

RELOCATION GUIDE TO

CZECH REPUBLIC



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INTRO

Welcome to our relocation guide to the Czech Republic!

This guide contains some practical information to help you with moving to and living in the Czech Republic.

Please note that all information in this document is gathered from external, reliable sources, mentioned at the bottom of each section. Yet, we cannot give full guarantees about the quality of the used sources and the completeness, accuracy and up-to-date nature of the content. Thus, before making decisions or taking actions, make sure you always check important or critical information with the responsible authorities and do take possible changes since the publication of this document into account.

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Whenever you would discover some missing key-information that would be interesting to add in this relocation guide, feel free to let us know.

We also do confirm that our company does not have any commercial bindings with any of the companies or organizations mentioned in this guide.

We hope this guide provides you some useful insights and we wish you all the best and a lot of success in your new challenge !

4/21/2021

GENERAL INFORMATION EXPATS

Cost of living

The cost of living in Czech Republic and even Prague, its capital, is fairly low compared to other countries and major cities in Europe. Prague ranked 97th out of 209 cities in Mercer's 2019 Cost of Living Survey, ranking well below cities such as London, Dublin and Milan.

However, as with anywhere in the world, there are bound to be things that are not so inexpensive – among others, the cost of entertainment and healthcare is similar to its European neighbours rather than cheaper.

Accommodation in Czech Republic

Generally, the cost of accommodation and utilities in Czech Republic is average compared to the rest of Europe, although the cost of accommodation is rising. Accommodation in Prague, in particular, is more in demand and therefore more expensive than in smaller towns or cities.

While Czech people have the option of renting from municipalities, which offer controlled rents, expats usually have to look for privately owned flats (Czech abbreviation: OV). Rental prices there are not controlled and can vary considerably according to location. On the bright side, these apartments are usually well kept and offer their tenants all kinds of modern conveniences.

Transportation in Czech Republic

Expats should not find transport in Czech Republic to be a major expense as both public transport and petrol are relatively inexpensive. Expats can purchase a small car for a reasonable price, although thanks to a well-developed, reliable and inexpensive public transport system, many expats (especially those living in Prague) may find this is not a necessity.

There are a variety of different passes available for the public transport system in Czech Republic and expats can get excellent value for money if they buy a monthly pass and use public transport regularly.

Czech Republic is centrally located at the heart of Europe and boasts excellent transportation links both within its borders and to its neighbouring countries.

By air, Czech Republic can be reached via several international airports. The biggest is Václav Havel Airport near Prague, but other international airports can be found at Brno, Karlovy Vary, and Mošnov (near Ostrava), among other places.

Czech Republic has an extensive railway network, connecting the country to the rest of Europe. Long-distant coach services also offer a fast and inexpensive way of travelling. The highways are generally well maintained, while smaller roads through small towns or villages may not be of such a high quality. To use Czech highways you must purchase a vignette for your vehicle to show that you have paid the tolls.

Cost of food in Czech Republic

Groceries are not expensive in Czech Republic and expats from Western Europe will find themselves spending much less money on food than they used to. Some common grocery stores in Czech Republic include Tesco, Bill and Albert.

Eating out at restaurants in Czech Republic costs around the same as it would in the rest of Europe. Alcohol and tobacco, however, are less expensive, especially in the locally brewed beer for which the country is renowned.

When walking around Prague, you will see restaurants, cafés, and pubs on each corner. The choice is huge from cheap pubs with local food to fancy restaurants which can be a great choice for special occasions. Regarding the Czech cuisine, opinions vary. Those who love meat and sauces will probably love it. For vegetarians and fans of healthy eating, it can be hard to find tasty traditional Czech food.

The variety of cuisines which you can taste in Prague is enormous. Thanks to the numerous Vietnamese community, you will find many Asian restaurants. There are cheap Vietnamese bistros, fancy Thai restaurants, Indian restaurants offering all you can eat: buffet, authentic sushi places, Korean BBQ, or Indonesian restaurants. In case you prefer Tex-Mex, there are several Mexican restaurants and many burger bistros. Besides this, of course, Prague offers other European cuisines like Italian, French, Spanish, or Greek.

Due to the high competitiveness, the quality of restaurants in Prague is outstanding. If you avoid overpriced restaurants in the touristic areas, you can find great places where to eat for a reasonable price.

Typical Czech dishes

Czech dishes are a mixed pedigree of influences: pork schnitzel (*řízek*) from Vienna; spicy beef goulash (*guláš*) from Hungary; sauerkraut (*zeli*) from Germany. Game – rabbit, deer and wild boar – and freshwater fish like trout round out the menu. The humble potato is given a number of tasty treatments, including roasted and spiked with garlic and bacon. Fried cheese (*Smažený sýr*) is a wedge of deep-fried edam. The national dish is *Svíčková*, a beef sirloin in gravy, topped with cranberry jam and a dollop of cream. Baked goods typically utilize the season's bounty: apples, cherries and plums turn up in *bublanina*, a yellow sponge cake, *štrůdl* and *koláč*, pastry topped with fruit or poppy seed (*mák*) paste.

Schooling system in Czech Republic

Public education in Czech Republic is inexpensive but, because of the language barrier, most expats send their children to private or international schools. Unfortunately, these schools have notoriously high fees. Expat parents moving for work purposes are advised to try to negotiate with their employer for an allowance for this as part of their employment package.

School attendance is compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 15. Foreigners can request free Czech language tutoring for their children, which, if they are young enough, might well enable them to take part in Czech primary education. Foreign language lessons start in year four; the languages most commonly taught at Czech schools are English, German, French, and Russian.

Healthcare system

There are no particular health risks for expats in Czech Republic; healthcare facilities generally provide very high standards of treatment and care.

Czech Republic has a good infrastructure of public and private hospitals and doctor's practices, and everybody who is employed in the country automatically becomes a member of the general health

insurance system. Some big international companies may offer you a private health insurance plan instead of, or in addition to, general health insurance.

Patients can choose their doctors, although in non-emergency cases, they may be refused if the doctor's workload is too big to be able to provide adequate care. You do not need a referral to consult specialists. The most important thing to remember before picking your doctor is that you can only register with one who has a contract with your insurance company.

General health insurance is provided by nine different, independent funds. Every person is free to choose their fund and health care provider, to which they pay mandatory contributions.

Social security consists of pension, sickness, and unemployment benefits. Everybody working in Czech Republic pays contributions based on their income. As of March 2017, the combined amount of social security contributions is 45% of an employee's gross salary, 34% of which are payable by the employer leaving 11% to be paid by the employee.

In case you need **emergency treatment**, you can go to your nearest hospital with an Emergency department. If you do not live near a hospital, there will most likely be an on-call doctor serving a certain area or working in a special doctor's office.

Dial 155 to call an ambulance or alternatively dial the general EU emergency number, 112 (with guaranteed English-speaking operators), to be connected with the police, fire department, or emergency medical service.

Doctor's prescriptions should be taken to a pharmacy within one week of being issued, otherwise they become invalid. Prescriptions from emergency services are valid for one day only; prescriptions for antibiotics can be picked up within three days.

Sports in Prague

Indulging in sports can be a great opportunity for meeting new people, relaxing your body and soul. Prague offers many sports activities, and even those who prefer to watch a sports match have many options.

Team sports in Prague

Sports activities are a great way to spend time with your friends or to make new ones! It is always desirable to do physical exercise and stay fit. Go to play volleyball, football, floorball, tennis, or basketball. You can either join a professional club, either play with amateur groups. For example, football and volleyball are quite common sports. You can be sure that somebody around you is part of the group like that. Ask if there is a free place in the team, and join them. Usually, this is not paid, only money for rental is collected. Do not make any plans after the game. It is common to go for one or two beers after the game.

Individual sports in Prague

As an individual, you always have a more significant choice. Prague's offer is enormous; the only limitation for outdoor sports can be the weather. There are several cycling routes which are used for jogging, cycling, or inline skating. One of the longest ones starts on the riverside under Vyšehrad and goes out of the city to Zbraslav. Another popular route is alongside Trója canal, or in Stromovka park. In case of bad weather, do some indoor activity.

There are numerous gyms where you can do exercise alone or hire a fitness trainer. Many places offer group classes like Fitbox, pilates, TRX, Bosu, Zumba, Tabata, etc. For people who love swimming, there are many options as well. Podolí, and Šutka are two swimming pools with a length of 50 metres. Other swimming pools are around 20 – 25 metres long.

In the winter, you can try ice skating, which can be big fun.

As everywhere else, yoga is trendy too. You can find yoga centres around the whole of Prague, all of them offering different kinds of yoga. Relax and slow down with Bikram yoga, power yoga, hatha yoga, or non-traditional aero yoga, and acro yoga.

Multisport card in Prague

Check the possibility to get a Multisport card from your employer. It costs around 800 CZK per month. Sometimes it is fully covered by the employer. It allows you to get one free entrance per day into the specified gyms and sports centres. If you like to do sport, it can save you a lot of money. Unfortunately, the only way to get it is through an employer as a benefit. In case your employer does not offer it, ask your friends, maybe they have a possibility to get an additional card for members of the family or friends.

If you still can't get it, check which gym is the most suitable for you and buy a monthly pass or membership, where you can get discounts or collect bonuses. Usually, the lessons are cheaper in the morning and around lunchtime. The evenings are the most popular time for a visit – for this reason, fitness centres and gyms charge the highest price

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VISA REQUIREMENTS IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Since Czech Republic joined the EU in 2004, citizens of all other EU member states enjoy the freedom to move to Czech Republic without a visa.

Citizens of most other countries must apply for a visa before they move. There are, however, roughly 40 states which are exempt from visa requirements if their nationals stay no longer than 90 days and their visit is not employment or business related.

To work in Czech Republic, a visa is always required except for prospective employees or Blue Card holders and citizens of the EU, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland.

If you are not a citizen of one of these countries, you must apply for your visa at a Czech mission abroad well before your move.

There are two main categories of visa: [long-term and short-term \(Schengen\) visas](#). Both can be issued for employment purposes, but they do not replace a work permit. To work in Czech Republic, you must apply for a permit at a Czech Labour Office before applying for a visa.

Expats should be aware that visa laws differ according to nationality. The applicant's nationality will determine the processes they need to follow and which visas they are eligible for in Czech Republic.

Schengen Short-Term Visa

Czech Republic is a Schengen country, so nationals of countries that are part of the Schengen Agreement need not apply for visit visas for a stay of 90 days or less. This includes citizens of the EU and the EEA as well as Switzerland, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

A Schengen visa entitles its holder to stay within the Schengen area for 90 days over a 180-day period. Assuming Czech Republic is your main destination within the Schengen area, you should apply for your visa at a Czech diplomatic mission abroad at least two weeks before traveling.

Expats not eligible for visa-free entry will need to apply for a Schengen visa prior to arrival at their nearest Czech embassy or consulate in order to be granted entry to Czech Republic.

This visa can either be for the purpose of tourism, business, culture, sport, study, scientific research, employment or training.

While in the country, expats can apply to extend the validity of their Schengen visa by a further 90 days.

For a short-term Schengen visa, applicants will need to fill out an application form and provide the following:

- A passport photo
- A valid passport
- Proof of travel health insurance
- Biometric data, such as fingerprints
- Document proving the purpose of their journey, their accommodation plans, their financial means and their intention to leave the territory

Long-Term Visa

Long-term visas are intended for applicants who expect to stay **more than 90 days** in Czech Republic for **health, culture, sport, family, study, research, or entrepreneurship purposes**. People who plan to **stay longer** in Czech Republic, including for university or employment, should apply for a **long-term residence permit**.

To apply for a regular long-term visa, applicants need to fill out an application form and provide the following:

- Two passport-sized pictures
- Valid passport
- Proof of travel health insurance
- Biometric data, such as fingerprints
- Copy of their criminal record, from their home country and any state they lived for more than six months in the last three years
- Documents proving the purpose of their stay, their accommodation and their financial means

Long-term residence permit

Long-term residence permit is available for people who have been living in Czech Republic for more than 90 days and intend to live in Czech Republic for more than a year (including time spent with a former visa).

The application must be filed in person, and requires a completed [application form](#) and supporting information, dependent on the reasons for your longer stay. Most applications will require:

- Passport
- Proof of accommodation
- A photo
- Proof of financial means
- Proof of health insurance

Long-term residence permits are renewable and are granted for a maximum of two years.

Those intending to work will have to apply for an Employee Card or a Blue Card. These are primarily work permits but serve a dual purpose as long-term residence permits. A Blue Card is issued for positions requiring a high qualification, while an Employee Card is issued for positions that do not require a high qualification.

Spouses and family members looking to join visa-holders will need to apply for a Schengen visa. Then, once they are in Czech Republic, they can apply for either a residency permit – if the family member already in Czech Republic is a EU national – or a long-term visa – if the family member is not. For that, the spouse or family member will need marriage or birth certificates translated into Czech, along with the other information specified above.

Once granted the long-term visa, applicants and any family members need to inform the Foreigners' Police Office about the place and length of their stay in Czech Republic within three business days.

Residence permits

For EU citizens

If you are a EU citizen (or citizen of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein or Switzerland) you have the right to apply for a “certificate of temporary residence” at the Ministry of Interior. The certificate is valid for an unlimited period and issued as a free-standing document. EU residents applying for residence in Czech Republic are also assigned a *rodné cislo* (birth number). To apply, submit an application and the following:

- Proof of 5-year continuous residence in Czech Republic
- Proof of accommodation in Czech Republic
- Passport
- Passport-sized photos
- Proof of non-criminal record

For non-EU citizens

If you are from a country whose citizens do not need a visa for a short stay, such as the U.S., you can stay for no more than 3 months within any 6-month period from the date of first entry in the Schengen zone.

If you intend in staying in the country longer than 90 days, you should apply for a long-term visa, or a long-term residence permit, at a Czech Embassy, based on the purpose of your stay, i.e. work, study, business, etc...

You should automatically receive a *rodné cislo* (birth, or registration number) if you are applying for long-term or permanent residence.

A long-term visa is based on your legal purpose of stay. If your purpose is employment, you must be hired by an employer, who will provide you with a work permit, which thus becomes your purpose of stay. You also need the following documents:

- passport valid for at least 3 months beyond the stay. Two empty pages in your passport for the visa.
- Two passport-sized photos
- Proof of accommodation
- Proof of medical insurance
- A document similar to a criminal record extract issued by your home country, as well as from any other country in which you have legally resided for more than six months in the past three years.

Once you have gathered all your documentation, make an appointment at a Czech embassy or consulate abroad. If you are already in Czech Republic, Dresden (Germany), Vienna (Austria) and Bratislava (Slovakia) are nearby. After re-entering Czech Republic with your long-term visa, you have three business days to register at the Foreign Police in the region where you live. Actual processing times vary.

Tips: Going to the Ministry of Interior to pick up all forms is suggested. Submitted documents cannot be copies or internet printouts: only original and notarized copies are valid (note: you don't get anything back, so always provide notarized copies). If the documents aren't in Czech, they must be officially translated. Also, no documentation can be older than six months. This applies to both EU and

non-EU citizens. After having lived in the country for five years on an uninterrupted basis, EU and non-EU foreign nationals can apply for permanent residence in Czech Republic.

Work Permits

EU/EEA citizens enjoy the freedom to settle and work in Czech Republic.

All other nationalities, however, must obtain a work permit before they can legally take up employment. As a general rule, foreigners can be employed in Czech Republic under two conditions: the employer has obtained a permit from the Labour Office to employ foreigners and the employee has been granted a work permit for the job in question.

Work permits are issued by the Labour Office, and require a work permit application, an administrative fee, and information about the job offer, including the potential employer, the position, the place of work, and how long the job will last for. These are usually issued only for internships or shorter work periods, and both Blue Cards and Employee Cards are used for regular long-term employment.

Blue Cards are for highly qualified foreigners who will work in Czech Republic for more than three months and are sponsored by an employer. If approved by the Ministry of Interior, Blue Cards automatically come with a long-term visa. Applicants must apply before arriving in Czech Republic, with:

- An application form
- Two passport-sized photos
- Valid passport
- Proof of travel health insurance
- Biometric data, such as fingerprints
- Copy of their criminal record, from their home country and state they lived in for more than six months in the last three years

They will also require supporting documents such as:

- Employment contract that is valid at least one year and includes a salary that is at least 1.5 times the average gross yearly salary in Czech Republic
- A university degree certification
- Proof of accommodation

Blue card and Employment Card

The **EU blue card** was introduced to provide EU countries with the possibility to compensate for skills shortages. If your skill set or qualifications are in demand in Czech Republic, you can apply for a job listed in the register of vacancies eligible for blue cards; you can also check whether a job you have found elsewhere qualifies for a blue card. One condition is that your new gross annual salary must amount to at least 1.5 times the average gross annual salary in Czech Republic.

Blue cards are usually only granted for jobs where no suitable candidate could be found in Czech Republic or in the EU. Applicants must have completed a higher (vocational) education, attending their respective educational institutions for at least three years.

A blue card is valid for the duration of your employment contract plus three months, but no longer than a maximum of two years.

Employee Cards are for foreigners who will work in Czech Republic for more than three months, but who may not be highly qualified or work full-time – jobs only need to offer 15 hours per week. These cards also come with a long-term visa, and they require the same application material as the Blue Card, except that, in place of university qualifications, they ask for proof of financial means. Also, your employment contract does not need to be for a specific length of time or amount of money, if you are applying for an Employee Card.

Registration of Foreigners

Non-EU citizens moving to Prague have to register at the Foreign Police Department or at an office of the Ministry of Interior within three working days of arrival.

Within 30 working days of entering the country, all foreigners are required to register at either their local Foreigners' Police Inspectorate or at an office of the Ministry of Interior. The difference between EU and non-EU citizens is that EU citizens do not need a residence permit (but can get one if needed), while all others may need to apply for a long-term resident permit.

Prospective employee or blue card holders must also present themselves at an office of the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of Interior to provide their biometric data within three days of arrival. This can be completed at the same time as registration. The card can be collected for a fee of 2,500 CZK paid in the form of revenue stamps, which can be purchased at the post office.

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HEALTHCARE SYSTEM & HEALTH INSURANCE

The standard of healthcare in the Czech Republic is generally high – in fact, the country’s healthcare scheme has been praised as one of the best in EU. The affordability and standard of medical treatment has even seen the country emerge as a popular destination for medical tourism in Europe.

It is compulsory to have health insurance in Czech Republic, whether through a public or private health insurance provider. Czech citizens, residents, and anyone working for a Czech employer are automatically insured under the country’s public healthcare system and pay monthly contributions. Other long-term visitors will have to use a private insurance company and short-term travellers are expected to have appropriate travel insurance.

The healthcare system

Czech Republic provides free medical care to Czech citizens, permanent residents and foreigners working for a local company through compulsory contributions to an approved Czech health insurance company. The Czech healthcare system consists of public and private health care centres.

Public healthcare in Czech Republic

Many doctors in public hospitals are Western-trained and able to speak English, though this is not always the case. Some expats using the public sector complained of doctors being short-tempered or unsympathetic, but this is largely due to the high turnover of patients and short consultation times and shouldn’t be taken personally. Although Czech Republic healthcare is excellent and heavily subsidised, patients might experience long waiting periods before receiving treatment.

Public hospitals are managed by the government are generally very well equipped. Most of them can accommodate up to 1,000 patients. You can find public hospitals in all major cities. District hospitals are found in densely populated areas.

The country also hosts smaller clinics that can accommodate up to 200 patients. However, these only provide basic health care services, along with emergency services. These also have a surgery department, as well as an in-patient department.

Private healthcare in Czech Republic

Czech private medical care is excellent and the staff at private hospitals are highly qualified. Although private healthcare tends to be more expensive than public healthcare in Czech Republic, many private hospitals are better equipped to cater to expat patients. This is because private medical centres have a higher proportion of English-speaking staff and because private clinics have a more service-oriented approach to providing medical care. A further advantage is that patients often do not have to wait as long to receive treatment as they might at public hospitals.

Who is insured?

Like most countries in the European Union, the Czech Republic has something known as the universal health care system. There are specifics and peculiarities to the application of the system in each country but, in general, this means that basic medical services are free for all.

To make this possible, those legally residing in the country make contributions to the system.

Similarly, the public health insurance system in the Czech Republic is based on compulsory contributions of insured residents. In the case of foreign nationals legally working in the Czech Republic, their employers will pay health insurance contribution automatically.

With that, families of legal employees and all others will need to purchase private health care insurance.

If you hold the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), this will cover basic medical expenses including emergencies. However, your EHIC card will not cover medical care in a private hospital or non-medical expenses like an emergency flight back to your home country. This is why it is generally recommended to purchase travel insurance prior to visiting the country, which will cover more complex medical procedures.

The following persons are obligatorily insured:

- People with the permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic
- Employees of employers based in the territory of the Czech Republic
- self-employed persons from other EU - countries, active in the territory of Czech Republic and covered by Czech social security legislation
- employees from other EU states, working on Czech territory for employer based in other EU-country, if they are covered by Czech social security legislation
- non-active family members of migrant workers from other EU states insured in the Czech Republic

Who pays the contributions?

1. **The employee and employer** pay altogether 13.5% of the gross income of the employee. The employee pays 4.5% and the employer 9% of it. Overall amount of contribution is paid to the fund of employee by his/her employer.
2. **People without a taxable income** (ex: housewives) pay their contributions themselves.
3. **The State** pays the contributions for unemployed, pensioners, students, women on the maternity leave, women taking care of one child younger than 7 years old or more children younger than 15 years old, prisoners, soldiers and people receiving social security benefits.

The State pays the contributions for 58% of the population. The amount of state contribution is regulated by Czech government.

Every health insurance company collects the contributions directly from employers, employees, self-employed and people without a taxable income.

The State pays the contributions to the so called Redistribution Fund. The collected contributions are divided to the individual health insurance companies.

Health Insurance Structure

The Czech health insurance system is administered by seven health insurance companies.

The largest health insurance company is the state-owned **Všeobecná zdravotní pojišťovna (VZP)** – *The General Health Insurance Company* – and it covers approximately 60% of the population. Its ability to pay is guaranteed by the State.

Czech citizens, registered foreign residents and employees of companies based in the country must make regular contributions to this fund. It is mandatory for employers to pay a portion of the monthly

fee with the employee contributing the remainder of the fee. Under this scheme, expats are also usually required to pay a small stipend for treatment received.

Each insured person can change his/her health insurance company twice a year.

Health insurance companies are not allowed to make profit.

Czech Republic has reciprocal healthcare agreements with other countries. In particular, EU citizens have access to free medical care in Czech Republic through their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

Healthcare covered by health insurance

- preventive care
- diagnostic care
- ambulant and hospital care, including rehabilitation and care of chronic diseases
- dental care
- medicines and medical aids
- patient transport
- spa care

Only the basic material and treatment is paid in the case of a dental treatment.

Only a small part of healthcare is excluded from the health insurance, for example cosmetic surgery without any health reason.

Medical aids are paid from the health insurance fully or partially.

Doctors and conditions

On your arrival, you are required to designate a reference doctor, paediatrician, dentist and gynaecologist. You are allowed to change your general practitioner or specialist every three months. Regardless of your choice, both you and your doctor must be registered with the same insurance.

You can also consult a specialist without a prior recommendation from your general practitioner. However, this implies that there will be no follow up between both parties. You may thus have to consult two different doctors for the same health issue.

Emergency

Emergency services in Czech Republic are generally good, as are ambulance response times. In the case of an emergency, dial 112 to be connected to the EU emergency line. This guarantees an English-speaking operator. Otherwise, Czech medical emergency services can be reached on 155.

Preventive health care

The Czech Republic is very vigilant regarding health issues. Therefore, companies make room for preventive care organizations. Their mission is to ensure the prevention of occupational accidents and the protection of employees against diseases and health hazards at their place of work via several measures: counselling, routine checks on the premises, preventive health consultations, among others.

Pharmacies and medication

Pharmacies, some of which can be found attached to hospitals, are widely available in Czech Republic with some open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You will find around 2,500 pharmacies across the country.

Some drugs are only available upon prescription while others are available at the counter.

Patients are immediately covered by their insurance. You can thus have to pay either part of the price, or whole, or even nothing, depending on the conditions.

The validity of prescriptions varies according to the type of medication and illness:

- 24 hours for a prescription issued by the emergency service
- 5 days for an antibiotics prescription
- 3 days for an opiates prescription
- 1 week for other prescriptions.

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SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Anyone working in the Czech Republic must be part of the public Social Security system. This system comprises sickness insurance, pensions and contribution to the state employment policy. Contributions to the social security system are automatically deducted from employees' salaries, and must be paid individually by self-employed individuals. Sickness insurance is optional for the self-employed.

Sickness insurance

The sickness insurance system provides coverage for working people in the form of financial benefits when they are temporarily unable to work due to illness, injury or quarantine, caring for a family member, pregnancy and maternity or caring for a child.

All employees are obliged to participate in the public sickness insurance system, unlike self-employed persons, for whom sickness insurance is optional. Sickness insurance remains in force for the whole period of employment.

The following 4 benefits are covered by sickness insurance:

- Sickness benefit
- Maternity benefit (paid maternity leave)
- Attendance allowance (when you miss work to look after a family member)
- Compensatory benefit in pregnancy and maternity (if you cannot continue in your usual position due to pregnancy)

To claim a benefit/allowance, the employee must deliver the application for a benefit/allowance (usually issued by his/her general medical doctor) to his/her employer, who sends it, together with other documents, to the appropriate District Social Security Administration.

For further information please click [here](https://www.cssz.cz/web/en). <https://www.cssz.cz/web/en>

Pension system

The Czech pension system is divided into two "pillars". The first pillar consists of mandatory basic pension insurance for all economically active individuals. You do not have to be a Czech citizen to be entitled to participate in the pension insurance scheme. All foreigners who are working in the Czech Republic are required to pay Social Security contributions, i.e. the first pillar of the pension scheme.

The second pillar consists of voluntary complementary pension insurance, to which the state contributes a certain amount based on the amount that the insured person pays into the scheme. This second pillar is provided by commercial insurance companies. Participation in the second pillar is voluntary.

The following pensions are provided from the basic pension insurance fund:

- old-age pension
- disability pension
- widow/widower pension
- orphan pension

If you are entitled to one of these pensions, the amount you will receive depends on how long you were insured for, and the total contributions you paid.

The decision about the entitlement to a pension, its amount and payment shall be made by the [Czech Social Security Administration](#) (*Česká správa sociálního zabezpečení*).

Professional assistance in the matters of pension insurance shall be provided to individuals and organizations by [district social security administrations](#) (*okresní správa sociálního zabezpečení = OSSZ*).

If you are a EU citizen or have at any time in your life been registered in the public Social Security system in another EU country, your contributions there can count towards a Czech pension (similarly, your Czech first pillar contributions will count towards your pension in another EU country).

Further information [here](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/retire-abroad/state-pensions-abroad/index_en.htm) (https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/retire-abroad/state-pensions-abroad/index_en.htm) and [here](https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=849) (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=849>).

For information about receiving a Czech pension when living abroad please see [here](https://www.cssz.cz/en/pension-insurance/conditions-for-paying-out-of-pension-benefits-to-persons-with-a-permanent-place-of-residence-outside.htm) (<https://www.cssz.cz/en/pension-insurance/conditions-for-paying-out-of-pension-benefits-to-persons-with-a-permanent-place-of-residence-outside.htm>).

State social support benefits

State social support benefits should be seen as social protection provided by state for families. Entitlement to the benefit is admitted on the income level of family.

These benefits include:

- child allowance
- housing allowance
- parental allowance
- birth grant
- funeral grant

Applications for state social support benefits are handled by the contact points of the Regional Branches of the [Labour Office of the Czech Republic](#) based on the (permanent) residence of the person entitled to the benefit. Further information about these benefits can be found on the website of the [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#), or please contact your nearest EURAXESS office with your question and we will give you advice.

Child benefits

This chapter explains the benefits that parents of children can receive in the Czech Republic. This includes support before birth, which some mothers are eligible for, and care for new-born and older children.

Other EU nationals are eligible for such benefits if they meet the same conditions as Czech nationals. Some benefits are identical for all parents, regardless of income, while others consider the individual economic situation of the family.

The benefits explained are the following:

- pregnancy and maternity compensatory benefit (*vyrovnávací příspěvek v těhotenství a mateřství*);
- parental allowance (*rodičovský příspěvek*);
- maternity benefit (*peněžitá pomoc v mateřství*);
- paternity benefit (*dávka otcovské poporodní péče - otcovská*)
- child allowance (*přídavek na dítě*).

- ✚ **Pregnancy and maternity compensatory benefit (*vyrovnávací příspěvek v těhotenství a mateřství*)** is provided to pregnant women and mothers of new born children who are employed. It compensates for lost earnings if women are reassigned to a lower paid position because of pregnancy or maternity and is paid from sickness insurance.

Performing specific occupations is explicitly prohibited to women during pregnancy and the early stages of maternity.

A treating physician may declare other occupations too risky in individual cases of pregnancy or maternity. If an employed woman is reassigned to a lower paid position due to her pregnancy or maternity, she is eligible for compensatory benefit.

Employed women are also eligible if her working conditions have to be adapted because of her pregnancy or maternity, such as shorter working hours or exemption from night work.

Eligible women should fill in the application form for the pregnancy and maternity compensatory benefit together with their employer who will then send it to the District Social Security Administration (Okresní správa sociálního zabezpečení) competent for their place of business.

- ✚ **Parental allowance (*rodičovský příspěvek*)** is the primary form of support for families with small children. Specifically, it is for parents caring for the youngest child (up to the age of four) in the family. The child's biological mother or father, a court-ordered guardian or adoptive parent is eligible for this benefit; only one parent can apply.

Parental income has no effect on eligibility.

Parental allowance can be claimed if the child attends pre-school. Children under two can attend pre-school for 92 hours per month at most, but there is no limit for children above 2.

Also, a parent has the right to continue working while receiving this benefit without any restrictions on earnings.

The mother and father can alternate between receiving the parental allowance. Only one of them is entitled to the benefit at any time.

The parental allowance application can be filed electronically or in person at the Labour Office's regional office or contact point at the place of residence.

- ✚ **Maternity benefit (*peněžitá pomoc v mateřství*)** replaces the mother's income just before birth and in the first months after birth. Women who participate in sickness insurance, either as employees or as self-employed persons, are eligible for this benefit.

They can apply for this benefit before giving birth. Under specific conditions, the insured father of the child or husband of the surrogate mother is also entitled to Maternity benefit.

In general, the period of receiving maternity benefit corresponds to the period of maternity leave. Pregnant women may determine the onset of maternity benefit between the eighth and sixth week before the expected due date.

Maternity benefit can be claimed after giving birth as well.

An employed woman fulfilling the conditions completes the maternity benefit application form with her employer who will then submit it to the District Social Security Administration (Okresní správa sociálního zabezpečení) competent for their place of business.

 **Paternity leave (*dávka otcovské poporodní péče – otcovská*)** can be granted to fathers under sickness insurance as of 1 February 2018. Those entitled are insured fathers caring for their child or insured foster parents (men and women) caring for their foster child if it is under seven years old at the start of the foster care.

Paternity leave should begin within six weeks after the birth of the child or the beginning of foster care.

As with other sickness insurance benefits, employees have to apply for paternity leave through their employers.

 **Child allowance (*přídavek na dítě*)** is a long-term benefit specifically for low-income families. It helps them cover the costs associated with raising and supporting dependent children.

At least one of the parents must reside or work in the Czech Republic (or another EU or EEA country or be Swiss nationals) to be eligible for this benefit.

Eligibility for this benefit is based on the family's total income.

The benefit is handled by the Labour Office's regional offices and contact points at the place of residence.

Sources:

<https://www.euraxess.cz/czech-republic/information-assistance/social-security>

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=13745&langId=en>

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

General numbers	
Fire	150
Medical Emergency (ambulance/first aid)	155
Prague City Police	156
Police	158
Emergency Road Service (ABA)	1240
Emergency Road Service (UAMK)	1230
Urgent gas leak	1239
Hospitals	
Nemocnice na Františku (Prague 1)	+ 420 222 801 111
Poliklinika Palackého (Prague 1)	+ 420 222 928 111
Všeobecná fakultní nemocnice v Praze (Prague 2)	+ 420 224 961 111
Fakultní Thomayerova nemocnice s poliklinikou (Prague 4)	+ 420 261 081 111
Nemocnice Podolí gynekologie a porodnice (gynecology and childbirth services; Prague 4)	+ 420 296 511 111
Nemocnice na Homolce (Prague 5)	+ 420 257 271 111
Fakultní nemocnice v Motole s poliklinikou (Prague 5)	+ 420 224 431 111
Fakultní nemocnice Královské Vinohrady (Prague 10)	+ 420 267 161 111
24-hour doctors	
Prague 1 & 2 (children)	+ 420 224 947 717
Prague 1 & 2 (adults)	+ 420 224 949 181
Prague 3 (children)	+ 420 284 861 979
Prague 3 (adults)	+ 420 284 862 149
Prague 4, 11, & 12 (children)	+ 420 241 733 916
Prague 4, 11, & 12 (adults)	+ 420 241 733 917
Prague 5 (children)	(+420) 224 433 654
Prague 5 (adults)	(+420) 224 438 590
24-hour pharmacies	
Prague 1, Palackého 5	+ 420 224 946 982
Prague 2, Belgická 37	+ 420 222 519 731
Prague 4, Thomayerova hospital, Vídeňská 800	+ 420 261 084 001
Prague 5, Štefánikova 6	+ 420 257 320 918
Prague 5, Hospital Motol, V Úvalu 84	+ 420 224 435 736
Prague 8, Bulovka Hospital, Budínova 2	+ 420 266 082 017
Dental emergencies	
Prague 1, Palackého 5	+ 420 224 946 982
Dental Clinic (Zubní), Prague 1, Palackého 5	+ 420 224 946 981
Dental Clinic (Zubní), Prague 4, Pacovská 31	+ 420 241 733 918
Repair services	
Problems with the (O2) phone line	+ 420 800 184 084
Problems with water, pipes, or sewer system	+ 420 840 111 112
Problems with electricity	+ 420 224 915 151
Problems with roads	+ 420 224 231 856
Problems with street lighting	+ 420 244 470 800
Loss	
Key Nonstop (lost keys – locked oneself out)	602 202 470
Credit card – Visa	+ 420 224 125 353
Credit card – American Express	+ 420 222 800 111
Credit card – MasterCard/Eurocard	+ 420 222 412 230
Credit card – Diners Club	+ 420 222 316 675

Source:

<https://www.welcometopraque.eu/czech-emergency-contacts>

SCHOOL EDUCATION IN CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech school system

To enrol your child in a Czech school, he or she will need to obtain a Czech residence permit. If your child has completed his/her primary education at a school abroad, a certification of attestation equality or a certificate of education featuring a recognition clause must be presented.

If your child needs Czech language training to be able to attend state school, this can be organised locally (typically a minimum of 70 hours would be required), and extra support can be continued at school as necessary. Online resource www.inkluzivniskola.cz is a EU-sponsored initiative that helps children of foreign families' transition into the Czech school system.

Pre-school is guaranteed at age five, and tuition is compulsory from ages six to 15, and provided free up to and including university level.

- Nursery and kindergarten covers ages 0 – 3
- Pre-school covers ages 3 - 6
- Primary schooling covers ages 6 – 10
- Lower secondary school runs from ages 11 – 15
- Upper secondary school runs from ages 16 – 18 or 19

Public schools in Czech Republic

State education in Czech Republic is well developed and well regulated. It is controlled by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Teaching in Czech Republic's public schools is conducted entirely in Czech language, with either English or German taught as a second language.

Some expat parents are discouraged by this but there are advantages to expat children being taught in Czech, the biggest of which is that it is a good way for them to learn the language and subsequently assimilate into the culture more easily, which is especially important for expats planning a long stay in the country. Some schools take difficulties with the language into account when assessing students in subjects such as Czech language and literature.

It is always a good idea for parents to visit schools of interest before enrolling their children. This can be done at official open days or may be arranged by request. Conditions in public schools may vary widely, and some are more amenable to and equipped for having foreign students than others.

Private schools in Czech Republic

There are a large number of private schools in Czech Republic, offering tuition at various levels. Their curricula will generally be closely aligned to the state system, with additional classes and activities depending on the philosophy of the individual school.

Private schools in Czech Republic are partly funded by the state and partly funded by tuition. Some of these schools are bilingual, teaching in both Czech and English, or sometimes Czech and German. Expat parents who cannot quite fit international school fees into their budget but are still concerned about their children having difficulties with the Czech language may find these schools to be an ideal solution.

Day care and nurseries (from age 0 to 3 years)

Childcare facilities in Prague offer both drop-in care and regular care two to five days a week. Some daycares require that kids be potty-trained and self-feeding.

Available care for infants (birth to six months) is limited; while collecting maternity benefits you cannot send your child to a state nursery for more than five days per calendar month. For children at least six months old, state nurseries (jesle) are among the few options. Contact your local town hall for more information or www.jesle.eu.

At age three, you may enrol your child in preschool as well as any state nursery school (materska skola).

Pre-school (from age 3 to 6 years)

Pre-school is not mandatory but is guaranteed at age five.

Elementary school (from age 6 to 15 years)

Elementary schooling lasts nine years and is the country's period of compulsory schooling. The school year begins on September, 1st and children start school in the new school year following their sixth birthday.

Traditionally, emphasis is placed on rote learning and the acquisition of facts and knowledge. One of the biggest differences is that the school day is not the same each day, so students finish at different times depending on their schedule. Parent-teacher meetings take place two to three times per year. While Czech is the language of instruction, a handful of state and private schools offer bilingual programs.

Many students will either cease study at 15, or enter a vocational or technical college with the aim of gaining qualifications in their chosen trade. The duration of tuition here will vary depending on the profession or occupation chosen. For those attending the vocational colleges or taking apprenticeships, there is also the chance of further advancement through technical universities, and there are many institutions for professions such as teaching.

For those continuing their studies in the state upper secondary system, a further State Graduation Exam is taken at age 18, with many expected to go on to university, depending on exam grades.

Secondary school (from age 16 to 18 years)

Secondary education starts with the end of compulsory education, when a child is around 15 years old. There are numerous schools to choose from and they can play a major role in future university education.

Schools are divided into vocational schools (stredni odborná skola) and grammar schools (gymnasium). Technical schools offer practical education in technology, business, economics, health and education. Grammar schools are oriented towards students who intend to study at university. Both schools end with the completion of a final exam (maturita).

International schools

There are a good number of fee-paying international schools catering more specifically for expat children of all ages, some with day care for infants, but separate pre-school kindergarten (ages 3-6) is also available privately in the larger cities. Many of these schools offer the full International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP), and most are based on tuition in English under various national education systems. International schools may be chosen for style of teaching (American, British, international) or even language (French, German, Japanese).

There are others in many areas, plus French schools and Montessori institutions to consider.

Demand for places at international schools is always high, and it is important to contact the school of your choice as early as possible. Fees will also be quite substantial, and it is always important to read the small print – additional expenses can mount up. For example many schools have additional contributory capital Funds for improvements/repairs.

High school or international school graduates will have the choice to continue their studies in Czech Republic, but many will want to pursue their higher education abroad. Successful graduation from Czech schools will give your child an internationally recognised high standard qualification, which is accepted at major universities worldwide without the need for additional assessments.

Here are a few of the international schools in Czech Republic:

- 1st International School, Ostrava (UK, pre-school to sixth form)
- Christian International School of Prague (UK, preparatory to sixth form)
- International School of Prague (ages 3-19 IBDP)
- Park Lane International, Prague (10 – 18 UK, IBDP)
- Open Gate Boarding School, Ricany (IBDP)
- PORG International, Prague (IBDP)
- Prague British International School (UK, IBDP)
- Sunny Canadian International School, Prague (co-ed day school)
- Townshend International School, Hluboka (UK, A levels, IGCSE)

University (as of 18 years)

Admission to a public university is based on the results of an entrance exam. Each course or faculty has its own exam, which can be written and/or oral. The most prestigious Czech universities, at least from a local point of view, are public.

Today, the degree program in Czech Republic is quite similar to elsewhere. There are 3 standard degrees: Bachelor (bakalar), Master (magistr) and Doctor (doctor). A Bachelor course runs for three to four years, a Master's from one to three and a doctorate from three to eight years.

Czech Republic also confers the degree "Engineer" (inženýr), for postgraduate study in technology, economics or agriculture. It is similar to a Master's degree.

Prague's most recognizable bastion of academia is Charles University. Established in 1348 by the Bohemian king Karel IV, it is the oldest university in Central Europe. The traditions of its original faculties (theology, law, medicine and art) have remained strong and the university offers degree programs (Bachelor, Master, and Doctor) with English-language instruction.

Sources:

https://issuu.com/martinhowlings/docs/sq2019_11

<https://www.expatfocus.com/czech-republic/moving/how-to-move-to-czech-republic>

<https://www.expatarrivals.com/europe/czech-republic/education-and-schools-czech-republic>

LEASE AGREEMENT IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Expats seeking accommodation in Czech Republic will be pleased to know that the country has a variety of homes to suit all needs, tastes and budgets.

Contracts for free market rentals are governed by certain regulations in Czech Republic. Lease agreements are indeed based on the civil code of Czech Republic.

Types of accommodation in Czech Republic

There is a wide variety of rental options for expats to choose from, and apartments and houses alike can be found in a variety of styles from contemporary to baroque and beyond.

Furnished, semi-furnished and unfurnished accommodation is available in Czech Republic, with a variety of properties available in Prague especially.

Leases

The main thing you need to remember is that everything is negotiable in Czech Republic. Just make sure you and the lessor agree on having a signed contract at the end of the negotiation.

Leases can be for either an indefinite term or a fixed term such as six months or one year.

There are usually two versions of the lease: one in Czech with the other being an English translation. However, in any legal matter the lease in Czech will be prioritised, so expats should have a Czech-speaking friend or preferably a professional translator look over both contracts to ensure that the terms in both are the same.

In Czech Republic, lease contracts have to be written. These should include the following:

- both parties' identity details (contact details, date of birth, identity card)
- the property's address
- description of the housing unit and annexes (basement, garage)
- number of occupants and their identity details
- authorizations and prohibitions (smoking, pets)
- the intended use of the property (professional activities, individual accommodation)
- the owner's and tenant's rights
- charges (maintenance fees, bills, repairs, etc.)
- the contract's validity period
- rent price
- any rise in the rent
- the security deposit (a maximum of three months' rent, to be refunded)
- departure notice
- Annexes (inventory, minutes of handing over and taking back the keys of the housing unit, etc.) have to be produced in two copies.

Always keep in mind that everything of importance for the rental agreement has to be stated explicitly in the contract. Not just the monthly rent but also dealings with utility costs, if included, have to be stated.

In addition, to avoid being accused of causing damage that was already there when moving in, expats should take date-stamped pictures of any areas of concern before the start of the lease.

In general, the owner may terminate the lease contract at any moment provided he sends a three months' notice (in writing) to the tenant.

Deposit and fees

When renting accommodation, a deposit equivalent to one or two months' rent is usually required.

By law, this deposit should be returned to the tenant in full within one month of vacating the property. This is provided that it is left in a good condition; if anything is damaged or broken, costs for repair or replacement may be deducted.

Lessees who find an apartment through an agent will also have to pay a commission fee – usually one month's rent – once they have found an apartment.

Practical tips

According to the law, lease must highlight the following aspects:

✚ Description of the apartment and its facilities

- an exact address, number of the building + number of the apartment,
- number of rooms in the flat,
- facilities (bathroom and toilets),
- other premises which belong to the flat (e.g. balcony, storage room).

The apartment should be described in great details, so that there is no chance to confuse it with an apartment of the same size located on the same floor of the same building. Common facilities should also be described in the agreement – some premises may belong to one apartment, some may be common and meant to be used by inhabitants of the block, like a bike storage room.

Examples:

The Lessor declares that he is the rightful owner of the studio / 2-bedroom apartment (1+kk) no. XYZ, situated on the 1st / ground floor in the house no. 123. The house is standing on the plot no. 123456789, cadastral area Praha-město, city Prague, district Prague, at the address Legerova 1234, 120 00 Prague.

The Apartment consists of entrance hall, bathroom with tub, sink, toilet and a place for washing machine, residential room with kitchen with two electric cookers and refrigerator. There is a cellar and shared bike room located in the basement. In the apartment there is connection to a common antenna and the internet (the price is included in Payment for services).

✚ Monthly rent and utilities and the method of payment

The tenant and the landlord shall agree upon the monthly rent, which relates to living in the apartment and using its facilities (e.g. electricity, heating, hot and cold water, gas, Internet –

etc.) and common premises (waste collection, lighting and cleaning of common premises, lift maintenance, etc.). Utilities are usually not included in the rental price and are to be paid by the tenant. The lease agreement should also determine the method of paying rent.

Examples:

The Lessee is obligated to pay to the Lessor the rent for the use of Apartment in the amount of XXXX CZK (in words: XXXX Czech Crowns) per every calendar month (hereinafter the "Rent").

Payment for services connected with use of the Apartment, (hereinafter the "Payment for Services") shall be paid by the Lessee monthly as advance payment. They consist of the following items:

- *electricity XXX CZK*
- *gas XXX CZK*
- *water/sewer rates XXX CZK*
- *heating XXX CZK*
- *services XXX CZK*
- *lighting of common premises XXX CZK*
- *cleaning of common premises XXX CZK*
- *lift maintenance XXX CZK*
- *waste collection XXX CZK*
- *internet XXX CZK*
- *TV antenna XXX CZK*
- *anything else? XXX CZK*

 **Period of time, for which the lease is being concluded**

Lease agreement can be signed for a definite period of time (6 months, 1 year, etc.) or an indefinite period of time (the date of the termination is not set, the lease continues to be valid, until it is terminated by an agreement or a notice).

Pay close attention to the conditions, on which the lease can be extended.

At the same time, make sure that there is a way for you to terminate the contract. The tenant may cancel the contract at any time by giving three months' written notice, without stating a reason. The landlord can only cancel the contract for a serious reason, such as the need to use the flat for his own family by giving a three-month notice as well.

Make sure you have a clear understanding of how things are in your case. Either way, the best thing is to get in touch with your landlord 3 months before the end of the contract.

Examples:

The Agreement is concluded for a definite period from 1 September 2020 till 31 August 2021. Shall both parties not agree otherwise as of the lease termination date, the Lease Agreement is automatically prolonged for another one-year period.

The Lessor shall be entitled to terminate this Agreement in accordance with the wording of Section 2288 and ff. of the Civil Code, by giving a termination notice with a period of 3 months, as well as Section 2291 without termination period when the conditions set therein are satisfied. The Lessee's delivery address under this Agreement is the address of the Lessee at

the Apartment, the Lessor's the address in the heading of this Agreement. It has been expressly agreed that the set deadline for notifying the Lessee of missing payment and the consequences thereof is 7 days of the posting.

Apartment viewings

In the event the tenant will be moving to a different location after 1-year rental period, the landlord will be looking for new tenants, while the tenant still lives in the apartment. Those future tenants will most definitely want to see the apartment before moving in. According to the law, the landlord has the right to organise visits of the apartment on the dates previously agreed with the tenant.

Sources:

<https://www.expat.com/en/guide/europe/czech-republic/14457-accommodation-in-the-czech-republic.html>

<https://blog.foreigners.cz/czech-lease-agreement/>

<https://www.justlanded.com/english/Czech-Republic/Czech-Republic-Guide/Housing-Rentals/Rental-contracts>

Lease agreement template = <https://www.flatio.com/document/show-contract/520?type=sublease>

<https://www.expatarrivals.com/europe/czech-republic/accommodation-czech-republic>

<https://www.liveteflprague.com/wp-content/uploads/accommodation-guide.pdf>

UTILITIES

Gas and electricity

Depending on your rental agreement, you may have a utilities fee included in the rental price. In this case, your landlord will handle payments. If you pay for utilities (gas and electricity) directly to the landlord, make sure the contract stipulates the due date for providing an overview of the yearly utility costs and that you have a right to see the bills.

Otherwise you will have to register with a local provider yourself. You will have to take care of paying the bills and some other details.

Dealing with the issue of gas and electricity consumption can last several days and in some cases weeks. Therefore, prior to moving into a flat, it is necessary to arrange registration for energy consumption. Before moving in, it is necessary to deal with everything in sufficient advance or be prepared to live in the flat for some days without electricity and gas.

Electricity

Registration for electricity consumption can be arranged in the service office of regional distributors of electricity dependent upon the address of your flat. When registering for consumption, you will pay an administrative fee and arrange the amount of advance payments for electric energy.

Following which, a technician will arrange an appointment to connect an electrometer. Periods for connecting electricity vary in different energy supply companies.

For the registration you will need:

- a completed electric energy consumption registration application
- the occupational lease (or a document proving the ownership of the flat)
- the approval of the owner of the real estate, validated by their signature.

Prices of electricity for households are set by the government of the Czech Republic. You can choose from several price bands, which vary depending on the volume of electricity consumption, some are intended only for households where all of the equipment runs on electricity. The respective energy company will advise you accordingly.

Electric energy is paid by means of advance payments every month (sometimes once in two months or once in a quarter). Billing of your consumption is administered as follows: the energy company sends you a balance of your account with particulars concerning the electricity used along with a paying-in slip to reimburse any possible remaining balance and the new amount of the advance payment required for the following months.

Gas

For gas consumption you will need to register with the gas company. In each region, there is a separate company (e.g. Central Bohemia Gas Company, etc.).

In order to register, you will need:

- the occupational lease for the flat
- to pay a fee for connection to a gas meter

Prices of gas for households are set by the government of the Czech Republic. Gas is paid for by advance payments every month and accounting of the gas consumption usually takes place once a year.

Methods of payment

There are several ways your electricity and gas bills can be paid. You can pay using a direct debit. In this case the monthly amount is automatically charged from your bank account. You can set a maximum amount to avoid unexpectedly large payments. Another very common method is paying in cash. You take a form, attached to your bill, to a post office and pay the bill in cash there.

In addition, there is SIPO. This billing method combines your rent, basic utilities and your television fees. You can register for it at your local post office. You may pay your bill in cash there or allow the post office to deduct the amount from your account. The bill is due every month.

Water

Water consumption fee is usually included in your rent. The consumption is estimated on the number of people living in the apartment. The meter is checked once a year. If you have used more than estimated you will have to pay for that with the next rent. If you have used less, you will receive a refund.

Registration for water consumption needs to be arranged only where you are living in a building owned by either yourself or family. The registration is arranged at the Water and Sewerage Company (these exist in each region).

Waste collection

Refuse collection (refuse containers) also needs to be arranged only by those living in their own family building and may be arranged at the municipal authority. Currently, each municipality sets a certain annual amount of cost per person or per the number of refuse containers – dustbins for refuse collection. This sum is either paid by you or on your behalf by the Landlord. In the case of living in rented or co-operative flats, payments for water and refuse collection are usually a part of services supplied and charged for by the Landlord.

Telephone line

You can have a fixed telephone line installed from e.g. Telefónica O2 Czech Republic, a.s. The application must be submitted in person at the company branch together with the occupational lease for the flat.

If you are a tenant in a flat where a telephone line has already been installed, you can transfer it to yourself with the approval of the owner. The line will be in your name, bills will be sent to you and you will be listed in the telephone directory.

If the Landlord does not agree to transfer the telephone line (even if only temporarily) to your name, it is possible to agree a service called “a change of payer”, i.e. a service, where the telephone line is still registered in the name of the telephone line owner, but bills will be in your name. This has an advantage, particularly when you carry out your business activities directly in the flat which you rent.

Where a telephone line has been installed in the flat and any debt tied to it, then the service supplier, prior to its re-connection, will demand the settling of this debt regardless of who should be responsible. This is a situation that owners fear when renting a flat to anybody. Therefore, always discuss the usage of the telephone line and the method of payment with the owner in advance.

Opening a bank account

Expats who plan on living in Czech Republic for more than a couple of months will need to open a Czech bank account, especially if they are receiving their salary in korunas.

The banking system in Czech Republic is modern and it proves relatively easy to open a bank account and apply for a credit card. Despite being a member of the EU, the country still uses the Czech crown as its currency.

The majority of services provided by Czech banks are paid. Thus, anything from obtaining a debit card to ATM withdrawals will typically incur a fee.

Companies, for their part, can open a professional bank account provided they produce supporting documents such as their business license, an extract of their criminal record, proof of tax registration, among others. Note that there are different types of professional bank accounts: current account, foreign currency account, Internet banking account, etc. In all cases, conditions are likely to vary from one bank to another.

There is no shortage of banks in Czech Republic and some banks even have some services that cater to the needs of expats. The largest bank in Czech Republic is Ceska sporitelna. This bank has designed a bank account specifically for expats. Some international banks such as Citibank, HSBC and Western Union also operate in the country.

Types of bank accounts

Czech banks offer three main types of bank accounts: the basic account, the current account, and the savings account.

The basic bank account only allows you to deposit your money and make cash withdrawals at ATMs and settle your bills. However, you are not entitled to an overdraft.

Most consumers prefer to open a current bank account which allows them to make deposits and cash withdrawals at ATMs. It also allows you to make bank transfers and payments in-store and other commercial enterprises.

Procedures

In general, you will need the following documents to open a bank account in Czech Republic:

- a valid passport
- another identity document (driver's license, identity card, birth certificate, resident card)
- a minimum deposit (between CZK 200 and CZK 2,000, depending on the bank).

Most banks in Czech Republic offer a service to bank online. The charges for doing this will vary, as will the security procedures to keep your money safe. Please note that you will still need to drop by the bank in person with your identity documents and the minimum deposit to finalize procedures.

Mobile payments are still not particularly popular in the country, but the situation is changing. Android Pay is already available in major retail centres and international restaurant chains like McDonald's across the country while there are also preparations for the launch of Apple Pay.

ATM

When making cash purchases in the Czech Republic, you will always need to use the country's ATM own currency, known as Czech crowns or Karuna. You will usually see this written as CZK, Cz, or KC.

The use of Visa Electron is quite widespread in Czech Republic. ATMs, for their part, are compatible with Visa, EuroCard, MasterCard, Maestro, and American Express cards.

ATM machines are widely available in town and city centres. Note that these machines are available in all cities, at bank agencies, subway stations, post offices, among others. They will normally have an option on screen to complete the transaction in English if you are using a card which was not issued in Czech Republic.

Most shops, international retailers, hotels and restaurants accept card payments. However, smaller town restaurants and shops prefer cash payments.

You are also likely to be charged an annual fee for your debit card, which many expats will not be used to. On top of that, you will be charged for all ATM withdrawals. Some will charge more for an ATM withdrawal from a machine which belongs to another bank. Occasionally you can track down an account which gives you up to two cash withdrawals a month without paying a fee.

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RECYCLING IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Recycling in Prague and in Czech Republic has become much more of a big deal over the years, with the nation consistently ranking among the best in all of Europe for its electronic waste recycling efforts.

Currently, Czech Republic offers its inhabitants thousands of recycling containers (for glass, plastic, paper, and beverage containers), and numerous collecting yards, and electronic stores that accept electronic waste.

The color-coded Bins

The color-coded bins are the basics of recycling. Although most of us are familiar with them, they are still often filled with items that do not belong there. To recycle efficiently, we should avoid filling them with items that belong elsewhere. Here is a reminder of what belongs where.

➤ **Blue = paper/cardboard (papier)**

🗑️ Suitable for paper wrappers and packaging, newspapers and magazines, flyers, cardboard and cardboard boxes, books, and also office documents with staples and envelopes with plastic address windows. You should never throw in greasy, wet, waxed, or charcoal paper, or paper that has been otherwise degraded. Receipts do not belong in the paper bin! Look for the symbols PAP 20, PAP 21, PAP 22 and PAP 39 on your paper items, these ensure that they are safe to recycle.

➤ **Yellow = plastic (plasty)**

🗑️ suitable for plastic bottles and bags, plastic containers from cosmetics and cleaning products, CD cases, polystyrene, plastic foil such as cling film, and other plastics. The materials that do not belong into the yellow plastic bin include PVC, rubber, textiles made of plastic fibers, Tetra Pak containers (these are typically milk and other beverage containers), and the wrappers and containers of hazardous chemicals such as glue, solvents, oils, and paint, among others. Please ensure that the plastic containers you place in the yellow recycling bin are empty and clean or they will be removed from the recycling process and will not be recycled.

➤ **Green = glass (sklo)**

🗑️ The green container is for colored glass and the white container is for clear glass. If only one bin is available, you are allowed to dispose of any glass. The glass that can be thrown in the green bin are bottles, medicine containers, opaque glass, and the glass filling of doors and windows. You must never throw in ceramics, porcelain or china, any glass treated with metallic coating, glass from cars, laboratory glassware, and objects made of cooking glass. The white glass bin is suitable for clear glass and glass jars. You must not dispose of large glass panels and stained glass. The symbols that indicate your item is safe to recycle include GL 70, GL 72, GL 71, and GL79.

➤ **Orange = beverage container (napojové kartony, tetrapak)**

- ✚ for beverage containers. You can dispose of wine boxes, dairy product boxes, juice boxes and other Tetra Pak containers. You should always compress them to reduce their size before disposing of them.

➤ **Brown organic waste bin**

- ✚ The brown bin is a new addition to the recycling bins. It's best for plant-based kitchen and garden waste such as fruit and vegetables, peels, tea and coffee, grass, leaves, flowers, eggshells, and peat. You should not dispose of pet bedding, diapers, bones, meat, oil, patés and spreads, sauces, charcoal and ashes, cigarette butts, vacuum cleaner bags or any other waste that cannot decompose.

➤ **Pink Hazardous Waste Bin**

- ✚ This bin is specially designated for waste that is dangerous for the environment. This includes anything corrosive, flammable or explosive, or toxic waste. This bin is also suitable for infectious or carcinogenic waste. Specifically, you can safely dispose of paint, paint thinners, solvents and other chemicals, pesticides, glue and paint, acids, batteries, car batteries, ink, electronics, medicine, lightbulbs, refrigerators, and coolers. Please refrain from disposing of ordinary waste.

➤ **Red Electronic Waste Bin**

- ✚ You can return the vast majority of electronics to the retailer. For small electronic waste, batteries and lightbulbs you can use the red bins. Another option of how to recycle lightbulbs in Prague is to take them to one of the 1384 lightbulb recycling points throughout the city.

➤ **Grey Metal Bin**

- ✚ Here you can recycle the metal lids from food and dairy products tinfoil, and tins. You can also recycle aerosol cans once they have been completely emptied. Look for silver grey bins labeled "kovové odpady". For larger pieces of metal waste, go to a recycling center.

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DRIVING IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Expats will find it easy to get around in Czech Republic, whether by its extensive public transport system or by car. Public transport is robust and generally preferred, with a wide variety of options including trains, subways, trams, buses, taxis and ferries.

It is not necessary to own a car. Indeed, owning a car could be an inconvenience in big cities such as Prague, where parking is extremely limited and car break-ins have been known to occur. Arranging a local Czech drivers' licence can also be a long and difficult process. While nationals of certain countries can continue to drive on their existing licence or exchange it for a local one, others will have to face a complicated procedure to obtain a local licence, including extensive testing.

Nationals of the European Union and the European Economic Area are allowed to drive in Czech Republic with their original driver's license. Others may have to apply for an international license prior to arriving in the country or exchange their driver's license into a local one on the spot.

Conditions

As mentioned above, you are allowed to use your original driver's license if it has been issued in the European Union or in the European Economic Area until it remains valid and unless you have committed a serious offence. If necessary, Czech authorities may replace your original driver's license with a local one. They may even suspend or revoke your driver's license if need be.

Exchanging your driver's license

To exchange your original driver's license for a local one, you are required to produce a Statement of Restricted Information or any equivalent document supporting the validity of your driver's license. Note that this document has to be translated into Czech. You will also have to produce the following to the nearest Transports Department (Dopravní Inspektoráty) to your place of residence:

- your original driver's license
- a statement of loss or theft if applicable
- a passport-size identity photo
- your resident card
- your passport or identity card.

Obtain a local driver's license

Expats from non-EU countries without agreements with Czech Republic will need to obtain a Czech driver's licence. This can be a long and arduous process. To obtain one, expats must be in possession of a resident card and must attend a local driving school for a prescribed number of hours and pass written and practical exams. Tests are usually available in English, German or Czech – those unable to take the test in any of these languages will be allowed to make use of an official translator during testing.

Note that you will also have to undergo a medical test with an approved doctor before registering at the driving school.

Good to know:

- Both theoretical and practical lessons are available in English.
- To pass the theoretical test, you will have to answer 25 questions. The number of marks given varies according to the different questions. To pass, you have to score at least 43/50. Thereafter, you will have to take driving lessons before passing the driving test.

Documents to be produced are the following:

- your passport or identity card
- proof of residence
- your lease documents (issued less than 6 months before and written in Czech)
- your employment contract (written in Czech)
- proof of family ties or cohabitation.

Note that procedures can be quite complicated if you live alone. Feel free to seek all relating information at the nearest municipality to your place of residence.

Vignette

You should know that a toll system is applied to highways. Therefore, the car vignette is compulsory. It can be purchased at border posts, garages, gas stations and post offices. For a 1-year vignette, you will need around CZK 1,000. Note that fines of up to CZK 5,000 apply in case your vehicle does not display a vignette. The vignette sticker must be placed in the bottom right corner on your windscreen and is valid for only one vehicle.

Driving rules and regulations

The Czech highway code is quite similar to that of the rest of Europe. In general:

- you will drive on the right side;
- wearing the seat belt is compulsory both in the front and rear;
- your vehicle's headlights have to be switched on both during the day and at night.

Note that the country has a strict zero tolerance policy for drunk driving. In fact, the allowed blood alcohol level while driving is zero and random road checks are quite common. If you are stopped by road police while driving under the influence, you will either be required to pay a hefty fine or taken to the police station.

Speed limits

Speed is limited as follows in Czech Republic:

- 50 km/h in city-centers
- 90 km/h on national roads
- 130 km/h on highways.

Road infrastructure

There are three types of roads in Czech Republic. These can be distinguished on roadmaps by letters:

- D = highways
- R = fast lanes
- S = national roads.

There are six highways across the country, namely D1, D2, D3, D5, D8 and D11.

National roads, for their part, are classified into different categories, for instance, long-distance transports, international transports, fast lanes, inter-district transports, inter-community transports, local transports and private roads.

In general, you are likely to come across traffic jam in city-centres and on highways. County roads, on the other hand, are usually less crowded. In all cases, the country has a developed road infrastructure.

When driving in winter, your car must be equipped with winter tires on all wheels (the 'official' winter period in the country lasts from November 1 to March 31).

Good to know:

Because of heavy snowfalls during winter and the specifics of road conditions, driving in the country can, at times, be not particularly safe. It is, thus, advised to follow the traffic rules, not exceed the speed limits and be especially careful during winter months.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Trams

A number of Czech cities have tram systems, most notably Prague. In Prague, trams run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are a quick way to get around, making them a popular mode of transport. Operating hours vary in other cities.

Trains

The national rail carrier is Ceske drahy and there are a few private rail companies in operation, including RegioJet, Leo Express and GW Train Regio.

The biggest and busiest railway station in Czech Republic is Praha hlavní nádraží, situated in Prague. This station offers long-distance travel to several neighbouring countries (including Germany, Austria, Hungary and Poland) and regional services to most large cities in Czech Republic.

Metro

Prague is home to the country's only metro system, which is popular among commuters and travellers alike. Continuously expanding, the track is over 60 km long, serving more than 60 stations.

Buses

If expats cannot find a train route to a city or village in Czech Republic, then a bus will most likely take them there. In some cities, local buses are the preferred form of transport, running 24 hours a day.

Local and regional buses are usually run by the state, while services crossing over the border into other European countries are often via private bus companies.

Taxis

Taxis in Czech Republic are infamous for taking advantage of foreigners. If expats are not able to speak Czech, they should write down their destination to avoid wrong routes as a result of mispronunciation.

It is best to arrange a taxi with a reputable company beforehand, but when hailing a taxi on the street, only use officially registered taxis. These can be identified by their yellow roof lights. A taxi from a legitimate company will also have the company's name, the taxi's licence number and its rates printed on both doors.

Alternatively, rideshare apps such as Uber and Liftago operate in Czech Republic. Many expats prefer using these apps as it gives them more control over routes and service prices while minimising language barrier issues.

Cycling in Czech Republic

Cycling is more commonly viewed as a sport and recreational activity than as a means of transport in Czech Republic. Expats used to getting around by bicycle are likely to be disappointed by the relative lack of cycle-friendly roads and sidewalks. The hilly topography of the country, and Prague in

particular, can also be a challenge for cyclists, not to mention its picturesque but bumpy cobblestone sidewalks.

In some cities, there are bicycle-renting schemes where bicycles can be picked up at one location and dropped off at another. Some forms of public transport allow bicycles to be brought on board, though this is sometimes restricted by area, for example only outside of the city centre.

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