get it translated before signing – never sign anything you don't understand.

Rental agreements in Åland are governed by the Act on Tenancy (1999:19) for the Åland Islands. This law covers key aspects such as the lease term, rent, deposits, subletting, and tenant/landlord obligations. Always make sure you are comfortable with the home before entering into a long-term contract.

[Hyreslag \(1999:19\) för landskapet Åland.](#)

[Rental regulations and housing policy on the Åland Government's website.](#)

Security deposit

Before you move in, the landlord will ask for a security deposit, usually equal to 1–2 months' rent (maximum 3 by law). The deposit is returned when you move out, provided the home is clean, undamaged (except for normal wear and tear), and all payments are made. Clear communication with your landlord is key to solving any problems.

Average Rent

The average monthly rent per square metre is €12.13.

- Mariehamn: €12.72
- Countryside: €10.39
- Archipelago: €9.49

[Source: ÅSUB, April 2024 \(in Swedish\).](#)

Paying rent

Rent is paid monthly by bank transfer, typically at the beginning of the month. Cash, credit cards, and checks are not used for rent payments in Åland.

Additional costs like water may also be included in your rental contract.

Rent may increase yearly based on the cost-of-living index – this must be stated in the agreement.

Living in a shared building

Most rental homes in Åland have house rules that everyone is expected to follow. These include quiet hours, rules for shared spaces, and often restrictions on smoking – even on balconies. Always check your rental agreement.

Each apartment building has a property manager or

maintenance company. Their contact details are usually posted near the entrance. Contact them for repairs or to report issues like heating problems, water leaks or pests. Notifications are usually made by email or through an online form.

Good to know when living in an apartment building

- **Quiet hours:** Be quiet between 22:00 and 07:00. No loud music, parties, or noisy activities. Normal sounds (like walking or talking) are okay. House rules are often posted at the building entrance.
- **Pets:** If you have a pet, make sure it's allowed and remember that tenants are responsible for any damage caused by their animals.
- **Parking:** Park only in marked parking spots. Guest parking is allowed only in spaces marked *Gäst* (guest in Swedish). Some spots have engine heaters for winter – these are not for charging electric cars. Ask your landlord or the building manager about charging stations.
- **Fire alarm:** Every home must have at least one smoke alarm. You are responsible for checking the alarm and changing the battery.
- **Laundry room:** Many buildings have a shared laundry room (often in the basement). You must book a time to use the machines. Check your rental agreement or house rules for details.
- **Sauna:** Apartment buildings often have a shared sauna. You can book a private weekly time (sometimes with an extra fee). Some buildings also have free group sauna times for women and men separately.
- **Bike storage:** There is usually a designated space for bicycles, prams and strollers, either outdoors or indoors. These items must not be stored in hallways or stairwells for safety reasons.

Moving in

Agree with your landlord when and how to collect your keys – usually when the rental contract is signed or directly at the property. You should receive at least two keys. Only the landlord can usually make copies, and replacing lost keys can be expensive.

It's a good idea to inspect the home together when you move in. Note or photograph any damage so that both you and the landlord agree on the condition of the property from the start.

Ending a rental contract

If you have a fixed-term contract, you cannot end it early without a penalty. If your contract is open-ended, you can usually give one month's notice (check your agreement).

If the landlord ends the contract, they must give three months' notice from the end of the month. If the rental agreement has lasted for at least two years without interruption, the notice period is six months.

If the tenant ends the contract, the notice period is one month from the end of the month.

Tenants are always responsible for any damage – even if caused by a guest or pet. Don't forget to return the keys when you move out.

HOUSING – TO BUY

Most residential areas are scenic and close to nature. Some homes are by the water and may include a private dock or boat space. Another option is shared ownership, where you own shares in the property.

[Here we have gathered information for those who want to buy a home.](#)

[Visit fastigheter.ax to find properties from all brokers \(in Swedish\).](#)

You can buy land or a home in Åland without the right of domicile

When you move to Åland, you can buy a house or a plot of land in a planned area for residence or in a village centre without the right of domicile (*hembygdsrätt*). You can also buy a house or a plot of land for permanent residence even if it is not a planned area.

To buy land or a house without the right of domicile, you must first apply for a land acquisition permit (*jordförvärvstillstånd*). When buying land houses for your own home, the Government of Åland generally always grants a land acquisition permit, if you meet the conditions.

HOUSING – BUILDING

If you want to build your own house, the options are the same as for those who want to buy. This means that you have the possibility to build without the right of domicile (*hembygdsrätt*) in planned residential areas, in village centres or similar local areas if you first apply for a land acquisition permit (*jordförvärvstillstånd*).

Most municipalities in Åland offer plots for building your own house for permanent residence. You also apply for a building permit (*bygglov*) through the municipality.

[Contact details and information on permanent settlement areas and building permit can be found on each municipality's own website.](#)

You should contact the National Land Survey of Åland (Lantmäteriverket) to register a change of property ownership by applying for title registration (lagfart), which is the official recording of ownership in the property information system. You can also get help with the title registration from your bank.

[Contact the National Land Survey \(Lantmäteriet\) in Mariehamn.](#)

INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY

When you move to Åland, start by contacting your new municipality of residence. The municipality is responsible for helping you settle in and will guide you through the integration process.

You can receive support with finding housing, enrolling your children in school, arranging childcare, understanding elder care and social services, and learning about working life in Åland.

AMS (the Åland Authority for Labour Market and Student Services) is also a partner and can assist you with employment matters.

[Contact your home municipality.](#)

[Contact AMS for more information about employment and study support.](#)

COST OF LIVING IN ÅLAND

The cost of living in Åland is comparable to that in mainland Finland and other Nordic regions. Housing, food, and transportation are the main expenses. Rental prices vary depending on location – Mariehamn, and surrounding areas, tends to be more expensive than rural areas or in the archipelago.

Basic groceries and consumer goods may be slightly more expensive than in larger cities due to the island's location and smaller market. However, many services such as healthcare, education, and childcare are publicly funded and affordable.

Mobile phone subscription and broadband internet in Åland are generally priced below the EU average, offering high-quality connectivity at reasonable rates.

Dining out and purchasing alcohol tend to be more expensive than in many other countries, mainly due to transport costs and taxation.

Overall, while Åland may not be a low-cost destination, the high quality of life, safety, and access to nature offer good value in return.

[For detailed information, you can visit Statistics Finland or ÅSUB \(Åland's official statistics bureau\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

MOVING COMPANY

[Contact details for moving companies in Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

PROPERTY TAX

As a property owner, you receive an annual property tax assessment and pay property tax.

[Read more about property taxation in Åland.](#)

HOME INSURANCE

Once you have found your home, it is a good idea to take out home insurance. Home insurance protects your home and its contents. Home insurance is sold by insurance companies.

In Åland you can take out home insurance with insurance companies listed below, which also offer other types of insurance, for example, personal and car insurance.

[Ömsen insurance](#)

[Pohjola Insurance](#)

[Lokaltapiola Åland](#)

ELECTRICITY

To get electricity in your home, you need to sign an electricity contract. In Åland, the electricity network and distribution are managed locally by Mariehamns Energi or Ålands Elandelslag, depending on where you live.

Electricity services are divided into two parts:

1. Distribution – this is the fixed network that delivers electricity to your home. You cannot choose your distribution company; it depends on your address.

2. Electricity supply – this is the electricity you buy and pay for based on how much you use. Here, you can often choose between different contract types and suppliers.

Many residents sign a contract directly with the local energy provider, who handles both supply and distribution in one agreement. You can usually choose between a fixed-term contract with a set price, or a flexible contract based on hourly market rates.

Electricity prices vary depending on usage and contract type but are generally considered reasonable. If you're unsure, ask your landlord or contact the local energy company for advice.

MUNICIPAL WATER, SEWERAGE AND ROAD NETWORKS

For information on local services such as municipal technology, please contact your home municipality directly.

[Visit the Government of Åland for information on municipal technology and other activities.](#)

RECYCLING AND WASTE

To contribute to a more sustainable environment, it is important to sort your waste at home before you throw it away. Sorting procedures differ slightly depending on which part of Åland you live in. Instructions can usually be found at the waste containers where you live. If you do not know how to sort your waste, contact your municipality or landlord.

[Here you will find companies and organizations in the field of waste management and recycling in Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

Getting around

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

You can get to and from Mariehamn by bus and/or archipelago ferry every weekday, regardless of which municipality in Åland you live in. The bus routes generally follow the main roads into Mariehamn. Both the bus and ferry timetables are adapted to the working hours of those who live in the countryside or in the archipelago and work in the town.

[Åland Transport – bus routes and archipelago ferries.](#)

THE CITY BUS (TÄTORTSTRAFIKEN)

The Mariehamn bus runs frequently every weekday (Monday-Friday). The fare is the same, regardless of the route. Children under 12 pay half price and children under 6 travel free.

[Urban traffic.](#)

COMMUNICATIONS

[Here you can find out more about local public transport and travel to and from Åland.](#)

More information:

[Good to know when travelling to Åland from Visitaland.com.](#)

[Good to know when travelling in Åland from Visitaland.com.](#)

[Ålandstrafiken – information about the archipelago ferries and public transport in Åland.](#)

[The Government of Åland's map portal \(in Swedish\).](#)

TRAFFIC AND TRAFFIC RULES

There is right-hand traffic in Åland and in the rest of the Nordic countries. The traffic culture is calm.

It is compulsory for cars to always drive with dipped headlights (low beam) and to have winter tires in winter. In winter you can use either studded or friction tires. When it is dark outside, it is important that pedestrians use reflectors to be visible in traffic.

The police monitor compliance with traffic rules. If you break the traffic rules, you will be fined. It is an offense to drive any motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

[Read more about road safety at regeringen.ax.](#)

DRIVING LICENSE

A driving license is a document that shows that you are authorized to drive a motor vehicle, off-road motor vehicle, tractor and/or motorized equipment. Anyone driving a licensed vehicle (e.g. a car) on public roads must have a valid driving license. A driving license is not a valid travel document or an official identity document.

A driving license issued in the Nordic countries can be used in Åland for its entire period of validity. If you live in Åland and want to renew your driving license, contact the Åland police authority at least 1 month before the expiry date.

[Read more about driving licenses on the police website \(in Swedish\).](#)

To obtain a driving license, you need to pass a driving test:

[Theory tests and driving tests for those who want to get a driving license or a new driving license category take place at the Åland Vehicle Administration \(Fordonsmyndigheten\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Here you can find driving schools in Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

VEHICLE INSURANCE (MOTOR INSURANCE)

If you have a car, you must take out vehicle insurance with an insurance company:

[Ömsen Insurance](#)

[Pohjola Insurance](#)

[Lokaltapiola Åland](#)

MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION

In Åland and in Finland, cars must be inspected and registered. Inspections are carried out at the Åland Vehicle Administration (Fordonsmyndigheten) at Norra Möckelövägen 58. This is the only inspection station in Åland. You can register your car at the inspection station, insurance companies and car dealers, for example.

[For more information on booking, payment and inspection intervals, please visit the Åland Motor Vehicle Authority \(Fordonsmyndigheten\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

You must book your inspection appointment yourself.

Health Services and Medical Care

HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL CARE

Health and medical care

ÅLANDS HÄLSO- OCH SJUKVÅRD (ÅHS) – ÅLAND HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

The Åland Health Service (ÅHS) is responsible for all public health care in Åland, from maternity and child health care to various forms of specialized health care and end-of-life care.

The comprehensive service offered by ÅHS to Ålanders and visitors is characterized by a people-oriented atmosphere, where care and quality are in focus. Collaborations with hospitals in Helsinki, Turku and Uppsala give patients and staff access to top Nordic expertise.

[The activities of ÅHS are mainly concentrated in Mariehamn, read more on Ahs.ax.](#)

[Read more about health care in Åland on Alandliving.ax \(in Swedish\).](#)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Call the emergency number 112 in life-threatening situations – such as serious accidents, heavy bleeding, severe chest pain, sudden breathing difficulties, unconsciousness, signs of paralysis or seizures – or go directly to the emergency department at ÅHS (Ålands centralsjukhus) in Mariehamn.

HEALTH INFORMATION

The health information service at ÅHS is available every day, tel. +358 18 535 117.

Your call will be placed in a queue and ÅHS will answer as soon as possible.

When should I call the medical helpline

018 535 117?

- When you or someone close to you is ill and you need advice or guidance.
- When you have new or suddenly worsening symptoms, but the situation is not life-threatening.

What happens when you call?

A nurse at the medical helpline will assess your symptoms and provide advice. If needed, you may be given an appointment at the emergency care clinic or referred to another service.

HEALTH CENTRES

Contact your nearest health centre in Mariehamn or Godby for illnesses and problems that are not acute or life-threatening. If you live in the archipelago, contact the health centre in your municipality.

[How to seek care at ÅHS.](#)

MATERNITY CARE AND CHILDBIRTH

Pregnancy and childbirth care in Åland is known for being safe, personal and close to home. Expecting parents receive care through mödrarådgivningen (maternity clinic), which is part of Ålands hälso- och sjukvård (ÅHS). Midwives provide regular check-ups, support, and guidance throughout the pregnancy.

You will give birth at Ålands centralsjukhus (the central hospital in Mariehamn). The hospital has a modern maternity ward and a dedicated team of midwives and doctors. Because of the small size of the unit, you often meet the same caregivers before, during and after the birth – something many families appreciate.

After the baby is born, most parents stay a couple of days at the hospital, allowing time to rest, recover and receive support with breastfeeding and newborn care. Follow-up care continues at the child health clinic (barnrådgivningen).

For more advanced care or special situations, ÅHS cooperates with the university hospitals in Åbo (Finland) and Uppsala (Sweden). Transport by helicopter is arranged when needed.

[Read more about Maternity care and childbirth at Ahs.ax.](#)

CHILD COUNSELLING

ÅHS provides all parents with support and encouragement during their child's first years. All children who have not yet started school can come here.

[Read more about the helpline for children's issues at Ahs.ax.](#)

CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

Municipalities are responsible for nursing homes and assisted living facilities for the elderly. Contact your home municipality for more information and the types of accommodation available.

DENTISTS

Public dental care is offered to children and young people up to the age of 28 and to patient groups that are prioritized for medical and social reasons.

[ÅHS dental care is available in Mariehamn and Godby.](#)

[Find private dental practices in Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

CONTRACEPTIVE

If you need help with contraception or sexual health, you can contact the contraception clinic at ÅHS. There are also private options.

[Contact private health care services \(in Swedish\).](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

There is support and care available for those who feel mentally unwell. A person in need of this kind of help should start by contacting the mental health services at ÅHS. Counselling and treatment services and support sessions are available.

[Mental health at ÅHS.](#)

PRIVATE HEALTHCARE

There are three private healthcare providers in Åland:

- [Cityläkarna](#)
- [Medimar](#)
- [Ålandskliniken](#)

FPA pays part of the cost of private medical care (including dental care). Many employers also offer occupational health care to their employees.

PHARMACY

There are four pharmacies in Åland. At the pharmacy, you can buy medication as well as skin care, hygiene products, vitamins and first aid equipment. Many medicines are available only by prescription from a doctor.



All prescriptions are electronic. To collect your medicine, you need to bring your Kela card or another form of identification. If someone else needs to collect a medicine for you, that person must have a power of attorney and be able to prove their identity with their own identity card, passport or driving license.

[The authorization must be made digitally via Suomi.fi.](#)

If you need a prescription for a medicine or if you need to renew a prescription, the easiest way is to contact the health centre.

[If you have a Finnish social security number, you can check you're the status of your prescriptions and medicines at Kanta.fi.](#)

If you have not visited a doctor in Åland before and have a long-term illness, you should bring your prescriptions or an updated list of medicines with you when you visit a doctor.

[Första Apoteket in Mariehamn and Kumlinge.](#)

[Central-Apoteket in Mariehamn.](#)

[Jomala Apotek in Maxinge.](#)

[Godby Apotek in Finström.](#)

KOMMUNERNAS SOCIALTJÄNST (KST)

– THE MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Kommunernas socialtjänst k.f. (KST) is responsible for social welfare in Åland. Contact KST if you need help with income support, maternity allowance, disability services or substance abuse treatment.

KST also includes child protection, special care and

Fältarna, which works preventively with young people aged 13–17.

[Read more about social care in Åland.](#)

DISABILITY RIGHTS ÅLAND

Funktionsrätt Åland is an umbrella organization that works for people with disabilities. The association includes 11 patient and family associations and the HandiCampen office in Mariehamn.

Funktionsrätt Åland has also produced a social protection guide that highlights the rights of those who are ill or have a disability.

[Read more about Funktionsrätt Åland.](#)

FOLKHÄLSAN PÅ ÅLAND

Folkhälsan is a national non-profit organisation that promotes health and well-being for people of all ages. In Åland, it offers baby swimming, family cafés, youth activities, fitness classes, senior support, and more.

The Allaktivitetshuset in Mariehamn is the main meeting place, with a café and spaces for events and group activities.

[Learn more at Folkhälsan Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

Emergencies and crisis information

CALL 112 IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY.

Keep this in mind when you call 112:

1. First, tell us **what** happened and **where** it happened.
2. Answer the questions that the staff ask you.
3. Follow the instructions given to you during the call.
4. Do not end the call until you have been given permission to do so.

Call 112 **only** in emergencies.

In a larger crisis, many people want information, but please do not call 112 to ask what is happening regarding a troubling situation you have learned about. Instead, wait for the authorities to inform you on how to proceed.

KRIS.AX

The authorities' crisis messages can be found at [www.kris.ax](#).

In Finland and in Åland, the authorities will test the official alert message transmission system on National Emergency Number Day, February 11, at 11:20 am. During the test, a test message will be broadcast on radio and television and will be available on the 112 text TV page. Information about the test will also be published on [www.kris.ax](#).

[Read also the brochure "If the crisis comes" from the Government of Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

[See also the regional alarm centre at \[www.alarmcentralen.ax\]\(#\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

GENERAL DANGER SIGNALS

When authorities want to warn the public of an imminent danger, they can use the alarm signal, also known as "Hesa Fredrik". This signal is tested at 12 (noon) on the first day of each month*.

Here is what the different signals sound like:

- **Test alarm***: the signal sounds as a seven-second continuous blast, followed by 14 seconds of silence. This is repeated for at least two minutes. This is followed by the 'All Clear' signal, which is a continuous signal lasting 30-40 seconds.
- **Air raid alarm**: A series of short, repeated blasts.
- **Emergency alarm**: A longer signal repeated with pauses in between.
- **All clear**: A long, sustained signal indicating that the danger is over.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

The municipalities in Åland maintain fire and rescue services, of which voluntary fire brigade activities are important and form a large part.

Mariehamn is staffed by the [Mariehamn Rescue Department](#), which also handles patient transportation in Åland on the basis of an agreement with Åland's health service.

[Regional Alarm Centre \(in Swedish\)](#).

THE POLICE

The [Åland Police Authority](#) is subordinate to the Government of Åland and has the whole of Åland as its area of operation.

The police station is located at Strandgatan 27 in Mariehamn.

The police switchboard is open during the day on weekdays, tel. +358 18 527 100.

In an emergency, always call 112.

SEA RESCUE

[Ålands Sjöräddningssällskap r.f.](#) is a non-profit organization, which conducts sea rescue in the waters around Åland.

Daytime number (24h) +358 18 19475.

CALL SUPPORT AND HELPLINES

Children's helpline

If you are under 18, you can call the Bris helpline to talk to a counsellor about what you are thinking about or what you need help with.

Call Bris: +358 18 25520 (local call charge).

Bris adult helpline – about children

You can call Bris's adult helpline for issues concerning children if you are worried and need to talk to someone about your own or someone else's child up to the age of 18.

Monday–Friday 10 am–1pm

Call the Bris adult helpline: +46 77 150 5050

Helplines

The helpline phones are open to residents of Åland 24 hours a day and offer guidance to Åland authorities on issues related to domestic or sexual violence.

Call the Women's helpline: +358 18 25 500

[Read more about the Women's helpline at regeringen.ax](#).

Call the Men's helpline +358 18 25504

Call the Helpline for transpersons +358 18 25509

The zero line

Nollinen is a national, toll-free helpline for anyone who has been subjected to violence or threats of violence in close relationships. Relatives of victims of violence or professionals and authorities who need support for client work can also call the Zero Line.

Call the Zero Line: +358 80 005 005

[Read more about the zero line.](#)

General emergency number 112	ÅHS switchboard/information: +358 18 5355	Medical information +358 18 535 117	Healthcare Center +358 18 538 500
Alarm centre hotline number +358 18 19000	Police switchboard, daytime, weekdays +358 18 527 100	Poison Information Centre 0800147111	Short-term dentist +358 18 538524
Veterinarian on call +358 18 21000	Sea rescue 029 41 000	Car recovery +358 457 313 5747, +358 18 31747	Search the phone book at Aland.com (in Swedish)

Tallbacken shelter

Tallbacken can be contacted around the clock in matters relating to domestic violence. The shelter is available for women and men who are victims of domestic violence.

Call Tallbacken: +358 18 532842 or +358 457 378 0018

Alternatives to Violence

Alternativ till våld, meaning alternatives to violence, offers support and treatment to men with violence and aggression problems in their close relationships, through conversations/treatment in groups or individually. Alternativ till våld has a duty of confidentiality and the service is free of charge.

[Read more about Alternativ till våld at regeringen.ax.](#)

Victim Support

Victim Support service points provide personal support and advice to victims, their families and witnesses in criminal cases, as well as the possibility to request a support person.

[Read more about Victim Support Finland.](#)

Crisis centre Monika

The online service is intended for women with a migrant background who have experienced violence or threats of violence. It is easy and safe to use the services.

The online services are confidential. Questions can be asked and discussed anonymously.

Call Crisis Centre Monika's helpline: 0800 05058

There is also a chat function.

[Crisis centre Monika](#)

Poison Information Centre

The Poisons Information Centre answers questions by phone about the prevention and treatment of sudden poisoning in humans.

Call the Poison Information Centre: 0800 147 111 or 09 471 977 (calls are free of charge).

[Find out more about the Poison Information Centre.](#)

Addiction Clinic

At the Addiction Clinic you can seek support for your use of or addiction to alcohol, drugs, medicines or gambling.

In Mariehamn there is an addiction clinic at the Municipal Social Services (KST) that provides services for the whole of Åland.

Call the Addiction Clinic: +358 18 532 851

[Read more about the addiction clinic at KST.](#)



Education and studying



EDUCATION AND STUDYING

The education system in Åland

Because Åland is self-governing, it has its own laws and education plans for daycare and basic schooling. All teaching is in Swedish.

Children start first grade the year they turn seven. Before that, children can attend early childhood education, including daycare from age 1–5 and one year of pre-primary education at age six.

Basic education (grades 1–9) lasts nine years and is followed by upper secondary education. Compulsory education begins in the autumn of the year the child turns 7 and ends when the child has completed the basic education program or after 10 years at the latest.

The municipalities are responsible for childcare and primary education, while the regional government is responsible for upper secondary education, higher vocational education and free education in the form of schools.

[Find out more about schools and educational opportunities in Åland.](#)

Contact your new home municipality before the start of the term to apply for a kindergarten place, enrolment in primary school or notification of homeschooling.

[Contact details for Åland municipalities.](#)

CHILDCARE (DAY CARE, AFTER-SCHOOL CARE AND PRESCHOOL)

Childcare includes day care, after-school care and preschool.

Daycare (kindergarten)

Daycare is well-organized, affordable, and focused on social learning and play. Fees are income-based. Many families care for their children at home for at least 9–12 months after birth. After the official parental leave ends, one parent can receive a home care allowance to stay at home longer.

You must apply at least four months before your child is due to start, but placement is only possible after your local address is officially registered. While all children are guaranteed a daycare spot, it may not always be at your preferred location—especially if you apply on short notice.

Note: Daycare centres are usually closed on national holidays but stay open during school breaks in February, October and December. Many close for all of July. If your child is in municipal daycare, one centre in the area typically remains open in July for families who need care.

Preschool

As a part of day care, children receive preschool

education during the academic year before compulsory education begins. Preschool education is available for six-year-olds as part of day care services. It is not compulsory, and formal education begins the year the child turns seven. The aim of preschool is to support the child's growth, development, and school readiness through play-based learning and group activities.

[Read more about childcare in Åland \(kindergarten\).](#)

[Film and brochure on childcare \(in Swedish\).](#)

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL (GRADES 1-9) AND BASIC EDUCATION

Compulsory education is the education that children are obliged to attend to learn the knowledge and skills included in the comprehensive school curriculum. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child completes compulsory education, either by attending a municipal school, a substitute private school or homeschooling.

Basic education incorporates a nine-year general education programme. In Åland, all children are subject to compulsory basic education from the year they turn seven.

[Film and brochure on basic education \(in Swedish\).](#)

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (GRADES 10-12)

After completing compulsory education, you have the option to attend upper secondary education. You can apply for upper secondary education after finishing basic education.

There are two main options:

- General upper secondary school (Ålands lyceum) – more academic, ends with a matriculation exam and prepares students for university.
- Vocational education and training (Ålands yrksgymnasium) – focus on practical skills and leads to a professional qualification.

Students choose their path during grade 9.

[Ålands Gymnasium \(Åland Upper Secondary School\)](#)

[Ålands Folkhögskola \(Åland Folk High School\) offers free education in a variety of subjects.](#)

STUDYING – HIGHER EDUCATION

Education is highly valued in Finland, and most people continue studying after basic education. Over 70% of the population holds a post-secondary qualification, and many have a master's degree or higher.

Finland has two types of higher education institutions:

- Universities – focus on academic subjects
- Universities of applied sciences – offer more practical, career-oriented training

Finnish universities offer four levels of degrees: bachelor's, master's, licentiate, and doctoral. Most teaching is in Finnish or Swedish, but many bachelor's and master's programmes are available in English. Licentiate and doctoral studies can often be completed in English as well.

Higher education is offered at Högskolan på Åland (Åland University of applied sciences) and corresponds to EQF levels 6 and 7.

[Högskolan på Åland \(Åland university of applied sciences\).](#)

Higher education is free for permanent residents and EU citizens.

[For more details about education and learning, visit the Government of Åland.](#)

You can also visit the [Finnish National Agency for Education](#) or [Study in Finland](#) websites.



Housing areas and schools in Mariehamn

Where you live in Mariehamn usually determines which primary school your child will attend. The town has one school for grades 1–6 and two schools for grades 1–9.

Primary schools (grades 1–6):

- Ytternäs skola – for families in southern and eastern parts.

Primary and lower secondary schools (grades 1–9):

- Strandnäs skola – for families living in northern and western Mariehamn.
- Övernäs skola – centrally located and open to students from different areas.

Your school placement is based on your address, but it is possible to apply for another school.

[For more information, visit mariehamn.ax.](#)

[Open the town's map service \(in Swedish\)](#)

Schools outside Mariehamn

If you live in another municipality in Åland, your child will attend the local municipal school (grundskola). Most municipalities have their own comprehensive school covering grades 1–6 while in some archipelago municipalities schools cover grades 1–9. On the Åland mainland, there are two school districts, Södra Ålands utbildningsdistrikt (SÅUD) and Norra Ålands utbildningsdistrikt (NÅUD).

School placement is based on your address, and school transport is often provided if the distance is long.

For details, contact your local municipality.

[Visit Södra Ålands högstadiedistrikt \(SÅUD, in Swedish\)](#)

[Visit Norra Ålands högstadiedistrikt \(NÅUD, in Swedish\)](#)

GROWING UP IN ÅLAND

The Government of Åland has gathered information on the rights and obligations a person has when they turn 18 and are considered an adult.

[Read more about growing up in Åland on \[regeringen.ax.\]\(#\)](#)

ADULT LEARNING

Åland strongly supports lifelong learning and there are many options for adults to study new skills or hobbies. Open universities and summer schools offer individual courses for anyone.

[Öppna högskolan \(Åland university of applied sciences\) – individual courses](#)

[Ålands yrkesgymnasium – adult education](#)

[Ålands yrkesgymnasium – integration training](#)

[Ålands yrkesgymnasium – courses and training for working life](#)

Liberal adult education

Medis - Medborgarinstitutet (Medis - Institute of Adult Education) offers non-formal, non-degree courses for adults. It is jointly funded by the Government of Åland, the municipalities, and course fees. The aim is to promote lifelong learning, community, and meaningful leisure activities for everyone over 16. Courses are available in areas such as arts, cooking, and sports.

[Read more about Medborgarinstitutet Medis.](#)

LIBRARIES

All municipalities have their own libraries, which offer books, newspapers and magazines in many different languages. Mariehamn Town Library at Strandgatan 29 is the central library for Åland.

Libraries can also order collections of books in other languages for both children and adults from the Multilingual Library of Helsinki.

[Read more about libraries in Åland.](#)



Working

WORKING

Working in Åland

Åland offers a unique working environment that combines small-community values with a high quality of life. While the region is smaller in scale than Finland's capital area, Åland plays an important role in the local economy and offers job opportunities in a variety of sectors, including health and social care, education, hospitality, maritime industries, public administration, construction, trade, and services.

Thanks to the region's compact size and short commuting distances, work-life balance in Åland is excellent. Employees typically enjoy regular working hours, generous holidays, and a non-hierarchical, respectful work culture. This allows for plenty of time to spend with family, enjoy nature, or take part in community life.

FIND A JOB

The chances of finding a job in Åland are good! Contact the Åland Authority for Labour Market and Student Services (AMS), which offers guidance in education and employment for adults and young adults in Åland. At AMS you can get information about job vacancies and answers to your questions and concerns about work and study options.

Åland Authority for Labour Market and Student Services (AMS)

Tel. +358 18 25501

info@ams.ax

www.ams.ax

[Search among job vacancies in Åland.](#)

[You can also use the European Commission's employment services EURES to look for jobs in Åland.](#)

[Applying for a job in Åland, information from Info Norden.](#)

[Visit our career and job pages here at Åland Living.](#)

[Difficult words on ams.ax? Here you will find a glossary!](#)

[Tips for finding a job.](#)

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Employment in Åland is regulated by Finnish labour law, and the same legal protections apply here as in the rest of Finland. Employment contracts can be written, oral, or electronic, but it is recommended to have a written agreement. The contract should clearly state key terms such as job duties, salary, working hours, trial period, location, and duration of employment.

Most contracts are valid indefinitely, unless there is a justified reason for a fixed-term agreement. If you need a residence permit or EU registration, a signed employment contract is usually required.



Whether you are planning to stay short-term or settle permanently, Åland offers a safe, balanced, and supportive environment for work and everyday life.

TAX CARD

When you work in Åland you need a tax card, which you give to your employer. The tax card states your tax rate, or how much tax you must pay on your income. You apply for a tax card via the Åland tax authority. Bring a valid ID document.

If you have the bank codes/BankID of an Åland/Finnish bank, you can apply through MyTax, which is the Tax Administration's e-service for taxpayers. You can use MyTax to take care of your own tax matters or those of your company or your underaged children.

[Information on MyTax – skatt.fi.](#)

[The Tax office in the State Department of Åland \(Skattebyrån, statens ämbetverk på Åland\).](#)

Torggatan 16, Mariehamn

Tel. +358 29 497 094

[Read more about tax cards at Skatt.fi.](#)

[If you move from another place in Finland, you can order a new tax card via MyTax.](#)

[If you work in Finland for 6 months or less, you have a limited tax liability – read more about general and limited tax liability \(withholding tax\).](#)

[Visit The Tax Campus \(Verokampus\) website – aimed at everyone needing help with managing their taxes or understanding the Finnish tax system.](#)

How to deliver a new tax card to your employer?

Ask your employer how and when they need your tax card details. Many employers receive details on both basic and revised tax cards electronically directly from the Tax Administration. In that case, you do not need to deliver the tax card to your employer.

TAX RETURN

Every spring, you receive a pre-completed tax return with information on your income and the taxes you have paid in the previous year. Check the information, such as the amount of pay you have received, your account number, and possible deductions. If everything is correct, you do not need to do anything. If necessary, complete and correct the information in MyTax by the due date.

If you paid too much tax in the previous year, you will receive a tax refund. If you paid too little tax in the previous year, you will have to pay back taxes.

When moving to Åland, your tax obligations depend on the type of tax card you apply for.

If you apply for a progressive tax card, you must report any foreign income you've received during the same year, starting from the day you became generally liable to tax in Finland. This information will then be pre-filled in your tax return.

- If you instead apply for a source tax card, you do not need to report foreign income when applying. However, you will not receive a pre-filled tax return either, and must declare any foreign income yourself if you become generally taxable in Finland.

You may also need to file a tax return in your previous country of residence. This depends on that country's tax rules, so be sure to check with the local tax authority.

[For more information, see Residency and nonresidency in Finland – skatt.fi.](#)

To avoid losing your tax refund, salary and any holiday pay, you should declare your current bank account to both the tax authorities of the country of emigration and the country of your former employer. This will also make future tax matters easier.

Registering a change of address with the Åland tax authority is done with a notification of a move.

[Contact the Åland tax office for more information.](#)

TAX CERTIFICATE

Appended to the tax return is a tax certificate. The tax certificate shows the total amount of your income subject to tax in the previous year.

Keep the tax certificate, you might need it. For example, if you apply for a housing allowance from FPA, you need to append the tax certificate to your application.

TAX NUMBER

Everyone who works at a construction site, a worksite of an installation project or at a shipyard must carry a photo ID that shows their tax number. The worker's tax number must be entered in the tax number register.

[Employer at a construction site or a shipyard – skatt.fi.](#)

RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND VALIDATION

In some regulated professions, such as health care, you need special professional rights (validation) to work in Åland and in Finland. If you have obtained your degree or professional certificate in a country other than Finland, you may therefore need to apply for professional rights. You can do this with the authority responsible for the recognition of your specific profession.

Apply for recognition at:

[National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health.](#)

[Government of Åland \(e.g. teaching degree, social worker degree\).](#)

[Åland Upper Secondary School - adult education \(validation of other education\).](#)

[The National Food Agency.](#)

[Transport and Communications Agency \(Traficom\).](#)

[Regional State Administrative Agency.](#)

WORKING IN ÅLAND – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Finnish labour market is based on collective agreements that define employment terms and protect both employees and employers in Åland and in Finland.

Employee rights include:

- Fair treatment and a safe, healthy work environment
- A fair salary and legal protections
- The right to join a trade union and terminate an open-ended contract
- Proof of the right to work (e.g. residence permit for non-EU citizens).

Employer responsibilities include:

- Assigning tasks and working conditions within legal limits
- Ensuring equality, safety, and proper occupational healthcare
- Paying mandatory contributions (pension, insurance, unemployment, etc.)
- Providing payslips with full salary and deduction details
- Possibly offering fringe benefits like meal vouchers, phones, or travel per diems (most are taxable)
- Checking qualifications for regulated professions (e.g. healthcare).

Employers must follow ethical hiring practices. If they fail to meet legal obligations, employees can contact the Regional State Administrative Agency or Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

[International Labour Organization.](#)
[Regional State Administrative Agency.](#)
[Occupational Safety and Health Administration.](#)
[Fair Play at work.](#)
[Employee rights advisory service.](#)
[InfoFinland – Employee's rights and obligations.](#)
[Occupational safety guide for foreign employees in Finland.](#)
[Working in Finland – brochure from the Ministry of Economi Affairs and Employment of Finland.](#)
[Working Time Act \(Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland\)](#)

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland monitors the work ability and well-being of employees.

More information:

[Regional State Administrative Agency for Southwest Finland.](#)
[The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's national telephone helpline.](#)

UNEMPLOYMENT FUNDS (A-KASSA)

A-kassa is an unemployment fund that acts as basic insurance for your salary. Contact your current unemployment fund for information on what applies when you move to Åland.

[All unemployment funds in Finland are listed here.](#)

TRADE UNION AFFILIATION

Trade unions look after the interests of their members and represent workers in matters relating to pay and working conditions. Trade unions protect workers' rights and pay unemployment benefits. Each sector of work has its own trade union.

[Read more about trade unions in Åland.](#)

[Unemployment benefits in Åland.](#)

WORKING REMOTELY FROM ÅLAND

It is possible to live in Åland while having your employer located elsewhere. The fiber network is well developed, even in the archipelago. With video meetings, digital tools, and a reliable internet connection, working remotely is smooth and efficient. Many Ålanders already work in teams spread across the globe.

Several municipalities also offer office spaces or co-working solutions for those who prefer a professional work environment.

As a resident of Åland, you generally pay taxes here, even if your employer is based in Finland or abroad. This also means that you are normally covered by Åland's system of social security, healthcare, and childcare.

Please note: There are exceptions. If you work for a foreign employer, international tax treaties and rules on social security may affect where you pay taxes and which country's social security system you belong to. In some cases, your income may be taxed in the employer's country instead of in Åland. Always contact the Åland Tax Administration for individual guidance.

[Read more on the Tax Administration website, Åland Tax Office.](#)

[Tax information in English: Contact the Finnish Tax Administration \(Vero\) with questions about taxation.](#)

[Here you can read more about working remotely from Åland.](#)

Entrepreneurship and running a business in Åland

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Åland has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a long tradition of self-employment and small business development – and warmly welcomes like-minded people. With a supportive local network and a strategic location between Finland and Sweden, Åland offers an excellent environment for starting and running a business.

Most companies are small or medium-sized, often family-owned, and active in trade, IT and finance, tourism, shipping, agriculture, food, construction, services, or creative industries. Business culture is practical and personal, rooted in local knowledge.

Åland's autonomous status, bilingual setting and focus on sustainability also create opportunities in niche markets. Whether you're launching a start-up or expanding an existing business, Åland offers a stable, safe and welcoming place for entrepreneurs.

Support is available from local organisations like Ålands Näringsliv (The Åland Chamber of Commerce), which promotes business growth and innovation. They can help you get started by guiding you in writing a business plan, understanding legal obligations, and choosing the right company form or self-employment option.

[Find out more about starting your own business in Åland at Åland Living.](#)

[Ålands Näringsliv offers support and help to those who want to start a business \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Business exchange - companies for sale \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Business Lab \(Åland university of applied sciences\) – for anyone looking to develop their entrepreneurial skills and build a sustainable business \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Innovation Lab \(Åland university of applied sciences\) – for those who want to test new ideas, explore creative solutions, and drive innovation forward \(in Swedish\).](#)

Apply for a business license (näringsrätt)

Individuals, companies and other entities wishing to carry out business activities in Åland must have a business license before starting business activities. You apply for the licence from the Government of Åland.

In order for a business license to be granted, the company confirms that it will be able to offer its products or services in Swedish in Åland.

[If you have questions about business licences, you can contact the Government of Åland.](#)

[Read more about business licences at Ålands Näringsliv \(in Swedish\).](#)

Business structures in Åland

If you want to start a business in Åland, there are several corporate forms to choose from. The best option depends on whether you're starting alone or with others, how much capital you have, and how you want to manage responsibility and profits.

Here are the most common business structures:

- **Private trader (enskild firma):** easy to set up and ideal if you're working alone. You are personally responsible for the business and its finances. Your company can also have employees.
- **General partnership (öppet bolag):** Requires at least two partners who share full responsibility for the business and its obligations.
- **Limited partnership (kommanditbolag):** a form of partnership with two types of partners: general (active) and silent (investing only).
- **Limited liability company (aktiebolag):** a flexible and common choice for small and growing businesses. The owners' liability is limited to the capital they invest.

Each structure comes with its own rules for taxation, profit distribution, and legal responsibility.

[For help choosing the right form, visit naringsliv.ax \(in Swedish\).](#)

Working as a freelancer or self-employed in Åland

In addition to starting a registered company, there are other ways to work independently in Åland.

- **Freelancer:** you work for multiple clients or employers on a project basis, usually with a service contract. You are responsible for your own taxes and insurance.
- **Light entrepreneur:** you work like a freelancer but use an invoicing service (umbrella company) that takes care of taxes and administration. You do not need to register a business.

CUSTOMS ADVICE

Åland belongs to the EU and the customs union but is not part of the EU fiscal territory (VAT, excise). In taxation, Åland is therefore a third territory and in everyday language we say that Åland has a tax bor-

der. Therefore, goods trade with the rest of the EU, including the rest of Finland, is import and export and customs formalities are applied.

The Tax Border Office at Ålands Näringsliv offers free of charge customs advice on customs formalities and customs clearance for both individuals and businesses.

[Read more about the tax border office at Ålands Näringsliv \(in Swedish\).](#)

ENTREPRENEURIAL ARCHIPELAGO LIFE

The archipelago of Åland is known for its strong spirit of entrepreneurship. The initiative Företagsam skärgård (Enterprising Archipelago) supports small businesses, innovation, and sustainable living in the islands.

[More about the Företagsam skärgård project \(skargarden.ax\) \(in Swedish\).](#)



Leisure

LEISURE

Time to start mingling!

Once you've taken care of all the practicalities, it's time to focus on your social life. Sometimes it's hard to know where to start but joining an association and being active and making contacts yourself will go a long way. This will help you integrate into society faster.

[More tips for valuable leisure time.](#)

LIVING AND ENJOYING LIFE

Åland offers the best of both worlds: peaceful island life and a wide variety of experiences. Whether you live in the lively small town of Mariehamn or in one of the quiet villages across the archipelago, you are never far from the sea, nature trails, rocky shores or small beaches.

Beyond the unique landscape, Åland has a vibrant cultural life with events, concerts, exhibitions, sports activities, and local festivals throughout the year. Museums, art galleries and community centers invite both locals and visitors to get involved and explore.

The food scene is also something to enjoy. Åland has a wide range of cafés, bakeries and restaurants – from cosy, locally run lunch spots to high-end dining experiences featuring local ingredients like fish, apples, and black bread. You'll also find specialty shops, boutiques, and open-air markets, offering everything from handmade crafts to organic produce and second-hand treasures.

As a new resident in Åland, you'll find plenty to explore – from sailing trips and sea kayaking to cosy cafés, traditional markets, and guided walks through apple orchards and cultural heritage sites. Whether you're settling in or just starting to get to know your surroundings, there's always something new to discover.

Highlights and ideas for a day out:

- Stroll along Lilla holmen beach and bird park in Mariehamn
- Visit the Åland Maritime Museum or Kastelholm Castle
- Take a ferry to explore Kökar, Föglö, or other scenic islands
- Hike the trails at Ramsholmen, Getabergen or Bomarsund
- Join in local activities like summer concerts, harvest festival, or winter swims

Åland is a place where life moves at a relaxed pace – but with rich possibilities to be active, creative, and connected.



COMMUNITY LIFE – SPORT AND CULTURE

Åland has over 500 cultural and sports associations for those who want to be active or get in touch with other enthusiasts. There are also several companies that offer a variety of leisure and hobby activities in areas such as dance, horse riding and fitness.

Joining a sports club, exercise group or cultural association is a great way to stay active and meet new people. Ålanders enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities, and you'll likely find others who share your interests. Ask colleagues or classmates for tips!

[Find out more about leisure opportunities at Åland Living.](#)

[Find more associations and organizations in Åland in the sector guide at Aland.com \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Cultural associations and enthusiasts in Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Museums and attractions managed by the Government of Åland.](#)

[Member organizations of Ålands Idrott.](#)

VOLUNTEER AND INTEREST-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Many people find a sense of community by getting involved in volunteer organizations.

In Åland, these include:

[The Red Cross Åland \(Röda Korset på Åland\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Voluntary Rescue Service \(Frivilliga räddningstjänsten\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Save the Children \(Rädda Barnen Åland\) \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Emmaus Åland.](#)

[Folkhälsan på Åland \(in Swedish\).](#)

[The Multicultural Association \(Ålands mångkulturella förening\) \(on Facebook\).](#)

[Åland Nature and Environment \(Ålands Natur och Miljö\).](#)

SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS

In the Nordic countries, people have the right to move freely in forests and by water. However, you are not allowed to move around in privately owned fields, forests and beaches. The right to move freely is called the right of public access. The right of public access in Åland differs in some aspects from the right of public access in Sweden and the rest of Finland.

Note: In Mariehamn, pets must be kept on a leash in public areas, except in designated dog parks. Dogs are generally allowed in national parks and nature areas if leashed, but some trails may have restrictions – check before you visit.

[A more detailed description of the right of public access at the Government of Åland.](#)

[Visit Åland provides information on the right of public access.](#)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Åland enjoys freedom of religion. This means that everyone living in Åland has the right to choose their religion and practice it. It also means that you have the right to choose not to have any religion at all. No one can be forced to participate in religious practice against their will either.

Most people in Finland are Christian. The largest religious community is the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The Orthodox Church of Finland is the second largest religious community in Finland, but relatively small in Åland. Both have a special status, including the right to collect taxes. There are also other religious communities in Åland, for example a small but active Catholic parish.

OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS

National holidays are known as public holidays. This means that all government departments and many shops are closed or have shorter opening hours. Hospitals are always on call. Some of the public holidays are flag days, which means that the Åland flag is raised.

The flag flown at half-mast signifies mourning. Mourning flags are usually used to express private grief. The Ministry of the Interior may also recommend a public mourning flag for a person of national importance or in connection with a major tragedy.

The Åland flag is an important symbol of the autonomy. As the flag is a symbol of Åland, it is allowed to be flown every day from 8 am to 9 pm. Åland Flag Day is celebrated on the last Sunday in April.

[All about the Åland flag.](#)

[Find out more about the Finnish flag and coat of arms.](#)

Many national holidays are linked to Christianity. In addition to the official holidays, some days may be partial holidays.

Official holidays

- New Years Day (January 1)
- Epiphany (January 6)
- Good Friday
- Easter Day
- Easter Monday
- May Day (May 1)
- Ascension Day
- Åland Autonomy Day (June 9)
- Midsummers Eve
- Midsummer Day
- All Saints' Day
- Finnish Independence Day (December 6)
- Christmas Eve (December 24)
- Christmas Day (December 25)
- Boxing Day (December 26)
- New Years Eve (December 31)

WANT TO READ MORE ABOUT ÅLAND?

If so, you can find more information here:

[Aland.ax - the official website of Åland.](#)

[Regeringen.ax - Official website of the Government of Åland.](#)

[Visitaland.com - tourist information for visitors from Visit Åland.](#)

[Aland.com - telephone directory, business guide and tourist information.](#)

[Info Norden - the Nordic Council of Ministers' information service for people working, moving, studying, travelling or starting their own business in the Nordic region.](#)

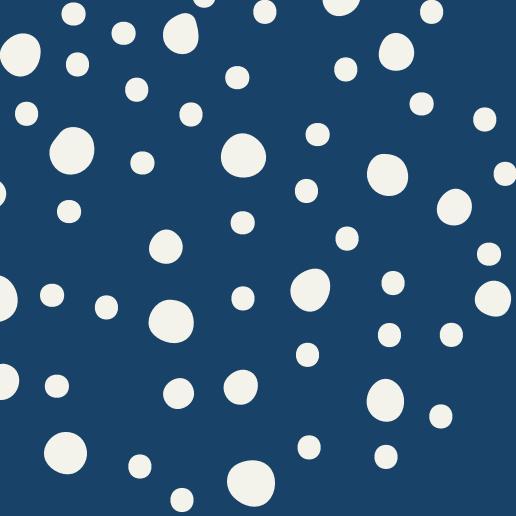
[Facts about Åland from Info Norden.](#)

[Visit Åland: Åland in brief.](#)

[Åland and the outside world.](#)

[ÅSUB answers common questions about Åland.](#)

[Facts about Åland from Varumärket Åland.](#)



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