

Working as  
a government  
employee  
in Sweden  
benefits  
and terms  
of employment




In the service of citizens | Pay | Working hours | Holiday | Work leave | Pay and other benefits during sick leave  
Work environment and preventive healthcare | Group life insurance | Pensions | Defined-benefit pension  
Terminating employment



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Most benefits described in this text were agreed by the Swedish Agency for Government Employers (SAGE) and the trade union organizations through agreements including the General Agreement on Salaries and Benefits (ALFA). Certain benefits can be determined by the agencies themselves, which is why the benefits may deviate between different agencies. For more information regarding the benefits applicable at a particular agency, contact the agency's employer representative.

# In the service of citizens

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Government employees work in the service of citizens. The Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) and the Government determine the agencies' duties and the operations are financed through taxes and fees. Accordingly, specific requirements are placed on the agencies' operations, which impact work.

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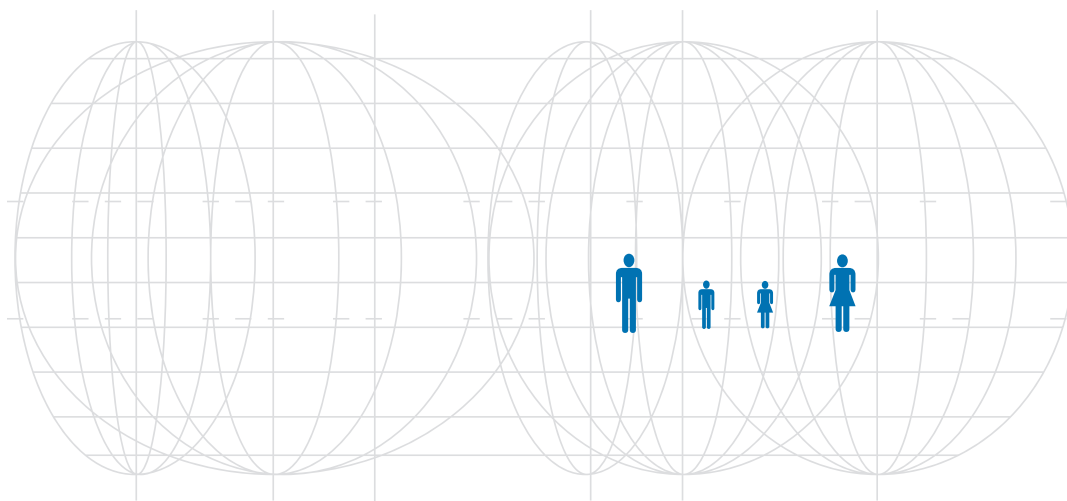
The Swedish government sector has approximately 240,000 employees. This means that the government sector corresponds to about 6 percent of the total labour force. The agencies' operations are all different, but the mission is the same: to work in the service of citizens.

This text is intended to provide comprehensive information regarding the terms and conditions of employment in the Swedish government sector and is aimed at foreign citizens employed by government agencies, but also to others interested in a summary of the terms and conditions of employment in the Swedish government sector.

The text provides a summary of the benefits and terms and conditions shared by all government employees. Certain benefits can be determined by the agencies themselves, which is the reason why the benefits may deviate between different agencies.

## **Democracy policy**

A living democracy is characterised by strong, well-functioning democratic institutions, by the exercise of public power with respect for human rights, by everyone having good opportunities for access, influence and demanding accountability, and an independent, broad range of voluntary associations.



### **Legal rights and effective service**

All government operations are characterised by the terms Rule of law and Efficiency. Citizens must be able to trust that the decisions made by the agencies are based on prevailing legislation. They must also be sure that everyone is treated equally under the law and that the agencies are objective and impartial in their assessments and evaluations.

### **Public access to information – a cornerstone of Swedish democracy**

The principle of public access applies to the Swedish government administration. This means that the public and mass media are entitled to transparency of operations, except information designated as confidential. Public access to information provides citizens the opportunity to read documents held by agencies and, thereby, examine the organisation.

### **Freedom of expression and freedom to publish**

Government employees have a broad freedom of expression. This means the right to inform outsiders of the operations of agencies, as long as it does not concern information designated as confidential. This also entails the right to submit information to the mass media. This is known as the freedom to publish for civil servants and others.



# Pay

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**In the Swedish government sector, pay setting is generally individual and differentiated. This means that the remuneration for each employee is based on his or her skills and work results in relation to the operation's goals. But also other factors, such as responsibility, the degree of difficulty and other requirements associated with work tasks, determine the individual pay.**

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The agencies' pay policies shall be clear and familiar to employees so that they know what the pay is based on and what he or she can do to influence their pay.

The basic idea for individually determined pay is that there is a connection between pay, motivation and results. The pay structure shall stimulate commitment and development. In the evaluation of the pay level, the employer shall consider the following three primary criteria: a) level of responsibility and degree of difficulty of the work, b) performance and contribution to the operation's goals and c) the cost of equivalent labour on the labour market.

The employer and the trade unions have a joint responsibility for ensuring an objective pay structure. Naturally, the pay must not be affected by the employee's gender, ethnic origins or other unrelated factors.

## **How pay is determined**

Pay has traditionally been primarily determined in negotiations between agencies and representatives for the local trade unions. The negotiations at the agency are based on the central pay agreements that SAGE and the central trade unions have signed. These negotiations result in collective agreements that include the employees' monthly pay from a certain date.

## **Pay-setting dialogue**

In recent years, a new type of pay-setting has evolved in the Swedish labour market, including the government sector. This means that the employee's pay is decided directly in a dialogue between manager and employee instead of in negotiations between the employer and the trade union representatives. Each agency along with the trade unions decides whether the model is to be applied or not. An increasing number of agencies decide pay through pay-setting dialogues.

# Working hours

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How much we work and when we work has an impact on our possibilities of balancing work and leisure time. Naturally, working hours shall be adapted to the needs of the operation, but at the same time the employee shall, to as great an extent as possible, be able to influence the scheduling of the working hours.

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Within each agency, the employer and the trade unions reach an agreement on working hours. The objective is to adapt working hours in the best way to the needs of the operation. This also means that the working hours for different employees may be different depending on what work tasks the person has.

## **Full-time work**

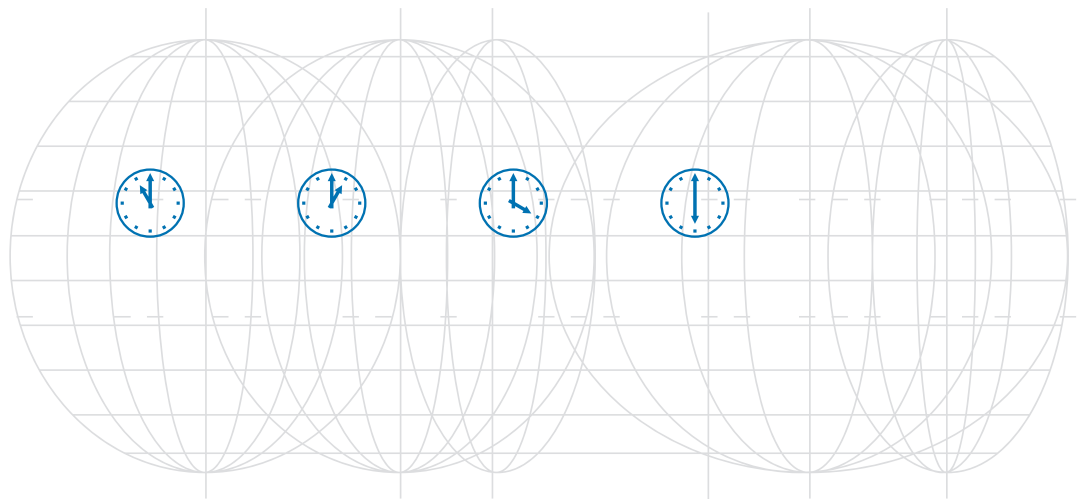
The average working hours per week for full-time employees working during office hours within the government sector are generally 39 hours and 45 minutes.

## **Flexible working hours**

Flexible working hours, flexi-time, is common in many agencies. For example, it may mean that normal working hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., but employees have the possibility of starting between 7:00 and 09:00 a.m. and ending work between 3:00 and 7:00 p.m.

## **Winter time and summer time**

There are also agencies that choose to have slightly longer working hours during the period from September to April and slightly shorter working hours from May to August.



### **Non-regulated working hours**

The employer and an employee can reach an individual agreement regarding non-regulated working hours. This means that the employee, taking into account the nature of his or her duties, is entrusted with the structuring of her or his own working hours, in consideration of the work tasks. Employees with non-regulated working hours receive no extra compensation for overtime work.

### **On-call and preparedness work**

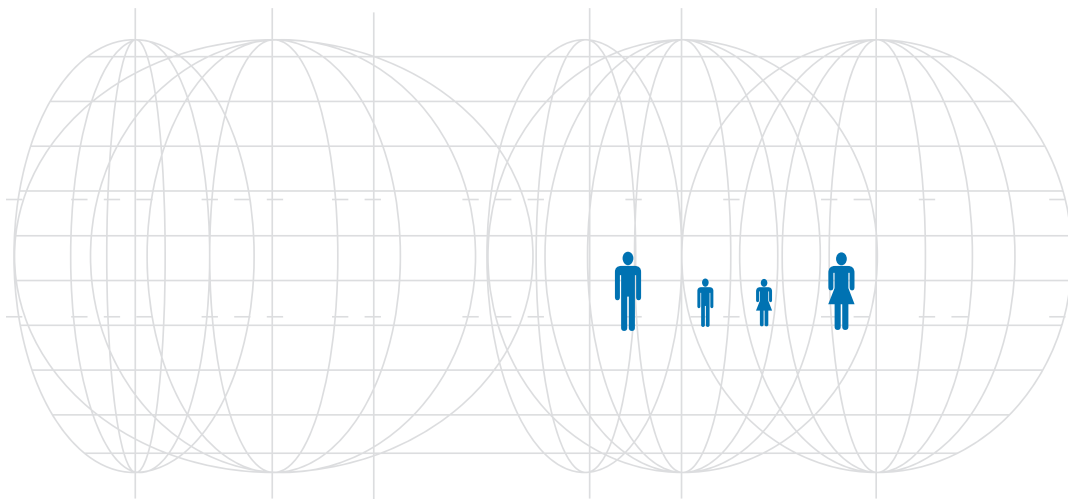
Certain positions include on-call or preparedness work. The person that is on-call shall be available at the work place. In the case of preparedness work, the employee can be in another location but shall be prepared to work when needed.

### **Overtime**

The employer can require employees with fixed or flexible working hours to work overtime when needed. An employee may work a maximum of 150 hours of overtime per year, but there are exceptions. The employee receives compensation in the form of remuneration or compensatory leave. In the case of mandatory overtime work during evenings or weekends, overtime is normally calculated as qualified overtime, which provides a higher hourly compensation.

### **Scheduled working hours**

Scheduled working hours are normal at agencies tasked with operating round-the-clock. Working hours may then vary from week to week as well as during the hours of the day.



# Holiday

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All employees in Sweden are entitled to five weeks' holiday. Government employees have longer holidays, with the number of days depending on age.

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Government employees are entitled to paid holiday from the first year of employment. However, to receive the full number of paid vacation days the employment must have spanned the entire year.

## **Holiday supplement**

During holiday time, a supplement is paid in addition to the normal pay. For one month of vacation time, the vacation supplement amounts to about 10 percent of the monthly pay.

## **Unused holiday**

At least 20 holiday days (four weeks) must be used during the year. The rest of the days may be saved for later years. An employee can have a maximum of 40 unused vacation days.

## **The employer decides**

It is the management that decides when the employees shall have their yearly holiday. There are however rules as to how and when information about this shall be given. Normally you have the right to at least four weeks holiday during summer.

Age		Number of annual holiday days (only working days are counted)
Up to and including the employee turning	29	28 days
As of the employee turning	30	31 days
As of the employee turning	40	35 days

# Work leave

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Sweden has comprehensive legislation providing employees the right or possibility to take work leave in addition to holiday time.

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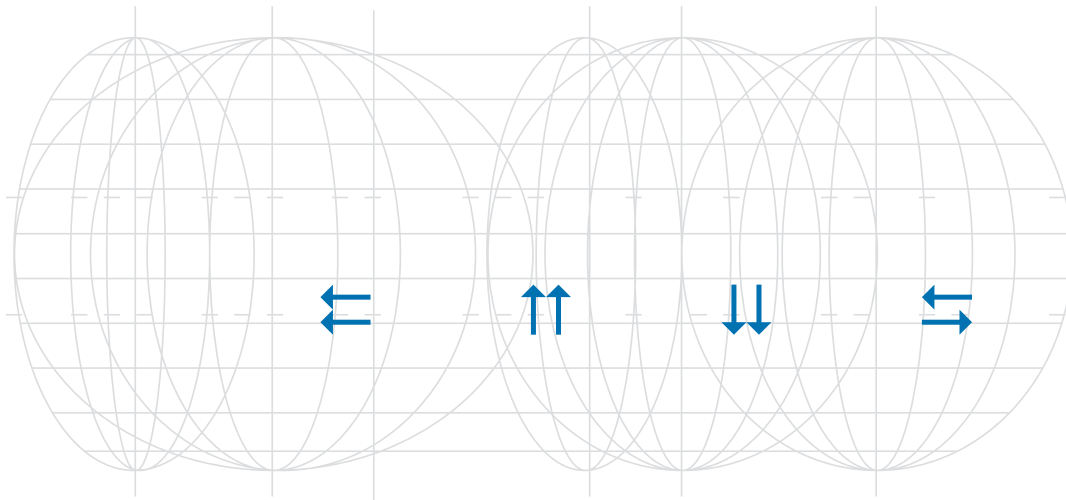
## **For everyone**

Included in the leave times applicable to everyone in the labour force is leave time for the care of children (parental leave), for studies, for trade union assignments, for the care of immediate family and the right for immigrants to take leave for Swedish courses. These cases of leave are normally unpaid. In the case of certain forms of leave, compensation is paid by such organisations as the Swedish Social Insurance Agency.

## **For government employees**

Government employees have additional possibilities for leave such as visiting a doctor and emergency dental care during paid working hours. It is also possible to be granted paid leave for the funeral of immediate family members, for moving, for graduation or exams, for example.

Leave may also be granted for other reasons, but in such cases without pay.



# Parental leave

A parent (mother or father) is entitled to leave to care for their child. In such cases of leave, compensation is paid by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. The government employer will pay supplementary compensation, so that the total compensation to a parent is 90 percent of his or her income during the majority of the leave. Parents of small children also have the possibility of working part-time.

## Leave for childbirth or adoption – Parental benefit

New parents receive parental benefit from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency in the case of leave for the care of a child. Parental benefit is payable for a total of 480 days. For 390 days the compensation is a maximum of 80 per cent of the income up to the income ceiling<sup>1</sup>. Government employees receive supplementary compensation from the employer for a maximum of 360 of the days with parental benefit. The supplementary compensation means that the total compensation corresponds to 90 per cent of the income. Parental benefit can also be paid for a further 90 days on the lowest benefit level, where the payment is SEK 180 per day.

## Care of a sick child – Temporary parental benefit

An employee requiring leave for a sick child receives compensation for the care of a sick child from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. The compensation is 80 per cent of the pay up to the income ceiling<sup>2</sup>.

The government employer pays a supplementary compensation on the income that exceeds the income ceiling for up to ten days per year. This means that the employee receives a total compensation of 80 percent of the income during these days.

	Pay percentage up to the income ceiling	Pay percentage above the income ceiling
Parental benefit supplement	Employer pays 10% for 360 days at most	Employer pays 90% for 360 days at most
Temporary parental benefit supplement	---	Employer pays 80% for 10 days at most

<sup>1</sup> The income ceiling for parental benefit is 10 price base amounts, which in 2009 corresponds to a monthly income of SEK 35,667.

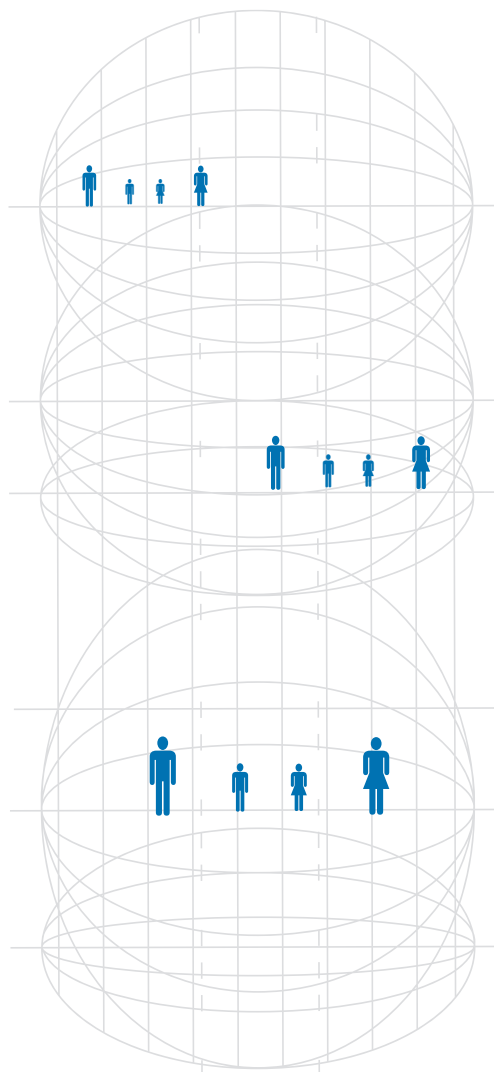
<sup>2</sup> The income ceiling for temporary parental benefit is 7.5 price base amounts, which in 2009 corresponds to a monthly income of SEK 26,750.

### **Right to work part-time**

All parents in the labour market are entitled to shortened working hours of up to 75 per cent of full-time work until the child is 8 years old or has completed its first school year.

Government employees have the additional possibility to apply for partial leave until the end of the school year when the child is 12 years old. It is up to the employer to approve the leave.

In these cases of leave, pay is reduced by a corresponding amount.



# Pay and other benefits during sick leave

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Employees unable to work due to sickness receive compensation corresponding to a portion of their normal pay. Everyone is entitled to 80 percent of their income up to a certain level of income. Government employees receive higher compensation through agreements.

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## **Sick pay**

During the first 14 days, all employees are entitled by law to sick pay from their employer. The first sick day is a “waiting period” for which no compensation is paid. During days 2 to 14, 80 per cent of normal income is paid.

If you are ill for more than seven days, you will normally be expected to produce a sick note from the doctor in order to continue receiving sick pay or sickness benefit.

## **Sickness benefit**

Following the period of sick pay, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency pays sickness benefit. Sickness benefit is about 80 per cent of income up to the income ceiling<sup>3</sup>.

For government employees, the employer supplements sickness benefit from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. During days 15 to 90, all government employees receive a total of 90 per cent of their income.

As of day 91, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency still pays sickness benefit of about 80 per cent of income up to the income ceiling. For employees with incomes above the income ceiling, the employer pays 80 per cent of the lost income.

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<sup>3</sup> The income ceiling for sickness benefit is 7.5 price base amounts, which corresponds to a monthly income of SEK 26,750 in 2009.

## Overview

	Pay percentage up to the income ceiling	Pay percentage above the income ceiling
First day of sickness	Waiting day – no compensation	
Day 2–14	Employer pays sick pay - 80% of normal income	
Day 15–90	about 80% from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 10% from employer	about 90% from the employer
Day 91–364	about 80% from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency	about 80% from the employer
Day 365—915	about 75% from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency	about 75% from the employer

### Doctor and dental visits

A government employee is, if necessary, entitled to doctor and emergency dentist visits during paid working hours.

### Compensation for healthcare costs

The government employer also pays other compensation in conjunction with illness including compensation for doctor's visits, physiotherapy or hospital stays. Compensation may also be paid for certain medication, on the condition that these are covered by high-cost protection.

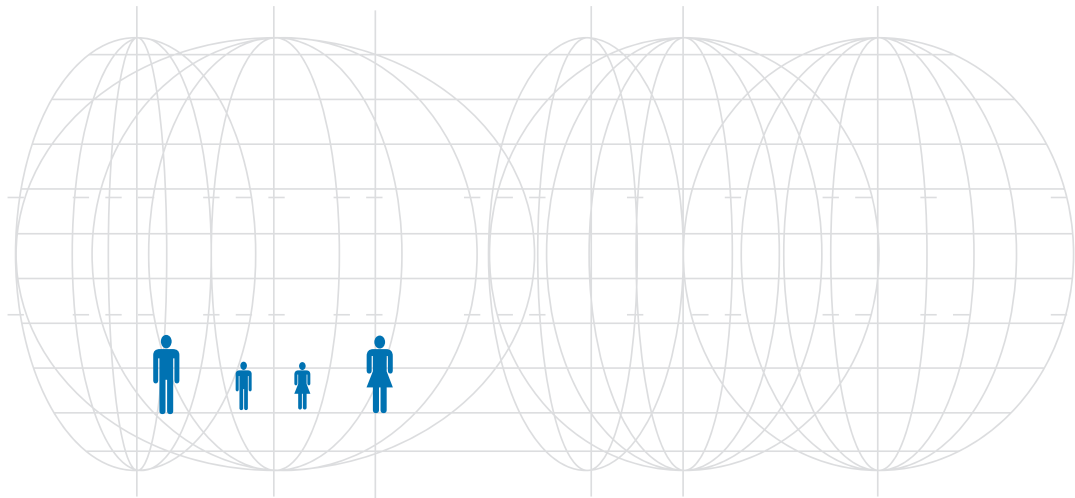
# Work environment and preventive healthcare

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**Within the government, a work environment initiative is operated in cooperation between the employer, employees and safety delegates. All government employees, according to central collective agreement, have access to occupational healthcare. Employers often support various fitness activities by subsidising them.**

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However, no common solution applicable to all workplaces exists. What can and should be done depends on the conditions of the individual workplace. Employees have several important tasks: participating in the work environment initiative, complying with the existing regulations and reporting hazards, incidents and accidents and suggesting measures to be taken.



# Work-related injuries

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Naturally, the work environment shall be designed so that employees are not exposed to ill health or accidents at work. Despite a good work environment, injuries may occur. Those affected by a work-related injury are entitled to compensation for lost income, pain and suffering, etc.

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Work-related injuries are considered as injuries caused by an accident or other injurious action at work. Certain contagious diseases can also be considered work-related injuries.

## **Accidents**

For an accident to be considered work-related it must be connected with work. This applies to both accidents in the workplace and if the work is being carried out in another location. Accidents occurring during work-related trips or occurring during the direct commute to or from work can also be considered work-related injuries.

## **Work illness and infection**

Illness and infection that may be due to something at work may be considered work-related injuries.

## **Compensation from Swedish Social Insurance Agency and employers**

All employees are entitled to certain compensation in case of illness or injury, by law. The compensation is paid by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. Government employees are also entitled to supplementary compensation through the Personal Injury Agreement (PSA). This can entail everything from lost income, pain and suffering, healthcare costs and invalidity to death.

# Group life insurance

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**All government employees are covered by an occupational group life insurance (TGL-S). If an employee dies, the immediate family may receive financial support. The insurance also applies during vacation or illness.**

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Occupational group life insurance provides financial support for the employee's spouse, registered partner, cohabitant and children. If an employee dies, the base amount, child amount and funeral assistance may be paid. The size of the base amount varies depending on the employee's working hours and age at the time of death. The child amount is dependent on the employee's working hours and the child's age at the time of death.

If the employee's spouse, registered partner or cohabitant dies without a service group life insurance policy of their own, the insurance also provides a certain amount of protection for the employee and children under 17.



# Pensions

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Government employees receive a collective agreement occupational pension consisting of multiple portions. It supplements the National Pension Insurance that everyone is entitled to. The employees have the right to choose themselves how a portion of the collective agreement occupational pension shall be managed. Older government employees also have the possibility to apply for partial pension.

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The complete pension comprises multiple portions:

- the National Pension Insurance,
- collective agreement occupational pension according to the Service Pension Agreement PA 03 and
- any private pension savings.

Here is a brief summary of the content in the Service Pension Agreement, PA 03.

## **Service Pension Agreement PA 03**

PA 03 consists of:

- retirement pension, which is normally paid from the age of 65 onward
- disability pension, which may be paid in the case of a protracted illness
- survivor's pension, which is paid to survivors of deceased government employees
- other benefits

## **Retirement pension**

According to the PA 03, retirement pension comprises multiple portions: Individual retirement pension and supplementary retirement pension, KÅPAN, is earned from the age of 23 until retirement age. Together the fees for the individual retirement pension and KÅPAN annually correspond to 4.3 percent of pay.

## **Defined-benefit pension**

means that employees with an annual income exceeding 7.5 income base amounts receive a certain guaranteed pension<sup>4</sup>.

## **Size of Pension**

According to PA 03, the size of the pension depends on the employment period's length and the amount set aside in fees. The fees plus the yield/dividends they generate over time constitute the retirement pension. Defined-benefit retirement pension is sometimes added to this.

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<sup>4</sup> In 2009, 7.5 income base amounts correspond to a monthly income of about SEK 31 800.

### **Disability pension – pension for long-term sickness**

Those affected by long-term sickness and receiving sickness compensation or activity compensation from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency may also receive disability pension, according to PA 03. The disability pension in PA 03 supplements the compensation paid by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency.

### **Pension to survivors**

If a government employee (or a retired former employee) dies before the age of 75, the family receives a limited-time survivor's pension according to PA 03. The pension is paid for a maximum of six years.

### **Other benefits in PA 03**

PA 03 also includes other benefits, which are non-mandatory. Government employees have the possibility of placing savings in the private pension insurance, Kåpan Plus. Saving can continue even if employment with the government is terminated.

The employer and the trade unions can also sign local collective agreements regarding allocations to Kåpan Extra. This can be financed i.e. through the employee refraining from a pay raise in return for a corresponding pension saving in Kåpan Extra.

### **Partial-pension agreements**

Government employees have the possibility of applying for partial pension. It is up to the employer to determine the right to partial pension. If the employer allows this, employees between 61 and 65 can reduce their working hours by up to 50 per cent of full-time work. The employer compensates 60 per cent of the lost income in cases of partial pension. The lost income causes the employee's national, statutory pension to decline in most cases, but the PA 03 pension is not affected.

# Terminating employment

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Employment can be terminated for various reasons. The most common is that the employee terminates the employment for a new employment. Mobility between the different sectors of the labour market is common. If a government employee loses the employment due to redundancies in the agency, the Job Security Agreement (TA) applies. It provides a protracted notice period, individual support through the Job Security Foundation and the possibilities for training in certain cases.

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## **If the employee wants to terminate his or her own employment**

The length of employment determines the amount of notice that applies. Those having multiple consecutive government positions must count the total period of government employment.

For managers, a six-month period of notice applies according to the central Manager's Agreement.

<b>Employment period</b>	<b>Period of notice – when the employee terminates the employment</b>
Three months at most	Eight days
Four years at most	One month
More than four years	Two months

## **Benefits in case of employment shortage**

An employee who is given notice due to redundancies in the operation, or work shortage, is entitled, as a government employee, to a longer period of notice than that which normally applies according to the law. Longer periods of notice are regulated by the Job Security Agreement.

The Job Security Foundation is tasked with supporting employees that are laid off due to redundancies in the operation. This means that the foundation shall plan, together with the redundant employee, for actions to avoid unemployment, or to at least ensure that it is short.

Through the Job Security Agreement there are also benefits such as income supplements if a redundant employee receives a lower pay in their new employment than in government employment.



# 2009



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