

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO RENTING ACCOMMODATION IN WALLONIA

Access to decent housing is a fundamental right in Wallonia. Are you currently living in temporary accommodation (family or friends, private accommodation provider, reception packages offered by the municipalities, Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSW), a hostel or an institution, etc.) and are you looking for accommodation so you can settle more permanently? This brochure will direct you to the different services and assistance available in Wallonia for renting accommodation.

Your situation (e.g. temporary protection status) means that you can benefit from the social services offered by the PCSW and the municipality. You can apply for income support or equivalent assistance and housing assistance, among other things.

THE PUBLIC CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

The Social Service of the PCSW can :

- support you in **your search for housing** (private or public) ;
- advance you the **1st month's rent** or rent guarantee ;
- give you a **settling-in grant**, in addition to **income support** (or equivalent assistance);
- help you to obtain assistance to improve the thermal comfort of your housing through the **MEBAR operation**.

Contact : Contact the PCSW of the municipality in which you are currently accommodate.



Telephone : 081 20 60 60

PRIVATE HOUSING

Private housing search tools :

You can view advertisements for available housing using these different channels:

- Real estate web platforms
- Newspaper ads
- Real estate agencies (<https://www.ipi.be/rechercher-un-agent-immobilier>)

THE RESIDENTIAL LEASE

In Wallonia, the residential lease is subject to a specific regulation that applies to leasing a main residence, student leases and joint tenancies.

The objective is to guarantee maximum legal certainty, while ensuring that a balance is maintained between the landlord's right to property and the tenant's right to housing.

→ Aspects to be considered

A. The main residence

The main residence is considered to be the dwelling in which the tenant **actually** and **habitually** lives.

This dwelling is the centre of their personal and family interests.

B. The lease

The lease, which must be in writing, is drawn up in as many copies as there are parties. As a minimum, it must specify :

- The identity of the tenant and the landlord and the national identification number of each party;
- The commencement date of the lease and its duration;
- The type of lease (e.g. main residence lease or student lease);
- The designation of all premises and parts of buildings;
- The amount of the rent excluding charges, any common charges;
- The amount of the private charges, if they are flat-rate;
- The indication of the flat-rate or provisional nature of any private and common charges;
- In the case of a building where there are several dwellings, if the amount of the charges is not a flat rate, the method of calculating the charges and their allocation;
- The existence of individual or collective meters;
- The date of the accommodation's last energy performance certificate (EPC), as well as the performance index assigned to the accommodation.

C. The lease term

The main residence lease is for a period of **9 years**.

However, under certain conditions, the parties may enter into a **short-term lease** (max. 3 years: for example 1 year + 1 year + 1 year or 6 months + 1 year + 18 months).

D. Tenant's obligations

- **To pay rent and charges** (you will probably have to open water, electricity or gas accounts in your name: the higher the consumption, the higher the bill; it is advisable to use these resources responsibly, avoiding waste);
- **To use the property responsibly by carrying out normal maintenance and handling repairs and losses for which they are responsible;**

NB: in the case of repairs for which the landlord is responsible, the landlord should be **notified by phone** and then **sent a written confirmation**, using **registered mail** is recommended.

E. Landlord's obligations

The landlord must provide **accommodation in good condition** for the **agreed use**, i.e. **free of defects and which complies with basic safety, health and habitability criteria**.

For the lease term, the landlord must carry out **repairs** to the property for which they are responsible so as **to guarantee the tenant's peaceful enjoyment of the leased premises**.

F. Rent indexation

Rent indexation is **the adjustment of rent to changes in the cost of living**. Most residential leases provide that the rent can be indexed during the lease term. **Provided that the lease is registered, the rent may be indexed annually** in accordance with a statutory formula, no earlier than the anniversary of the effective date of the lease.

G. The rent guarantee

Most tenancy agreements require the tenant to pay a **"rent guarantee"**. This most often consists of a **sum of money** that:

- cannot exceed **two months**;
- must be placed in a **bank account in the tenant's name**.

PRECARIOUS OCCUPATION AGREEMENT

Another possible option is to sign a precarious occupation agreement with a landlord by which **they allow the occupant to use a dwelling for a short period of time, while having the right to take it back at any time.**

For this type of agreement, we recommend providing for a duration (e.g. 6 months) with an extension mechanism, each time for short periods, as well as the requirement to give notice to terminate it.

Regarding the payment of a price, **the agreement implies an occupation compensation** (generally lower than the rent that would be charged under a conventional lease) as well as a **contribution to costs and charges.**

It is strongly recommended that the agreement is concluded **in writing**, indicating the reasons for it, excluding the provisions of the residential lease and including clauses such as the possible indexation of the occupation compensation or the obligation to insure (an agreement template is available on the website : <https://logement.wallonie.be>).

The precarious occupation agreement can therefore be attractive for both the landlord and the tenant since it is a good solution for agreeing temporary occupation and thus responding to your temporary situation.

Useful information : Info-Conseils Logement (Housing Info & Advice)

PUBLIC UTILITY HOUSING

A PUBLIC SERVICE HOUSING COMPANY


- These are **63** in Wallonia ;
- This organisation can help you complete an application for public housing, which means that **the rent is calculated according to your income** ;
- A submitted application is valid for five different companies ;
- Allocation of social housing is based on **priority points** ;
- Housing should always be proportionate to the size of your household.

How can you submit an application ?

1. You can contact the **PCSW in your municipality or the municipality in which you are currently living** to obtain information; OR
2. You can **apply to the housing company of your choice yourself**. The contact details of the housing companies can be obtained from the SWL.



communication@swl.be

 Phone : +32 71 20 02 11

A SOCIAL HOUSING AGENCY (AIS)

- These are **31** in Wallonia ;
- Social housing agencies manage **rental properties** on behalf of third parties (individuals or legal entities), **that they reserve for low-income households**, particularly those receiving income support;
- The AIS is the **direct contact** for landlords and tenants. Its role is therefore that of an intermediary to which you can submit a housing application.
- Support suited to your specific situation is arranged to help you settle down and become a positive part of a neighbourhood.

Contact : For the contact details of social housing agencies in Wallonia, contact the **Walloon Housing Fund** or the **PCSW of the municipality in which you are currently accommodated.**



contact@flw.be



Phone : **+32 71 20 77 11**

<https://www.flw.be/associations/les-associations-a-finalite-sociale/les-agences-immobiliere-sociales/>

WHAT ASSISTANCE CAN YOU RECEIVE FOR HOUSING?

MOVING AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE (ADEL)

After a minimum of **3 months** of accommodation with **individuals** (friends, family, Belgian hosts, etc.), in a **Fedasil centre** or a stay in a **hostel** or **recognised institution**, as a **"homeless"** person and under certain other conditions, you can benefit from **financial assistance to move and to pay your rent**, if you find healthy housing.

This assistance amounts to a **maximum of €400 for the move and €100 per month for the rent**, increased by **20% per dependent child or disabled person**.

Contact : Contact the Housing Info & Advice Service (Info-Conseils Logement). Local offices by appointment.



Phone : +32 **81 33 23 10**

or +32 **475 50 80 00**

http://lampspw.wallonie.be/dgo4/site_logement//contacts#infos

POINTS OF CONTACT

HOUSING INFO & ADVICE

- This service is based in the **10 Espaces Wallonie** covering the Walloon Region ;
- It can help you in various ways, such as:
 - telling you how to **obtain the moving and rental allowances**, provided you find healthy housing in Wallonia;
 - informing you about the **minimum health standards** that all housing in Wallonia must meet;
 - informing you about the **residential lease** (agreement, inventory of fixtures, rent guarantee, etc.) and in particular your rights and duties as a tenant



Do you have specific questions about leases? You can also send an e-mail to infobail@spw.wallonie.be

<https://logement.wallonie.be>

TIPS FOR MANAGING ENERGY IN YOUR ACCOMODATION

- In Wallonia, there are **16 energy offices** available to you ;
- They can provide you with a range of sustainable daily tips and tricks to **reduce your energy consumption**;
- You will also find information on possible **assistance for heating** (MEBAR operation) or **insulating** your accommodation



<https://energie.wallonie.be/fr/guichets-energie-wallonie.html?>

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MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The municipal administration, through **its various departments**:

- will help you get **your registration in the population registers** in order;
- will inform you whether or not the housing you are considering renting is subject to a **rental permit**;
- will inform you about the possible **municipal assistance** for which you could apply or direct you towards the **collective accommodation** listed in its area;
- will provide you with useful addresses (such as recycling businesses) where you can find furniture;
- will tell you about the schools, associations, clubs, etc. where you could register to facilitate your integration;
- etc.



<https://www.uvcw.be/communes/>

DISCRIMINATION ASSISTANCE

UNIA and the **Institute for the Equality of Women and Men** can help you if you are **discriminated against in your search for housing** (income, status, origin, religion, sex, etc.).

These are **independent public services**, which you can contact in complete **confidentiality** and **free of charge**.



<https://www.signalement.unia.be/fr/signale-le>



<https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/discrimination>

Mentions éditoriales - Service public de
Wallonie (EDIWALL) Territoire Logement
Patrimoine Énergie - www.wallonie.be
Éditrice responsable : A. FOURMEAUX,
Directrice générale du Service public de
Wallonie Territoire Logement Patrimoine
Énergie, rue des Brigades d'Irlande, 1 - 5100
Jambes

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Les commandes peuvent se faire à partir du
site : ediwall.wallonie.be ou à l'adresse
ukraine.logement@spw.wallonie.be. Pour toute
question, vous pouvez joindre le téléphone vert
du SPW : 1718 (pour les francophones) et 1719
(pour les germanophones).

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