

Permanent Residency



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[Permanent Residency]

This content provides the legal information foreign nationals need to obtain permanent residency (F-5) in the Republic of Korea, including the concept, benefits, eligibility requirements and procedures, and the grounds for loss and cancellation.

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1. Permanent Residency

1.1. Acquiring Permanent Residency

1.1.1. Permanent Residency

Status and benefits of permanent residency (F-5)

What is "permanent residency (F-5)"?

- "Permanent residency" is a status of stay that allows a foreign national to reside in the Republic of Korea permanently (indefinitely). A foreign national who holds the status of stay as a permanent resident (hereinafter "permanent residency") is not subject to restrictions on scope of activities or length of stay (Subparagraph 2 of Article 10 and Article 10-3(1) of 「Immigration Act」).

Benefits of permanent residency

- A permanent resident is exempt from the re-entry permit requirement if re-entering the Republic of Korea within two years from the date of departure (proviso to Article 30(1) of 「Immigration Act」; Subparagraph 1 of Article 44-2(1) of 「Enforcement Rule of the Immigration Act」).
- A permanent resident shall not be forcibly deported from the Republic of Korea except in any of the following cases (Article 46(2) of 「Immigration Act」; Article 54 of 「Enforcement Rule of the Immigration Act」):
 - A person who has committed the crimes of insurrection or foreign aggression under 「Criminal Act」;
 - A person who has been sentenced to imprisonment or imprisonment without labor for not less than five years and released, and who has committed crimes such as murder, robbery, sexual violence, or narcotics and is deemed by the Minister of Justice to be subject to deportation;
 - A person who has illegally caused a foreign national to enter into or depart from the Republic of Korea, concealed or harbored a foreign national who has illegally entered, or brokered, instigated, or aided any such act.
- A permanent resident aged 18 or older, and as of the reference date for preparing the voter list, is entered on the foreigner registration ledger of the relevant local government for at least three years after obtaining permanent residency may vote in elections for members of local councils and heads of local governments conducted in that district (Subparagraph 3 of Article 15(2) of 「Public Official Election Act」).

Q. May a foreign national with permanent residency (F-5) work freely in the Republic of Korea?

A. Yes. A foreign national with permanent residency (F-5) may take employment in most sectors on the same basis as a Korean national and does not need a separate work permit. However, some fields, such as civil service or certain licensed professions, may have restrictions under applicable laws.

Eligibility and requirements for permanent residency

Eligibility for permanent residency

- The following persons may obtain permanent residency (Article 10-3(2) of 「Immigration Act」; Article 12-2(1) and attached Tables 1-2 and 1-3 of 「Enforcement Decree of the Immigration Act」).

Eligible categories for permanent residency
1. An adult under 「Civil Act」 who has resided in the Republic of Korea for at least five years with a status of stay as intra-company transferee (D-7) to specific activities (E-7) or as a resident (F-2). 2. The spouse or minor child of a national or permanent resident who has resided in the Republic of Korea for at least two years, and a person one of whose parents was a permanent resident at the time of birth. 3. A foreign investor who has invested at least USD 500,000 and employs five or more Korean nationals. 4. A person who has resided in the Republic of Korea for at least two years with an overseas Korean (F-4) status and is recognized as needing to continue to reside. 5. An overseas Korean of foreign nationality who meets the requirements for acquiring nationality. 6. A person who previously held F-2 (Resident) status and is recognized as needing to continue to reside in the Republic of Korea (ethnic Chinese in Korea born in the Republic of Korea). 7. A person who obtained a doctoral degree in an advanced industry field overseas and is employed by a domestic company, or who completed a regular graduate program in the Republic of Korea, obtained a doctoral degree, and is employed by a domestic company. 8. A holder of a bachelor's degree in an advanced industry field, a master's degree or higher in a general field, or a technical qualification, who has resided in the Republic of Korea for at least three years, is employed by a domestic company, and receives wages at or above a specified threshold.

9. A person recognized as having outstanding abilities in specific fields such as science, management, education, culture and arts, or sports.
10. A person recognized as having made special contributions to the Republic of Korea.
11. A person aged 60 or older who receives a pension of not less than a specified amount from overseas.
12. A person with a status of stay for working visit (H-2) who has worked in manufacturing for at least four years.
13. A person who meets standards for age, academic background, income, etc. as determined and publicly notified by the Minister of Justice, who has resided for at least three years with a status of stay as a resident (F-2), and is recognized as needing to continue to reside.
14. A person who has invested in assets such as real estate or who, as an officer or shareholder of a corporation, has maintained an investment continuously for at least five years with a status of stay as a resident (F-2), and is recognized as needing to continue to reside in the Republic of Korea, and such person's spouse and children.
15. A person who has continuously resided in the Republic of Korea for at least three years with a status of stay as for technology startup (D-8), has attracted investment of at least KRW 300,000,000, and employs at least two Korean nationals.
16. A person who has invested at least KRW 3,000,000,000 on condition of maintaining the investment for at least five years, and such person's spouse and children.
17. Essential professional personnel for research and development facilities who have continuously resided for at least three years in the Republic of Korea with a status of stay as for corporate investment (D-8).
18. A person who has resided in the Republic of Korea for at least two years

with a status of stay as a resident (F-2) obtained on the basis of recognition as a refugee.
19. A person who has resided in the Republic of Korea for at least two years with a status of stay as a resident (F-2) obtained by having made special contributions to the Republic of Korea or by contributing to the promotion of the public interest.

※For detailed eligibility categories and requirements for obtaining permanent residency (F-5), please refer to 『Foreigner Stay Guide Manual』 (Ministry of Justice Korea Immigration Service).

Requirements for permanent residency

- A person who seeks to obtain permanent residency must meet all of the following requirements (Article 10-3(2) of 「Immigration Act」; Article 18-4(1) of 「Enforcement Rule of the Immigration Act」).

Requirements	Details
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1. Must show good conduct, including observance of the laws of the Republic of Korea	• Must not fall under any of the following: √ A person for whom five years have not elapsed since the completion or exemption of execution of a sentence of imprisonment or heavier punishment; √ A person for whom five years have not elapsed since a suspended sentence of imprisonment or heavier punishment became final and conclusive; √ A person for whom three years have not elapsed since the payment of a criminal fine following a sentence of a fine; √ A person for whom five years have not elapsed since violating provisions under 「Immigration Act」 relating to possession of a visa/entry permit or to immigration inspection; √ A person who, within the five years prior to the date of the permanent residency application, violated 「Immigration Act」 three or more times (excluding cases where only an administrative fine was imposed); √ A person for whom seven years have not elapsed since departure under an order of deportation; √ A person for whom five years have not elapsed since departure under an order to depart; √ Any other person who falls under a comparable ground as separately determined by the Minister of Justice.
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2. Must be able to sustain a livelihood either through personal income and assets or those of family members living together	• A person whom the Minister of Justice deems will not adversely affect national finances, such as where the combined income of the applicant and cohabiting family members is at least equal to the previous year's per-capita gross national income (GNI) announced by the Bank of Korea, or where household assets are at or above the median level.
3. Must possess the basic competencies necessary to continue residing in the Republic of Korea, such as Korean language ability and understanding of Korean society and culture	• A person who has completed the social integration program or scored at least 60 out of 100 on the comprehensive assessment. ※ Social integration program: Korean language education, education on understanding Korean society, and other education, information, and counseling deemed necessary by the Minister of Justice to support the social adaptation of foreigners.

Application for and acquisition of permanent residency

Application for permanent residency

- A foreign national who wishes to apply for permanent residency status must file the application with the competent Immigration Office/Branch/Division before the current period of stay for the present status expires (Article 24(1) of 「Immigration Act」; Article 30(1) of 「Enforcement Decree of the Immigration Act」).
- When applying for permanent residency status, the applicant must submit the following common documents together with status-specific documents [『[Foreigner Stay Guide Manual](#)』 (Ministry of Justice Korea Immigration Service)]:

Common documents
1. Integrated application form (including revenue stamp) 2. Passport 3. Alien registration card 4. Proof of place of stay 5. Certificate of criminal record from abroad (unless exempt) 6. Affidavit of guarantee (unless exempt) 7. Documents related to livelihood maintenance (annual income) requirements (submitted according to income holder) 8. Documents proving fulfillment of the basic competency requirements (unless exempt) 9. Basic information sheet for applicants for F-5 (permanent residency) status

※For documents specific to each permanent resident category, please refer to 『Foreigner Stay Guide Manual』 (Ministry of Justice Korea Immigration Service).

Acquisition of permanent residency

- A foreign national who has applied for permanent residency status will obtain such status by receiving permission for change of status of sojourn if, upon review, the applicant is found to meet the eligibility and requirements for permanent residency (Article 30(3) of 「Enforcement Decree of the Immigration Act」).
- A foreign national who has obtained permanent residency status must complete alien registration in accordance with the changed status and replace the existing alien registration card with a permanent resident card (Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Article 31 and Article 33(1) of 「Immigration Act」).

※ Permanent resident card renewal

Q. I hold Korean permanent residency status (F-5). Do permanent residents need to extend their period of stay or complete a separate renewal procedure?

A. No. Permanent residency status has no time limit on the period of stay, so there is no need to extend it. However, a permanent resident's permanent resident card is valid for ten years and must be renewed before expiration. If it is not renewed before the expiry date, an administrative fine of up to KRW 2,000,000 may be imposed depending on the period of delay (Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Article 33, and Subparagraph 4 of 100(1) of 「Immigration Act」).

Loss and revocation of permanent residency

Loss of permanent residency

- If a permanent resident does not re-enter the Republic of Korea by the end of the re-entry permit period or the re-entry permit exemption period (within two years from the date of departure), permanent residency status may be lost (proviso to Article 30(1) of 「Immigration Act」; Subparagraph 1 of Article 44-2(1) of 「Enforcement Rule of the Immigration Act」).
- However, if a foreign national cannot re-enter within the period due to illness or other unavoidable reasons, the person must obtain an extension of the re-entry permit period from the head of a diplomatic mission abroad before the period ends (Article 30(3) of 「Immigration Act」; Article 39-8 of 「Enforcement Rule of the Immigration Act」).

Revocation of permanent residency

- Permanent residency status may be revoked in the following cases (Article 89-2(1) of 「Immigration Act」; Article 94-4 and Subparagraph 16 of attached Table 1-3 of 「Enforcement Decree of the Immigration Act」).
- Where permanent residency status was obtained by fraud or other improper means.
- Where the person committed a crime prescribed in 「Criminal Act」, 「Act on the Aggravated Punishment, etc. of Specific Violent Crimes」, 「Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment, etc. of Sexual Crimes」, etc. (Article 76-2 of 「Enforcement Rule of the Immigration Act」), and a sentence of imprisonment or imprisonment without labor of at least two years has become final and conclusive.
- Where, within the last five years, the person violated 「Immigration Act」 or another law and was sentenced to imprisonment or imprisonment without labor, and the aggregate of finalized prison terms is three years or more.
- Where a person who obtained permanent residency status on the condition of maintaining an investment of KRW 3,000,000,000 or more for at least five years violates that condition.
- Where the person has engaged in acts contrary to the national interests of the Republic of Korea in terms of national security, foreign relations, or the national economy.
- A foreign national whose permanent residency status has been revoked will be issued an order to depart, and if the person fails to depart by the specified deadline, a deportation order may be issued (Paragraphs 1 and 4 of Article 68 of 「Immigration Act」).

찾기쉬운 생활법령

※ Inquiries regarding acquisition of permanent residency

- Website: Korea Immigration Service (<https://www.immigration.go.kr>)
- Hotline: Immigration Contact Center (☎ 1345)