

SERBIA WORKS

Living & Working in Serbia

A practical 2026 guide for foreign workers

Before you move to another country for work, you should know what you are agreeing to: what the job is, who the employer is, what you will earn, what you will pay, which documents you need, and what to do if something goes wrong.

Hi, my name is Filip Kosic. I am an economist and I created Serbia Works to answer the questions I hear repeatedly from people who want to come to Serbia for work.

My perspective comes from working directly with foreign workers and seeing the process beyond the paperwork: transportation, accommodation, documentation, communication with employers, and the practical problems that can appear after someone arrives.

This guide is intentionally practical. It is not a promise that every employer, agency or job will be good or bad. Instead, it gives you a checklist for verifying what you are being offered before you spend money or travel.

What this guide covers

- What kinds of jobs foreign workers commonly encounter in Serbia
- Salary, overtime, accommodation and the real cost of moving
- Visa D and the temporary residence / single work permit process
- How to check whether an employer or recruiter is legitimate
- Healthcare and basic worker protections
- What to check before paying anyone
- A final pre-departure checklist

Important: immigration and employment rules can change. This guide is educational and should not replace instructions from Serbian authorities, an embassy/consulate, or qualified legal advice.

1. What Is It Really Like to Work in Serbia?

Serbia has a diverse labour market. Foreign workers are particularly visible in sectors where employers have difficulty filling positions locally. In practice, many international applicants will encounter jobs in construction, manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, hospitality, agriculture, cleaning and other operational roles. The exact opportunities depend heavily on your nationality, qualifications, language skills and the employer's current needs.

The job offer matters more than the headline salary

One of the most common mistakes is looking only at a number such as “€700 salary” without asking what that number actually means. Before you pay a recruiter or book a flight, ask for the offer in writing and confirm:

- Employer: full legal company name and registered address.
- Position: exact job title and main duties.
- Location: where you will actually work.
- Salary: amount, currency, whether it is net or gross, and how/when it is paid.
- Working time: normal weekly hours, shifts, days off and overtime arrangements.
- Accommodation: whether it is free, paid, shared, deducted from salary, and where it is.
- Contract: obtain and read the employment contract or other written employment document before travelling.

Salary: understand the 2026 baseline

For 2026, Serbia's government set the minimum price of labour at 371 RSD per working hour. For a standard 174-hour monthly calculation, the government stated a minimum wage of 64,554 RSD (about €551). The exact monthly minimum varies with the number of working hours in a month, so avoid treating €551 as a universal monthly figure for every month.

You may encounter job offers above the legal minimum — for example €650, €700, €800 or €1,000+ — but these are offer-specific figures, not guaranteed market salaries. The only number that matters for your situation is the amount and conditions actually agreed with your employer.

Overtime

Under Serbia's Labour Law, overtime work is compensated with an increase of at least 26% of the base salary used for the calculation. Your contract and applicable rules may provide additional rights or more favourable terms. Always ask how overtime is recorded and paid before accepting a job.

Official sources: Government of Serbia — minimum wage 2026 · Serbia Labour Law — Article 108 · Welcome to Serbia — employer obligations

2. Visa D: The First Major Step

A Visa D is a long-stay visa. It can be issued for 90 to 180 days. When issued on the basis of employment, it can allow a foreign citizen to stay and work in Serbia during the validity of the visa. If you intend to remain longer, the next step is normally to apply for temporary residence and work through the single permit system while your lawful stay allows it.

How much does Visa D cost?

The official Visa D application fee is €50, paid in RSD at the National Bank of Serbia middle exchange rate. Some passport holders are exempt under applicable agreements. This government fee is separate from any private recruitment, translation, transportation or service fees charged by companies.

Typical employment documentation

The exact list depends on the employment basis and your individual circumstances. For ordinary employment, the official Welcome to Serbia guidance lists documents such as:

- Visa application and valid passport
- Applicant photograph
- Invitation letter
- Employer registration certificate
- Signed employment contract or other qualifying employment agreement
- Relevant job description / systematization information
- Diploma or other evidence of required qualifications, with certified translation where required
- Power of attorney if the employer or authorised person submits the application on your behalf
- Landlord statement regarding the registered residential address

The official portal may request additional documents depending on the case. Do not rely on a generic checklist from a recruiter when the government portal provides a more specific checklist for your application.

Can someone guarantee approval?

No one should promise you a guaranteed visa approval. The competent Serbian authorities decide applications, and additional documentation can be requested. A recruiter can help you prepare and submit documents, but that is different from controlling the decision.

Track your application

Use the official Welcome to Serbia portal and the email address associated with your application. Keep copies of everything submitted and every payment receipt. If someone tells you that an application has been submitted, ask for evidence that it actually was.

Official sources: Welcome to Serbia — Visa D · Welcome to Serbia — D visa, purpose of stay: Employment · Welcome to Serbia — Help / fees

3. Temporary Residence & the Single Permit

Serbia's current system uses a single permit for temporary residence and work. Depending on the legal basis, temporary residence or a single permit can be granted for up to three years. The permit is issued as a biometric document.

The important distinction

Document	What it does	Typical relevance
Visa D	Long-stay entry/residence visa; employment-based Visa D	Usually up to 180 days during its validity.
Single permit	Combines temporary residence and the right to work on the applicable basis	Up to 3 years

Official fees currently listed

The Welcome to Serbia help page currently lists a 430 RSD submission fee and a 22,770 RSD fee for approval of the single permit. A separate temporary residence approval is listed at 23,450 RSD. These are official administrative fees and are separate from any private agency or legal service charges.

If an agency gives you a large “permit fee”, ask them to break it down into: government fees, translations, courier/transport, professional service, accommodation and any other charge. A transparent cost breakdown is one of your best protections.

Do not confuse a government fee with an agency fee

A private company may charge for recruitment, document preparation, translation or administrative assistance. That does not mean the entire amount is a government fee. Ask for invoices/receipts and a written explanation of what each payment covers.

Keep your own copies

- Passport and visa
- Employment contract
- Application confirmations
- Payment receipts
- Single permit / biometric document information
- Employer contact details
- Accommodation address
- Any written communication about salary and working conditions

Official sources: Welcome to Serbia — Temporary Residence · Welcome to Serbia — Information about the Single Permit · Welcome to Serbia — Help / current fees

4. How to Verify an Employer or Recruitment Agency

This is one of the most important parts of the entire process. A professional-looking Facebook page, WhatsApp profile, logo or PDF is not proof that an employer or recruiter is legitimate.

Before paying, verify these five things

- 1. Legal identity: obtain the company's full legal name and registration details. Check that the entity actually exists.
- 2. Job: confirm the exact company where you will work, not only the name of an intermediary.
- 3. Contract: get written terms covering position, salary, working hours and other key conditions.
- 4. Accommodation: ask for the address and photographs, and clarify whether the room is private or shared and whether you pay for it.
- 5. Payment: request a written cost breakdown and a receipt for every payment.

Red flags

- You are pressured to pay immediately because “the offer expires today.”
- The salary changes after you have paid.
- The employer refuses to give its legal company details.
- You are told to travel first and “the documents will be sorted out later.”
- You receive a job offer but cannot verify the actual workplace.
- Accommodation is promised but no address or photos are provided.
- A large payment is described only as “processing” without an itemised explanation.
- The recruiter guarantees a visa, work permit or approval.
- You are asked to send money to a personal account without a clear explanation and receipt.

A high price alone does not prove a scam. Some legitimate companies charge for genuine services. The problem is when you cannot clearly establish what you are paying for, who receives the money, what you get in return, and what happens if the service is not delivered.

A simple verification routine

Ask the recruiter to send the legal company name, job offer, employer details, salary and full cost breakdown in writing. Then independently verify the employer and compare the information across documents. If the information conflicts — different company names, different salaries, different locations — stop and ask for clarification before paying.

Do not send your passport to an unknown person merely because they say they are an agent. Only provide documents through a channel you have independently verified and keep a record of where and why you sent them.

Official sources: [Welcome to Serbia — employer obligations](#) · [Welcome to Serbia — D visa employment documentation](#)

5. The Real Cost of Moving to Serbia

A salary is only one part of the decision. Before travelling, build a simple budget that includes everything you will personally have to pay before receiving your first salary.

Typical cost categories to ask about

Category	Question to ask
Recruitment / service	What exactly am I paying for? Is there an invoice or contract?
Visa D	Is the €50 government visa fee included or separate?
Translation	Which documents require certified translation and who pays?
Travel	Who pays for the flight/bus/train ticket?
Accommodation	Is it free, shared, or deducted from salary?
Food & transport	What should I budget for the first month?
Single permit	Which official fees apply and who pays them?

Accommodation

Accommodation varies dramatically between employers. Shared rooms can be common in some operational jobs. Do not assume that “accommodation provided” means a private apartment. Ask for photographs, the approximate location, number of people sharing the room, utilities, internet, transport to work, and whether anything will be deducted from your salary.

Healthcare

Foreign workers employed in Serbia under the applicable rules enter compulsory social security. Serbia's official guidance states that foreign citizens employed in accordance with the Law on Employment of Foreign Citizens have the same employment rights and obligations as domestic workers when the legal conditions are met. Public health insurance is part of the compulsory system, and for employees the employer is responsible for the relevant contributions.

For emergencies, foreign citizens can receive emergency medical assistance during temporary stays, subject to the applicable rules. If you have a medical condition or regular medication, bring the relevant medical information and check in advance how your coverage works.

Professional jobs: don't assume your home-country qualification transfers automatically

If you are an engineer, teacher, healthcare professional or another regulated profession, check whether the Serbian position is regulated and whether recognition of qualifications, licensing or Serbian-language requirements apply. Manual and operational jobs generally follow a different recruitment pattern than regulated professional roles.

Official sources: [Welcome to Serbia — Healthcare and health insurance](#) · [Welcome to Serbia — Obligations of employers](#)

6. Before You Leave: Your Final Checklist

The final stage is where small mistakes can become expensive. Your goal is to leave your country knowing exactly what job you are going to, who is responsible for you, where you will stay and what you have already paid.

Before booking your trip

- I have the employer's full legal name and can independently verify it.
- I have a written job offer / contract.
- My salary is clearly stated and I know whether it is net or gross.
- I know the exact workplace and expected working hours.
- I know who pays for accommodation and what the accommodation looks like.
- I have a complete written cost breakdown.
- I have receipts or proof for payments already made.
- I know which visa / residence route applies to my nationality and employment.
- I know which Serbian embassy/consulate or other authority is relevant to my application.
- I have copies of my passport, contract and application documents.
- I have enough money to cover the journey and basic expenses until my first salary.

Choosing the right embassy or consulate

Do not assume that every part of the process will happen in the same place. After approval, the Serbian diplomatic or consular mission involved may need to arrange delivery of your passport and insertion of the visa sticker, and in some situations personal attendance may be required. Confirm the procedure directly with the relevant Serbian mission before travelling to another city or country solely for paperwork.

Your most important rule

Never make an irreversible decision based only on a verbal promise. If the salary, job, accommodation, fees or employer identity matters to you, get it in writing and keep a copy.

A final word from me

Serbia can be a good place to build a life and work, but the experience depends heavily on the employer, the job, the accommodation and the expectations you arrive with. The purpose of this guide is not to convince you to come or to discourage you. It is to help you arrive informed.

If you remember only one thing, remember this: verify first, pay second, travel third. Ask questions. Read the documents. Keep copies. And if something does not make sense, stop and get clarification before you commit money.

Useful official resources

Welcome to Serbia — official portal for visas, residence and work permits.

[Visa D information](#) · [Residence & work permit information](#)

Version: September 2026 · Information should be rechecked against official Serbian authorities before making a move.