

National service in Sweden

About enrolment and compulsory national service
for Swedish citizens living abroad



PLIKTVERKET

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Swedish National Defence concerns us all

In Sweden, everyone has a duty to do national service from the year in which he/she turns 16 until he/she turns 70. This applies to all Swedish citizens and everyone living in Sweden, even if he/she is not a Swedish citizen. Everyone has a duty of service in the event of a crisis or war.

In times of peace, the most important task of the Swedish Total Defence is to prepare Sweden for a serious crisis or war. Every year, young people therefore receive training within the military and civil defence – they do their national service.

Men have a duty to enrol

Young Swedish men have a duty to enrol from the year in which they turn 18 – but only if they are called by the Swedish National Service Administration. The duty to enrol ends in the year after the man turns 24. Men who have not enrolled before the year in which they turn 20 will not be called unless they themselves request it and there are special reasons.

Women can apply to do national service

Young women may volunteer to “enrol” and do national service. All women who are Swedish citizens can apply to take an entrance examination at the National Service Administration. The entrance examination corresponds to the men’s enrolment.

A woman must have turned 18, but ought not be older than 24 years, when taking the entrance examination. The results of the examination, the needs of the Armed Forces and the woman’s own wishes determine whether she is accepted for national service. Before the National Service Administration can enrol a woman for training, she must agree to do national service or service in non-combat areas. A woman who enrolls has the same rights and duties as a man.

How enrolment works

As from 2007, enrolment takes place in two stages. In the first stage, 17-year-old men answer questions about their health, interests and schooling in an examination of suitability on the National Service Administration’s website.

If the National Service Administration judges the man to be fit for national service, he will be called up for enrolment at the National Service Administration – the second stage of enrolment. He may not, however, enrol with us if we judge him not to be fit for national service.

Men enrol in the year in which they turn 18. The enrolment is carried out at the National Service Administration’s enrolment offices in Stockholm, Gothenberg and Kristianstad, and in Kramfors and Boden a few weeks every year. The enrolment consists of an enrolment examination, medical and physical tests, and an interview with a psychologist and with an enrolment officer.



Enrolment duties

The National Service Administration is responsible for the right young persons being selected for duties in Total Defence. Their enrolment results and the availability of training places determine whether the young persons will do national service and, if so, which training they receive. If the National Service Administration judges that someone does not meet the requirements for enrolment, he/she will not be selected.

Those who have been enrolled or have taken an entrance examination and enrolled for national service have a duty to complete the basic training and refresher training. They also have a duty to perform the task for which they have been trained during preparedness or in the event of war.

Unarmed service

Persons with a strong personal conviction against using arms against another person may apply to the National Service Administration for unarmed service.

This applies to...

...Swedish citizens who live abroad and are entered in a population register abroad

A man who lives abroad is not obliged to enlist for national service. This means that he will not be called up if he lives in a different country and is registered there. But a man who wants to enlist can contact the National Service Administration (Pliktverket) himself and apply for enlistment.

In order to enlist, applicants must be able to speak Swedish, be healthy and intend to reside in Sweden. Such enlistment applications must be sent to Pliktverket, Karolinen, SE-651 80, KARLSTAD, Sweden.

... Swedish citizens who live abroad and are entered in the Swedish population register.

According to the regulations on national registration, a citizen must be entered into the population register where he or she lives. People who reside in other countries must be registered in that country. But there are exceptions. For example, family members of SIDA employees (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) or of embassy employees may be entered in Sweden’s population register despite living in another country. The National Service Administration will call up a man for enlistment by sending a written summons in good time to his address as stated in the Swedish population register. If he cannot enlist for some reason, he must immediately notify the National Service Administration.

A man who is approaching the age for enlistment should inform the Administration about his stay abroad before he leaves Sweden. If he can verify that he will be abroad for more than six months due to studies or work, he will not be called up during this time.

A man can enlist when visiting Sweden

A man who lives abroad can enlist when on a temporary visit to Sweden. He should contact the National Service Administration in plenty of time to determine a suitable time for enlistment. Please note that the Administration does not conduct enlistment work during the summer and the Christmas and New Year public holidays.

If the man is not entered in Sweden’s population register, he must bring his Swedish passport when he visits the Administration for enlistment. The National Service Administration does not pay for travel to and from Sweden.

...Swedish citizens who move back to Sweden

When a man moves back to Sweden and enters his details into Sweden’s population register, he may be called up for national service. The duty to enlist for national service applies to Swedish men up to and including the year in which they turn 24. Those who have not enlisted before the year in which they turn 20 will not be called up, unless they request it themselves and there are special reasons for doing so.