



NORWEGIAN GUIDE SERVICE

- where the story begins -

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General

What is Dispatch personnel/Dispatch Team?

Dispatch personnel (aka 'Dispatchers') are the focus of our Dispatch operations on the pier, overseeing outgoing/incoming tours. The Dispatch Team's task is to implement and coordinate the planned schedule for the day, and - when necessary - adapt plans to ensure a safe and successful day for all. Dispatch personnel are also responsible for maintaining communication with the ship's Shore Excursions Team on the day of their visit, as well as supporting Guides and guests.

You will be part of a small team, either working together or separately depending on the complexity of the day.

Do I need to be Norwegian or from Bergen to become Dispatch personnel?

Some of our team are Norwegian while others are from different parts of the world. You do not need to be Norwegian or from Bergen to become a Dispatcher with Norwegian Guide Service (NGS) but you do need to be genuinely in love with Bergen and Norway. Working as a Dispatcher means working in an international environment, and we see the cultural diversity of our Dispatchers as an asset.

Do I need to know Norwegian to become Dispatch personnel?

You don't need to know Norwegian to become Dispatch personnel, as the core educational literature and training is in English and daily working language is English. Knowing Norwegian is however useful, so we do warmly encourage you to learn and use it if you don't already.

What is the season in Bergen?

The season is defined by the tourist activity in Bergen. Cruise ships start arriving in January and the last are leaving Bergen in December. However, the high season in Bergen is from the end of April to mid-September, with June usually being the busiest month of the season. Refer to Bergen Havn's website for statistics on cruise calls at <https://bergenhavn.no/en/cruise-en/cruise-statistics>

How can I apply?

Firstly take your time to carefully read the job description on our website to familiarize yourself with our offer and the job requirements. After you have decided that becoming a Dispatcher with NGS is something for you, you need to apply via our online form. After that we take it from there together.

What do I get in return for working with NGS?

We are passionate about Dispatching and we view it as a profoundly human experience. Working with Dispatchers gives us a chance to help them become better and do the best work they can. The skills you acquire as Dispatch personnel will help you for the rest of your life: how to define and maintain an overview; how to speak to people so that people will listen; how to lead groups of people; how to manage emergencies and difficult situations; how to react professionally to complaints and emotional outbreaks, and many other skills. We operate over 80% of the cruise calls, which means our Dispatchers have a large percentage of the assignments in Bergen. You will also benefit from an international environment of professionals to work with and a chance to develop and certify skills to build a career.

Can I develop a career with NGS?

Once you become Dispatch personnel you also have the possibility to return to the Dispatch Team for NGS the following seasons. NGS is also a part of a larger network of companies all over Norway and Northern Europe. Working as Dispatch personnel with NGS might just be the stepping stone towards future career in the service industry. Our network is continuously growing, and should you apply for other positions, starting as a Dispatcher is a great way to get noticed.

What are the steps towards becoming Dispatch personnel?

You will find details of the application process on our website.

Training

Do I need to do the training to become Dispatch personnel?

Yes; everyone who wants to become Dispatch personnel with NGS must complete the on-site training led by experienced Dispatch personnel. This is because there are specific tasks, routines, procedures and techniques as well as quality standards required by our company and our clients.

Will I get paid while I am doing the course?

Dispatchers work as freelancers which implies that when they accept assignments they bring with them the skills and competence to fulfill the assignment to a satisfactory level. It is the responsibility of every Dispatcher to acquire and develop these skills and competences. This is why the Dispatch Course is not paid. We aim to get you working as soon as possible after your completion of our Basic Requirements training. The education and certification programme to become a Dispatcher is an investment in your future.

Do I have to pay for the course?

The costs for the courses, seminars and materials are sponsored by NGS. Dispatchers do not get paid for training, but attending these and continuously developing your competence will open up possibilities and opportunities to take on longer and more complex assignments. When Dispatchers develop their knowledge and skills, they should view it as a long term investment that will pay back over the years to come.

How is the training organised?

You will find details of the training on our website.

What do I need to bring for the training?

You will need to invest the time and undivided attention necessary to get as much out of it as you can. You will however be required to come to the on-site training dressed smartly and appropriately for the weather - please refer to our FAQ on uniform.

You will be given details on how to obtain your branded clothing in time for your first assignment.

Am I guaranteed paid assignments after the training?

If you successfully complete and pass the course, you will receive a certificate and work agreement that enable you to work as a Dispatcher with NGS. We will then endeavour to give you as many assignments

as possible, as per your availability, requirements, skills and the needs of our clients. You will find more details on assignments and expected work in the Employment section of this FAQ.

If I want to come and work next summer with NGS, do I have to go through the selection process again?

No. Once you have received your certification you are qualified to work for NGS in the future. We will of course update our training each season.

Is there further training during the season?

After your initial experience from the Basic Requirements training, you have the possibility to join your fellow Dispatchers as observers (trainees).

We also provide Dispatchers with opportunities to gain a better insight into the scope of their responsibilities by going on tour with real Guides and guests as an observer.

Employment

Will I be employed as Dispatch personnel?

Dispatch personnel are hired as freelancers, and not as employees. You agree to NGS being the entity that provides you with Dispatch assignments, and you accept the ones you can work. This however does not guarantee a certain amount of assignments or volume of work from NGS, but that we will provide assignments as we get the requests from our clients. The working relationship with NGS is regulated by a written agreement in which NGS is a client hiring the services of the Dispatch personnel as a contractor. You do not need to register as a company in order to work as a freelancer.

Do I have to pay tax?

Yes, you will have to pay tax. Unless you are registered as self-employed in Norway, NGS is legally required to automatically pay tax for you in accordance with your registered Norwegian tax card. You must make sure you apply for and have the correct tax card registered with the Norwegian tax office (Skatteetaten).

Tax is paid by our accounting department from your gross amount before you are paid your net salary for each working month.

Do I get employee insurance?

Being consultants to NGS, regular employee insurance does not apply to Dispatchers. However, you will be covered by an obligatory Norwegian occupational injury insurance for medical emergencies when at work. If you are a resident of Norway, then you have the standard health insurance provided by the social security system. EU/EEA citizens are covered for most health expenses by their European Health Insurance. Very often our Dispatchers from other countries obtain travel insurance for convenience.

Do I have the right for paid sick-leave?

Freelancers do not have the right to paid sick-leave. The argument goes that since you are not obliged to take all assignments you are offered, the right for paid sick-leave does not apply. After the 17th day you are declared sick, you have a right to apply for sick leave from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

Do I have to stay and work the entire season?

To plan the season, it is important for us to agree the period during which you are available to take on assignments. NGS will prioritise Dispatch personnel who can and show the desire to work consistently. A Dispatcher's availability is a large factor in the number of possible assignments they will be offered during the season.

Is this a full-time job? How much can I expect to work?

Dispatching is not a full-time job, nor a part-time job with predetermined working hours. As a Dispatcher, you accept assignments that NGS will offer based on the demand for each ship that calls Bergen.

May, June, July and August are the peak months, with June being the busiest month. We do not guarantee a minimum or maximum number of hours. Many of our Dispatchers based in Bergen work around 35 to 40 hours per month in the high season while others work less.

Dispatchers are paid per assignment, with the rate reflecting the assignment duration and role. Duration of assignments varies between 5 and 10 hours, with the average being 9.5 hours over the season.

How are assignments assigned to Dispatch personnel?

Assignments are allocated based on the demand from NGS' clients. Dispatch personnel will be assigned according to skills, attitude and dedication. We aim to assign Dispatch personnel as fairly as possible throughout the season.

How much can I expect to earn?

It is difficult to calculate what you will earn. June, July and August present most opportunities for earning. The income mostly depends on the demand from clients and your availability during the season.

A newly-qualified Dispatcher who is fully available may earn around 100,000 NOK before tax in their first year. Returning Dispatchers are paid at a higher rate for their loyalty and experience, and may earn between 180,000 and 240,000 NOK before tax.

Can I do other paid work while working as Dispatch personnel?

Due to the level of the demand over the season, Dispatch personnel should consider this as their primary occupation particularly during the peak season.

When do Dispatch personnel get paid?

You will get paid on the 15th every month for the assignments completed the month before. For example, all assignments worked in May will be paid on the 15th of June. Please bear this in mind when applying to make sure you have enough funds to support yourself until your first income.

Administration

Do I need a mobile phone and Norwegian phone number? Do I get refunded for the costs of my calls/SMS?

You must have a contactable mobile phone to work as Dispatch personnel; mobiles are required for receiving and confirming assignments. When on assignment you will be issued with a work phone for all work related calls.

Is there a uniform? Do I have to pay for it?

Our Dispatch personnel are required to dress smartly:

- A white or black shirt/polo shirt
- Black trousers/skirt
- Black shoes

You will also receive a weatherproof jacket to wear when you are on the pier. You will receive a yellow visibility vest, which is obligatory on certain piers in Bergen.

Are there any other clothing requirements?

Since Bergen can be such a rainy city, we recommend that you are prepared for the weather with rain boots, rain trousers, wool underwear, etc.

International applicants

Is there anything I need to do to be able to work in Norway?

It is your responsibility to check whether you are able to work in Norway. Please consult the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) website at www.udi.no/en and the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA) at www.sua.no/en for more information.

Do I need a work permit?

Citizens of an EU/EEA country are allowed to visit and work for 3 months. After 3 months you have to register with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). It is your responsibility to check whether you need a work permit. Consult the UDI website at www.udi.no/en and the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA) at www.sua.no/en

Do I need a tax card?

Yes. You can apply for a tax deduction card in person at the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA) in Bergen. You will need to fill in the relevant forms and provide documentation to prove your requirement to pay tax. Refer to <https://www.skatteetaten.no/en/person/foreign/are-you-intending-to-work-in-norway/tax-deduction-cards>

Will I have to pay tax? And if so, how much?

Yes, you will need to pay Norwegian Income Tax. This usually amounts to 20% to 36% of the income. However, if you overpay tax during the summer, this will be refunded the year after; likewise, if you have underpaid your tax, you will have to repay what is owed. Norway has instated since 2019 a new system

called PAYE (Kildeskatt) that taxes 25% automatically from your income. We do not recommend going for this system as you cannot get paid back the next year in case you paid more tax than you were meant to.

Do I need a visa to come to Norway?

Citizens of Nordic and EU/EEA countries do not need a visa to come to Norway. It is, however, your responsibility to check if you do need a visa to come to Norway. You can do that here: <https://www.udi.no/en/want-to-apply/>

Does Norwegian Guide Service organise accommodation?

Dispatch personnel are responsible for finding accommodation in advance of their arrival to Bergen. We strongly advise you to find accommodation in the city centre as this makes life and work much easier.

How do I find a place to stay in Bergen?

Most people looking for a place to rent use websites such as www.hybel.no or www.finn.no

How much does it cost to rent in Bergen?

Prices vary depending on location, size and standard, but in Bergen city centre you can find a room in a shared flat for as little as 3700 NOK and as much as 7000 NOK. The average is around 5000 NOK per person. On top of that you should usually calculate electricity costs. Be advised that many places will require a 2 or 3 months deposit which will usually be returned at the end of your stay.

What should my budget be to live in Bergen?

You should consider a minimum of 7500 NOK per month to cover living costs (accommodation, electricity, internet, phone etc.) and food (home cooked). Food costs could be around 2000 NOK per person, per month.

Approximate costs per person, in Norwegian Krone NOK (calculated in 2019):

Accommodation pr. Month - 5000 (city centre area, room in a shared flat, including internet)

Food pr. Month - 2000

Social pr. Month - 800

Electricity pr. Month (summertime usage) - 350 (unless the electricity is included in your rent)

Internett at home pr. month: 450 (but is usually included in rent)

Phone pr. Month - 150

Transport options:

Bus/tram travel pass (monthly) - 780 per month, 38 for 1,5 hour ticket.

City bikes (for the year) - 399

Clothes for season - 800

What other financial practicalities are there to consider?

Please be aware that many landlords require two or three months of rent as a refundable deposit.

Your salary will be paid out monthly on the 15th of the following month.

Also remember that your salary amount depends on the assignments that you have worked - so your first and last salary payments will usually be less since you may not have been guiding for the entire month.

Students with valid Student ID can often get discounts on travel passes and other services.

Application

I have worked with a different Dispatch agency in the past. Can I still apply?

We welcome Dispatch personnel that have worked with sister companies within our network.

The deadline has passed. Can I still apply?

If the deadline for applications has passed you can no longer apply.

I am not available throughout the whole season. Can I still apply?

You can still apply but Dispatch personnel who are available for the whole season have an advantage in the recruitment process.

I do not have enough funds to support myself during the guide course and training until my first salary. Can I still apply?

After the training period you will start working and the first salary you will get will be on the 15th, the month after. It is your responsibility to provide for yourself during the training period. If you cannot manage this season, we hope you can try again next season.

I do not have any previous work experience. Can I still apply?

Not having work experience does not mean you cannot become fantastic Dispatch personnel. But you must prove in the application process that you have experience of being committed to work as an employment or volunteer in a charitable or non-governmental organization, and that you have people that can endorse you as a worker.

I do not live in Bergen. Can I still apply?

Yes. But you do have to be in Bergen and available for the on-site training so that you can start working as Dispatch personnel.

I do not live in the city centre. Can I still apply?

Yes, although we have experienced that those living outside the city centre have a higher chance of being late because of trouble with their means of transportation (bus, tram etc.)

I do not have a passport and I live outside of Norway. Can I still apply?

You must make sure to obtain a passport by the time you travel to Norway. Those who have come to Norway and did not have a passport, have had difficulties with the paperwork (opening a bank account, getting a tax card etc.)

I am not an EU/EEA citizen. Can I still apply?

Unfortunately not, unless you already reside in Europe and have the appropriate documentation to live and work in Norway. It is your responsibility to check that you are entitled to live and work in Norway. Check via <https://www.udi.no/en/>

I don't currently live in Bergen. If I get invited for an interview how will that work?

All interviews will include an online video call first, from which we will make a preliminary selection of candidates.

We will then invite you to an in-person interview in Bergen, from which we will make our final decision.

Therefore you will need to be available for the in-person interview in Bergen, but we will try to schedule a date that fits both our schedules.

I don't have a visa for Norway. Can I still apply?

You must be entitled to work and live in Norway by the time you apply. This includes the visa. It is your responsibility to check that you are entitled to live and work in Norway. Check via <https://www.udi.no/en/>

I don't have a work permit for Norway. Can I still apply?

You must be entitled to work and live in Norway by the time you apply. This includes the application for a work permit. It is your responsibility to check that you are entitled to live and work in Norway. Check via <https://www.udi.no/en/>