

Social Security

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The social security system

Life sometimes brings difficult times, because of illness, an accident or unemployment, for example. In Switzerland, social security protects people in these situations. Thanks to the various social insurance schemes, social security ensures that you have enough money to live on. It also supports families and the elderly.

How does social security work?

Where does the money for the social schemes come from?

Social security money usually comes from working people and their employers.

Part of each employee's salary is deducted every month to replenish the funds of the social insurance schemes.

Money from healthy people pays for the sick. Money from young employees pays for old age insurance.

A large number of people pay for a small group of people who receive assistance.

This is called the solidarity principle.

Social insurance is often compulsory. Each month, part of the employee's salary is deducted to pay social insurance.

Self-employed people and the unemployed also pay the compulsory part.

Social insurance schemes are all regulated by laws.

The different types of social insurance support

Social insurance scheme support people in different ways:

- through pensions: money is paid out every month for years. For example, the OASI pension or the IV pension.
- through daily allowances: money is paid for each day not worked. For example, unemployment insurance.
- supplementary benefits (also known as: SBs): additional money is given to people who do not have enough money to live on.

Insurance schemes pay all or part of the medical costs in the event of illness or accident.

When do I receive financial assistance?

- after retirement (after the age of 65): this is the old age pension scheme (with the OASI, among others),
- in the event of death: husband or wife, and children receive the OASI,
- in the event of disability: if you have a disability and can no longer work, you receive an invalidity insurance (IV) pension,

But also:

- in the event of illness or accident (health and accident insurance),
- in the event of maternity (maternity insurance),
- in the event of unemployment (unemployment insurance),
- when you have children (family allowances).

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/social-security/the-social-security-system

Old age pension scheme (the 3 pillars)

In Switzerland the old age pension scheme ensures that pensioners have enough money to live on. There are three pillars of the old age pension scheme: old age and survivors' insurance (OASI), occupational pension provision (OPA) and private pension provision (the third pillar).

OASI: old age and survivors' insurance (the first pillar)

Old age and survivors' insurance (OASI) is the basic national pension scheme. The OASI pays a monthly pension to retired persons.

The amount of the pension depends on the number of years during which the person contributed as an employee. The amount also depends on the average salary the person was receiving.

If a person dies, the OASI also provides assistance to the spouse and children of the deceased person (widower's or widow's and orphans' pension).

All adults must contribute to the OASI. Each month, part of an employee's salary is deducted to pay the OASI. That's half of the contribution. The employer pays the other half.

Persons engaged in self-employment and unemployed persons must also pay their contributions. To do so, they must submit a request to the municipal OASI office.

Occupational pensions (the second pillar – OPA)

The OASI pension alone does not allow you to have as much money as before retirement. For this reason, there is also an occupational pension scheme (the OPA) for employees, which is mandatory about a certain annual income.

Occupational pension provision (OPA) is also known as the second pillar or the pension fund.

Each month, part of the employee's salary is deducted to pay the OPA. That's half of the contribution. The employer pays the other half.

When you retire, you receive the money saved in the pension fund (or OPA) in two possible forms:

- either in the form of a pension (which you receive every month)
- or in the form of a lump sum (which you receive in a single instalment).

You can choose the form you prefer.

In some cases, you can request the money earlier:

- when starting your own company;
- when moving outside Switzerland, subject to certain conditions;
- when you build a house or buy an apartment to live in.

Self-employed persons are not obliged to pay contributions. They can do so voluntarily. They are responsible for taking steps to do so themselves. To do this, they must apply to a pension fund.

Private retirement provision (third pillar)

It is possible to insure your old age even better: with the third pillar. This is private and individual retirement provision.

It is not mandatory, but it is recommended. It provides an additional reserve for retirement.

You can take out a third pillar with a bank or insurance company. You can deduct the amount paid for the third pillar (known as pillar 3a) from your taxes.

OASI supplementary benefits (or OASI SBs)

Sometimes, despite OASI and pension fund pensions, elderly people do not have enough money to pay for their basic needs (food, shelter, etc.).

Then they may be entitled to supplementary benefits (or SBs). They must apply for the SBs from the municipal OASI agency.

There are clear rules as to who is entitled and who is not entitled to supplementary benefits (SP).

**Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets,
brochures)**

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/social-security/old-age-pension-scheme-the-3-pillars

Invalidity insurance

Sometimes, due to health problems or disability, a person cannot or can no longer work. Or they have to reduce their working hours and work part-time. For a long time. Then we say: this person is disabled. This person is entitled to financial assistance from the invalidity insurance (IV), subject to certain conditions. The IV doesn't just pay out money. It also helps people return to work. This is called vocational reintegration.

Invalidity insurance

Invalidity insurance (IV) is a basic national insurance scheme.

All adults must contribute to IV. Each month, part of the employee's salary is deducted to pay the IV. That's half of the contribution. The employer pays the other half.

Self-employed persons and unemployed persons also have to pay their contributions.

To do so, they must submit a request to the OASI/IV agency in their municipality of residence.

Invalidity insurance (IV) services

Who is entitled to IV assistance?

Persons who cannot work (or only part-time) for at least one year due to health or disability (physical or mental) are entitled to IV assistance.

The assistance provided by the IV takes different forms: in the form of money or in the form of support. For example:

- through rehabilitation and reintegration measures (to train and return to work);
- through daily allowances;
- through pensions.

You only receive an invalidity pension if you can no longer be integrated into the world of work because of health problems or disability.

To receive an IV benefit you must apply to the cantonal social insurance institution (IV office).

IV supplementary benefits (IV SBs)

With their IV pension, some people do not have enough money to pay for their basic needs (food, accommodation, etc.).

These people may then be entitled to supplementary benefits (SBs). They must apply for SBs from the OASI/IV agency in their municipality of residence.

There are clear rules as to who is entitled to supplementary benefits and who is not.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/social-security/invalidity-insurance

Unemployment insurance

All employees are insured against unemployment. If you lose your job, you can receive financial assistance for a period of time. To do this, you must register with a regional employment centre (REC). The RECs advise unemployed people and help them find jobs.

Unemployment insurance

All employees must contribute to unemployment insurance (UI). Each month, part of the employee's salary is deducted to pay the UI. That's half of the contribution. The employer pays the other half.

If you lose your job, you receive unemployment benefits from an unemployment fund.

The amount of unemployment benefits depends on various criteria.

Are you self-employed?

Then you can't take out unemployment insurance.

Are you unemployed? What should you do?

Are you going to lose your job? Have you lost your job? Then register with the nearest Office régional de placement (ORP) (Regional Employment Centre (REC)) as soon as possible.

Register online on Jobroom.

Tip: Register as soon as you know you are going to lose your job. No later than the first day of unemployment.

The REC will give you information and support you.

Offices régionaux de placement (ORP) (Regional Employment Centres (RECs))

The Office régional de placement (ORP) (Regional Employment Centre (REC)) will advise you and help you find a job quickly.

If you receive unemployment benefits, you have to go to interviews. This is mandatory.

The REC also offers training and employment courses or programmes. Some are mandatory and some are not, depending on your personal circumstances.

Not worked in Switzerland yet? And you're looking for a job?

You can register for the REC. You will be given tips on how to write your CV, for example. But you will not receive unemployment benefits.

**Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets,
brochures)**

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/social-security/unemployment-insurance

Health and accident insurance

Anyone living in Switzerland must have health and accident insurance (HAI). This is mandatory. This social insurance covers part of the costs in the event of accident, sickness or maternity. You must take out health insurance within three months of arriving in Switzerland.

Health insurance (basic insurance – HAI)

All residents of Switzerland must take out health insurance themselves (basic health insurance – HAI). This is mandatory.

Arriving in Switzerland?

You have three months to take out health insurance.

If you fall ill during this period you will be paid later, after the fact.

Many health insurers offer basic insurance.

You are free to choose your health insurance provider.

For basic insurance, health insurers are obliged to accept anyone living in Switzerland, including sick people.

Basic insurance: what does it cover?

Basic insurance covers the costs in the event of illness, pregnancy and childbirth.

Benefits (everything the insurance pays) are set out in law. Please note that costs for dental treatment or glasses are not generally covered.

Insurance premiums

You pay a premium each month for your insurance.

These premiums have different prices depending on the health insurance fund and the insurance model. Tip: take the time to compare offers.

You can change your health insurance provider, but only once a year (before the end of November).

Do I have to contribute to the costs?

In Switzerland, before receiving money from a health insurance fund you first have to pay a **deductible** yourself.

There are several possible deductibles: e.g. CHF 300, CHF 500, CHF 1000 or CHF 2,500. You choose the amount of deductible you want. You must first pay this amount yourself.

Above that the insurance pays part of the costs. Insurance pays 90% of the costs.

The remaining 10% you have to pay yourself.

This remaining 10% is called the “retention fee”.

You pay a maximum of CHF 700 per year for an adult and CHF 350 per year for a child.

If there are any more costs above that, the insurance pays for everything.

Which deductible should you choose?

If you are **not often** sick, choose a high deductible. Your premiums will be cheaper.

If you are **often** sick, choose the lower deductible.

But then your premiums will be higher.

Accident insurance

Do you work 8 hours a week or more for an employer?

Then you are automatically insured by your employer against accidents during work and leisure time.

The amount of the premium is deducted directly from your salary.

If you work less than eight hours per week, your employer insures you only against occupational accidents.

You must insure yourself against non-occupational accidents that occur during your free time.

If you are self-employed or not gainfully employed, you must also take out accident insurance with your health insurer.

Persons who are self-employed may also take out accident insurance with another insurance company.

Cheaper health insurance premiums

People on low wages can apply for a lower health insurance premium.

This also known as asking for a reduction in health insurance premiums.

This is only possible for basic insurance. To do this you must apply to the Jura cantonal OASI office by 31 December.

The Jura cantonal OASI office may or may not accept, depending on certain conditions.

If the application is successful, the individual will pay lower premiums the following year. For all information on premium reductions, contact the Jura cantonal OASI office.

Supplementary insurance

If you want to have more care paid for by insurance, you can take out supplementary insurance. For example, if you want natural medicine sessions, or a private room in hospital, or cheaper dental care.

Supplementary insurance is not compulsory. It is optional.

Many health insurers offer supplementary insurance. For these types of insurance, health insurers are not obliged to accept everyone. In general, to be accepted you have to be in good health.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/social-security/health-and-accident-insurance

Parents and family: leave and financial assistance

When a child is born, working women are entitled to 14 weeks of paid maternity leave. Fathers are entitled to at least two weeks of paternity leave. Families receive family allowances and training allowances for each child.

Maternity leave (or maternity allowance)

Women who are employed at the time of the birth of their child are entitled to 14 weeks of paid maternity leave. During this period, they will receive at least 80% of their salary. Those who are unemployed women or cannot work must contact the unemployment fund or the cantonal OASI fund. They must ask if they are entitled to paid maternity leave.

After birth mothers are not allowed to work for eight weeks. This is a law to protect mothers.

Paternity leave

After the birth of their child, fathers (or second mothers) are entitled to two weeks (14 days) of paid paternity leave. Fathers (or second mothers) can choose how to take these 14 days: either all at once or on individual days.

They must take them within six months of the birth of the child.

Family allowances

Parents receive family allowances for each child.

child allowances are paid until the child reaches the age of 16.

Are the children engaged in studies after compulsory school? In such cases parents receive a **training allowance** for their children up to the age of 25. This allowance replaces the child allowance.

Good to know

All families are entitled to family allowances. It does not matter if the parents are employed, self-employed, not working, or even both unemployed.

Allowances are paid monthly. The amount of family allowances varies from one canton to another.

For more information, contact your employer or the cantonal OASI office.

Money when a child arrives

In Switzerland, several cantons pay a **birth allowance**.

The canton of Jura is one of these. This is one-time financial assistance to welcome the baby.

Parents who adopt a child under the age of 8 receive a **adoption allowance**.

For more information, contact your employer or the cantonal OASI office.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/social-security/parents-and-family-leave-and-financial-assistance

Social assistance

For people who have too little money to live on, social assistance provides support. The aim of this support is to help them become independent and self-sufficient. Social assistance is not insurance. It is state aid.

Social assistance

Are you in a difficult situation or do you have serious financial worries? Do you have very little money to live on?

Social assistance can help you.

This assistance covers the basic needs of living here in Switzerland.

In addition to financial assistance, it also offers support from a social worker.

The aim of social assistance is to help people regain their financial and social independence to lead a life with dignity.

If you receive enough other assistance (e.g. unemployment benefits, a pension, a salary or parental support), then social assistance is not paid. Social assistance also does not repay debts.

Apply for social assistance

To apply for social assistance, contact the regional social service in your district.

You must provide information about your income and wealth, among other things.

Then the service will assess your application. And the canton will determine the type of assistance and the amount it will give based on your situation.

Social assistance may ask you to take action. They may set conditions. If you do not comply with these, the amount you receive may be reduced.

It is mandatory to attend interviews with your social worker.

And you must commit to doing everything you can to improve your situation.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/social-security/social-assistance