

# Returning Residents

(Toshav Chozer)



Have you decided to make your way home to Israel?

Welcome back - we're happy to have you here. Let's provide you with essential information to help you navigate the process of resettling in Israel, both before and after your return.

It's important to understand that the criteria for a 'returning resident' (Toshav Chozer)' can differ across various departments, impacting eligibility periods and associated rights. This might seem daunting but Belong is here to make sure your transition is as smooth, clear, and straightforward as possible. Let's break down what it means to be a Toshav Chozer, starting with the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.

**Belong**  
The Smart Way to Israel

# Who

is a Toshav Chozer  
According to the  
Ministry of Aliyah  
and Integration  
(*Misrad Haklita*)?



To be recognized as a returning resident (Toshav Chozer) by the [Ministry of Aliyah and Integration](#) (Misrad Haklita), you need to meet several criteria. Firstly, you must have Israeli citizenship, which requires an Israeli ID or passport as proof. Additionally, you must be at least 17 years old at the time of your return to Israel.

In terms of residence, you should have lived abroad for at least 2 consecutive years. However, for “returning scientists” or “business entrepreneurs,” the requirement is 3 years. During this time, you should not have spent more than 4 months in Israel per year, unless you’re in entrepreneurship or science, where the limit extends to 5 years.

## Exemptions

For a Toshav Chozer, there’s a notable exception regarding time spent abroad: if the stay was part of an emissary mission, it doesn’t disqualify you from being considered a returning resident unless less than 5 years have passed since that mission ended.

Additionally, to qualify as a Toshav Chozer, neither you, your spouse, nor your parents should have been stationed abroad as an employee of specific Israeli or Jewish institutions. These include any authority of the State of Israel, such as government companies, The World Zionist Organization, The Jewish Agency, The Jewish National Fund, Keren HaYesod, The United Jewish Appeal, or The Israel Bonds.

## Understanding Eligibility for Toshav Chozer Status

Eligibility for Toshav Chozer status depends on how long you’ve lived abroad, typically ranging from 2 to 5 years, as previously mentioned. To confirm your status, you’ll need to visit a Ministry of Aliyah and Integration [office](#) in Israel near your residence.

During the visit, officials will review your passport’s entry and exit stamps and check records at the Ministry of the Interior to confirm your time spent abroad. It’s a good idea to keep older passports, as they might be required for this assessment.

# Who is a Toshav Chozer According to the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration (*Misrad Haklita*)?

## Period of Eligibility for Assistance

The period during which you can receive assistance and services from the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration is 24 months from the date of your return to Israel, with assured income limited to 12 months from your return date. Additionally, [customs](#) concessions are available for 9 months from your return date, applicable to individuals over the age of 16.

## Procedures for Receiving Eligibility for Assistance

To receive eligibility for Toshav Chozer status, start by consulting with a personal counselor at the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration's nearest branch or bureau to apply for a Returning Resident's Certificate (*Te'udat Toshav Chozer*). Ensure your Israeli identity card (*Te'udat Zehut*) is up to date at the Population Registry beforehand. This update helps streamline the process of obtaining your Toshav Chozer Certificate.

If you didn't register online before returning to Israel, you must complete a "returning resident [questionnaire](#)." This involves presenting your passport, updated *Te'udat Zehut*, and other required documents to the absorption counselor. To receive financial assistance, make sure to open a bank account in Israel.

In some cases, a Toshav Chozer might be classified as a child or spouse, aligning with the criteria of a returning minor, immigrant citizen, or new Oleh. This classification can impact your eligibility and benefits.

# Who

is a Toshav Chozer  
According to  
the Customs  
Department?



## The Department of Customs defines a Toshav Chozer in 3 possible ways:

- An individual who lived in Israel, spent at least 2 years abroad, and has now returned to Israel. This is similar to the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration's definition.
- A person who made Aliyah to Israel for a second time, as outlined in the Ministry of the Interior guidelines.
- A person classified by the Israel Tax Authority as a Toshav Chozer for customs purposes based on specific criteria.
- For applying for a customs duty exemption as a Toshav Chozer, you can access the application form [here](#).

## The Department of Customs requires the following documents to confirm your Toshav Chozer status:

- Your current Israeli identity card (Te'udat Zehut), which should include your current residential address.
- Valid passports for all family members, which serve as proof of residence abroad. It's advisable to keep previous passports, including foreign ones, as these might be needed.
- Certificates related to education or professional qualifications.
- A detailed inventory list for customs purposes, outlining all items you plan to bring into Israel.



# Who

## is a Long-Term Toshav Chozer According to the Tax Department?



The Tax Department (*rashut hamisim*) considers someone a “long-term resident” if they return to permanent residency in Israel after living abroad for at least 10 consecutive years. To determine a Toshav Chozer’s tax obligations, authorities assess various aspects of the individual’s life in Israel. They examine factors like:

- Where the Toshav Chozer’s permanent home is located
- Where the Toshav Chozer and their family live
- The usual or permanent place of business or employment
- Where they have significant economic interests
- Where they participate in activities with various organizations, unions, or institutions

Two key points can help determine if Israel is the center of a Toshav Chozer’s life for tax purposes:

- If they spent 183 days or more in Israel during a specific tax year
- If they spent at least 30 days in Israel during the current tax year, and the total time spent in Israel across that year plus the two preceding years is 425 days or more

### Residency Criteria for Toshav Chozer under the Minister of Finance

The Minister of Finance, with the approval of the Knesset’s Finance Committee, has the authority to set conditions for determining who qualifies as a resident of Israel for tax purposes. This authority allows individuals who might not meet traditional residency criteria to be deemed residents of Israel if they meet specific conditions. To be considered a Toshav Chozer under these circumstances, individuals should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- They are employed by the State of Israel
- They work for a local authority in Israel
- They are employed by the Jewish Agency in Israel
- They work for the National Fund for Israel or the United Israel Fund (Keren Hayesod)
- They are employees of a government company
- They work for a state authority or a corporation established by law

# Who is a Long-Term Toshav Chozer According to the Tax Department?

The Ministry of Finance holds the final authority to determine whether specific Toshav Chozer should be considered residents or not, even if they meet the previously mentioned criteria. This power is subject to various conditions set by the Ministry.

In 2006, the Minister of Finance issued Income Tax Regulations, providing guidelines to determine who qualifies as a resident of Israel for tax purposes. These regulations account for scenarios where someone might not meet typical residency conditions but can still be considered a resident in certain situations. For example:

- If the Toshav Chozer is employed by the State of Israel, with the employment relationship established while they were a resident of Israel.
- If the Toshav Chozer works for a government employer and began their employment while residing in Israel, they can maintain residency status if they haven't worked for this employer outside Israel for more than five years. However, the tax assessor may override this condition if other circumstances apply.

Understanding these criteria is crucial for 2 primary reasons related to tax:

- **Income Tax:** It affects your obligation to report income to tax authorities and pay income tax in Israel.
- **Real Estate Taxes:** It determines your liability for taxes related to real estate, such as appreciation tax and purchase tax. Under the Real Estate Taxation [Law](#), tax exemptions and reliefs are typically available only to residents of Israel.

## Financial Assistance for Toshav Chozer

As a Toshav Chozer, you are entitled to financial [aid](#). To access these funds, you need to provide details of an Israeli bank account registered in your name. This step is essential for processing and receiving financial support.

## Health Insurance

If you returned to Israel as a Toshav Chozer after living abroad and lost your residency status, it's critical to re-establish your residency with the National Insurance Institute (bituach leumi). This allows you to access National Insurance benefits and healthcare services. You must also set up your national insurance and health insurance contributions.

Once you receive initial approval confirming your eligibility, ensure you have health insurance. This can be arranged through the National Insurance Institute, either via their [website](#) or by calling their customer service at \*6050 or 04-8812345.

To formalize your Toshav Chozer status with National Insurance, complete the Online Recognition Form for Returning Residents. This step is crucial for ensuring your eligibility for National Insurance benefits and services.

# *Returning*

## to Israel with Minor Children (under 18)



If you return to Israel with children, especially in cases of separation, divorce, or when one spouse arrives ahead of the other, you must provide specific documentation:

- **Separated or Divorced Parents:** A notarized affidavit or an affidavit before the Israeli consul general from the non-returning spouse, granting consent for the children to live with the returning parent in Israel.
- **Spouses Arriving Separately:** Similar documentation is required when one spouse arrives with the children before the other spouse.
- **Alternative Documentation:** A court ruling that shows the returning parent has sole legal custody of the children.

These documents are crucial for the following reasons:

- **Rights from the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration:** To claim various rights and benefits for the children.
- **Customs Requirements:** To process and receive customs rights for the children.

Additionally, enrollment in kindergartens and schools should be based on the current residential address registered with the Ministry of Population. This ensures children are placed in the appropriate educational frameworks.

# Toshav Chozer's

## Rights & Benefits



A Toshav Chozer (returning resident) is eligible for a range of rights and benefits from three primary institutions: the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, the Customs Authorities (Ministry of Finance), and the Income Tax Authority.

Here's an overview of the rights you can expect in each category:

### **Financial Assistance from the [Ministry of Aliyah and Integration](#)**

- The recognition of care and assistance status extends 12-24 months from the date of return to Israel.
- Income guarantee is available for 12 months.
- A returning resident certificate can be obtained.
- Discounts on El-Al flight tickets and extra baggage allowances.
- Access to conversion and professional training courses.
- Licensing and certification for various professions.
- Placement for academics in employment within government, public institutions, and the private sector.
- Assistance for scientists, business entrepreneurs, and artists.
- Employment placement for non-academics in the private sector for up to six months.
- Housing assistance for renting or purchasing according to specific guidelines.
- Assistance for lone soldiers.



# Toshav Chozer's Rights & Benefits

## Customs Authorities (Ministry of Finance) Benefits

- Exemption from customs duties for personal importation applies for nine months from your return to Israel. Note that IDF service (regular or reserve) isn't included in the calculation of eligibility for those over one year old.
- The laws differentiate between short-term Toshav Chozer (over two years) and long-term Toshav Chozer (over six years):
- Short-term returning residents generally have fewer benefits and quicker tax obligations due to their shorter absence from Israel.
- Long-term returning residents are eligible for more substantial benefits and tax concessions, often resembling those given to new Olim. This can include significant tax breaks, like exemptions from reporting overseas income and assets for up to 10 years, thanks to Amendment 168.
- Purchase tax relief is available for long-term returning residents who bought an apartment before returning to Israel.

## Income Tax Authority Benefits

- For returning residents who stayed abroad between six and ten years.
- For returning residents abroad for over ten years, known as veteran returning residents.
- Offers a 10-year concession with extensive exemptions for all income outside Israel, along with broad exemptions from reporting those assets.
- Amendment 168 to the Income Tax Ordinance provides similar tax benefits to those granted to new Olim.
- A foreign resident must inform the Tax Authority on a special [form](#) within 90 days of arrival in Israel for an income tax adjustment year. The "adjustment year" lasts one year from your return date.


## Education and Local Authority Benefits


- Assistance in acquiring a language for returning residents aged 16 and older, with special permission from the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.
- Tutoring in Hebrew for children from pre-compulsory Kindergarten to 12th grade, requiring proof of a four-year stay abroad from the Ministry of Education.
- Discounts on pre-compulsory Kindergarten fees from the [Ministry of Education](#) and local authorities.

## Health Insurance

If you stayed abroad for over a year and a half and haven't paid health insurance premiums for at least 1 year, or if you revoked your residency, you might not immediately qualify for health [services](#) upon return. A waiting period is calculated based on the date of return to Israel recorded in the returning resident's certificate. The waiting period is one month per year of absence, with a maximum of 6 months.

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