

We work for
sustainable
development



Länsstyrelserna

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WE WORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This brochure has been produced on behalf of Sweden's twenty-one county administrative boards.

Graphic production: Pelle Rumert, Syre, Östersund.

Photographers: Fredrik Herrlander, Marie Birkel, Denny Calvo, Claes Ahlström.

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The County Administrative Board – close to you

Because we are a link between people and municipalities on the one hand, and between the government, Parliament and national authorities on the other, we have a unique position in the democratic system. Sweden is divided into twenty-one counties; each county has a County Administrative Board and a county governor. The County Administrative Board is a coordinating national authority with supervisory responsibilities. We are also a public service authority and can hear appeals.

The County Administrative Board is the most versatile of Sweden's authorities; our issues and our competence cover the entire social span. We have lawyers, biologists, architects, foresters, engineers, public relations officers, archaeologists, social workers, veterinarians, sociologists, economists and many others.

Our aims are to provide good service with open accountability that is based on the rule of law. Changes in society are resulting in increasing demands for accountability and accessibility. The County Administrative Board are developing services that help private persons and organisations to carry out their tasks regardless of time and place. This new form of administration is called the "e-gouvernement".

Electronic services should be simple to use and facilitate the County Administrative Board's own administration.

This brochure provides more information about what we do and why we do it. You are welcome to turn to your County Administrative Board with questions and opinions.

Welcome!







What we do

The County Administrative Board must ensure that decisions made by the government and Parliament, and which affect the county, are as effective as possible. Therefore, we:

- provide advice and information
- monitor and check that various organisations comply with laws and guidelines
- perform our duties as an authority — issuing permits, hearing appeals against municipal decisions and compiling information
- coordinate the county's strengths by taking initiatives and organising meetings and activities
- provide contributions to various kinds of activities.

We also have other tasks as an authority, where we make decisions or impose measures in accordance with laws and other democratically made decisions.

Some examples are the payment of state wage guarantees, registration of foundations, authorisation of security companies and wrecking yards, as well as rent deposits. We also make decisions about licences for pawnshops, bingo halls and some lotteries, surveillance cameras and the disposal of cremated remains.

Protecting the environment

Our task as regards environmental protection means that we work with businesses and activities in the county that pose environmental hazards. Actions that could damage the environment may not be carried out without permission from the County Administrative Board. Examples of hazardous activities are surface treatments, foundries, the pulp and paper industry, energy facilities, sawmills, agriculture, ports, waste depots, food industries, wastewater treatment plants and quarrying or mining. In accordance with the Swedish Environmental Code we are responsible for the inquiries into, and supervision of, the larger activities in the county. When carrying out an inquiry we evaluate the activity's environmental impact, based on the environmental impact assessment that was submitted.

Decisions about permits are notified by the Environmental Court, or the Environmental Licensing Delegation of the County Administrative Board, and regulate how environmental impact is to be minimised.

The County Administrative Board also works with the treatment of polluted areas in order to reduce contamination in the surrounding area. We besides supervise and carry out some inquiries into water-related operations such as filling in, construction in water and other actions that affect water conditions.

The County Administrative Board also works comprehensively as a coordinator with environmental targets and health protection issues. We ensure that organisations and activities adhere to the Environmental Code and its regulations, court judgements and other decisions. We are as well responsible for supervisory guidance for the municipalities. This means that we evaluate, follow up and coordinate supervisory activities and provide support and advice to other supervisory authorities.







Nature conservation and management

The County Administrative Board's work with nature conservation deals with protecting valuable areas and species, both in water and on land. Our activities should also make it easier for people to use the outdoors and see what nature has to offer. The natural landscape, natural resources and biological diversity should be both preserved and developed.

We work with the county's protected areas and Natura

2000 sites, which are part of the EU's network for nature protection in Europe. The main aim of a nature reserve is to protect a certain habitat and, frequently, to make the area accessible to the general public. This means establish new reserves and that we administer existing ones using management measures such as clearing and constructing fences and paths.



Another important task for nature conservation is surveying Sweden's flora and fauna. Each part of the country has its own unique nature with different conditions for plant and animal life. We make inventories of the occurrence of rare and red listed animals and plants, as well as proposing various conservation measures in order to ensure a rich flora and fauna. The information we collect is besides used for municipal planning, different types of development and as a basis for improving nature conservation and outdoor activities.

Environmental objectives

The Swedish Parliament has decided that we must have a coherent environmental policy for a sustainable Sweden. The overall objective is that coming generations will inherit a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved.

Work on environmental objectives is based on sixteen national environmental quality objectives and seventy-two national interim objectives. The County Administrative Boards have been assigned the task of adapting, defining and giving a concrete form to fifteen of the sixteen national environmental quality objectives, in order to suit them to regional conditions. The Swedish Forest Agency is responsible for the sixteenth objective, Sustainable Forests.

The environmental objectives include climate and energy issues, chemical management, waste issues and

treatment of contaminated areas. The environmental objectives also include issues relating to surface, ground and coastal water, the preservation and development of valuable natural and cultural environments and sustainable planning for land and water.

Consultation with municipalities, county councils and other organisations has meant that the regional environmental objectives, which have been adopted by each County Administrative Board, have received broad support from the counties. Participation is vital to the objectives' credibility and effectiveness. Concrete proposals for measures that contribute to fulfilling the targets have been connected to the regional environmental objectives. The effects of these measures are the subject of ongoing assessment.





Thriving rural areas

We have the right to make demands about the quality of our food. Naturally, it should taste good. It should besides be nutritious and produced in a manner that respects people, animals and the environment.

The County Administrative Board actively promotes more environmentally-friendly agriculture, increased organic cultivation and the preservation of valuable grazing lands. The aim is to have thriving rural areas with active agriculture.

The EU's agricultural policy is aimed at supporting farming. Every year the County Administrative Board distributes EU funding to farming businesses in order to support ordinary food production and the preservation of grazing land, tree-lined avenues and stone walls in the natural and cultural landscape. The County Administrative Board must ensure that changes to the agricultural landscape are made with respect for animals, plants and insects — in order to preserve biological diversity. This is why you have to apply for permits when digging ditches or removing copses, for example.









Animal welfare

Our task is to promote improved animal health and animal protection. Everyone who own animals are responsible for treating them well and protecting them from unnecessary suffering and illness. This is the point of the Swedish Animal Protection Act, which regulates how animals should be kept and treated. This includes designing the space in which the animal is kept so that it behaves in a natural manner. Therefore we review drawings for animal stalls and check game enclosures to ensure that requirements are fulfilled.

The municipality inspects how owners look after their animals and we review how the municipalities carry out these inspections. Additionally we can decide that an animal should be remained due to ill treatment. If the police take charge of a mistreated animal, it is the County Administrative Board's duty to decide whether it can be properly rehoused or whether it is so mistreated it should be put down.

If a contagious animal disease was to break out in Sweden it is the duty of the county veterinarian to coordinate the efforts to control it in each county. For example, the County Administrative Boards' veterinarians were placed on stand-by when bird flu was spreading in Europe.



Hunting and fishing management

Hunting and fishing are our oldest means of support, but they are now important leisure activities as well. Hunting should be carried out with its focus on biological diversity and a natural balance. We are responsible for providing information to hunters and landowners, registering hunting grounds, awarding licences and collecting and compiling shooting statistics. We as well take inventories and administer the occurrence of large carnivores in the county, as well as appointing hunt supervisors.

Some species may normally not be hunted, but occasionally they can cause major problems. We work on preventing and compensating damage. It is also the County Administrative Board that, on occasion, issues licences for “protective hunting”.

The County Administrative Board’s unit for reindeer husbandry grants the right to hunt and fish on State owned land above the cultivation limit and on reindeer grazing areas.

The County Administrative Board can answer your questions about commercial fishing, water usage, angling and fish conservation.

Our task is to promote long-term, sustainable fishing run by financially stable businesses and to do so in a variety of ways. We also take decisions about financial support from the EU for both commercial fishing and fish farming.

If you plan to start a fish farm, or to introduce fish or crayfish must obtain a permit from their County Administrative Board. This is important if we are to avoid the spread of foreign fish species and diseases.

The County Administrative Board can create fish conservation areas. We do this in order to increase opportunities for more people to go fishing and to preserve fish populations. If you wish to manage fish conservation in a lake you can obtain both assistance and grants from us. We as well provide grants for liming acidified lakes and for the restoration of crayfish waters.





Responsibility for the highlands

Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland and Dalarna have almost seven million hectares of highland areas. The County Administrative Boards are responsible for managing these areas and granting the use of land, as well as hunting and fishing rights.

Every year we grant almost quarter of a million fishing days and around 40,000 small game hunting days. We are as well responsible for the national trail system with bridges, wind shelters and for marking winter and summer trails. These trails are important, both for mountain safety and so that visitors don't damage sensitive areas.

We also have special nature and conservation rangers. They monitor and manage mountain reserves, check hunting, fishing and terrain vehicles, as well as taking inventories and protecting large carnivores.

The County Administrative Board also works with issues relating to reindeer husbandry. The Sámi have reindeer grazing rights on about 40 percent of the area of Sweden and the County Administrative Board and the Sámi villages cooperate on keeping track of reindeer. We have a supervisory role in ensuring that regulations are followed and mediate in conflicts relating to grazing or carnivore inventories, for example. However, since the year 2007, Sametinget, the Sámi Parliament, has taken over many of the tasks related to reindeer husbandry that were previously the responsibility of the County Administrative Boards.









Preserving our cultural heritage

The County Administrative Board is responsible for protecting, preserving and providing information about the county's cultural environment.

This means that we promote utilisation of the historic values found in the cultural landscape, a responsibility that stretches from ancient remains to industrial history. We want to preserve valuable cultural environments and cultural landscapes for the coming generations.

We take inventories and protect valuable buildings, ancient remains and cultural landscapes. This could be

anything from a castle in Skåne to a shieling in Jämtland, or a mediaeval church on Gotland and an abandoned industrial site in Bergslagen. We provide information about the value of the things we protect.

Much of our work deals with ancient remains, buildings and churches. We also work with places related to industrial history and the cultural landscape in its entirety.

The County Administrative Board may grant subsidies for the preservation of, and information about, valuable cultural environments.



Everyone's right to attractive housing in good surroundings

Housing is important for all of us. The County Administrative Board works to ensure that our homes and their surroundings are pleasant. We provide information about the state funding that is available when building or rebuilding homes for the elderly, and we encourage environmentally sustainable construction.

Do you have a house of cultural-historical interest, that uses traditional building materials and workmanship that is more expensive than the current standard? If so, you may be entitled to financial support for renovations. Grants are also available for radon decontamination of houses (radon is a carcinogenic gas).

You can apply for grants if you would like to reduce your electricity consumption and convert from electric heating to district heating or individual heating using biofuel. Grants are also available for installing solar panels, energy-efficient windows and for making public buildings more energy efficient.

The municipalities are responsible for housing provision. All Sweden's inhabitants should have somewhere to live. At the County Administrative Boards we provide advice and help the municipalities with information and planning.





Developing trade and industry

Stimulating growth in the counties is vital to Sweden's welfare. Strong regions and individuals are vital to Sweden's competitiveness.

Our task is to support the development of trade and industry in order to create jobs and growth. This is partly done through direct grants to companies that invest in future growth and partly through support for various development projects.

For a number of years now, work with regional development issues has been carried out at both County Administrative Boards and bodies for regional cooperation. A cooperative body is a cooperation in which municipalities, county councils and County Administrative Boards can participate. There are permanent ones in Västra Götaland, Skåne and Kalmar, and trials are being carried out in a number of other counties.

Due to Sweden's EU membership it is possible to apply for money from the EU's structural funds. Money is allocated through different types of programmes, such as Interreg, the Rural Development Programme and the Structural Fund Programme for regional and social funds. In some counties, projects that contribute to development may apply for EU funding from these programmes.

The County Administrative Boards or bodies for regional cooperation have been tasked by the government to produce regional development strategies and regional growth programmes. The aim is to identify and better utilise the particular conditions of the county and region. This means that resources can be focused where they have the greatest potential for development.

The County Administrative Boards should also provide information about issues relating to competitiveness and promote effective competition, in both the public and private sectors.







Reliable, environmentally friendly transport and communication

We travel to work and to school, to leisure activities, shops and public services. Goods and products are transported between companies by road or rail. At our computers we communicate through various types of networks.

The County Administrative Board influences the design of the transport network for traffic and for data communications, in both the long and short term. We help to shape the future's infrastructure. Improvements to roads, making public transport wheelchair-friendly and measures to increase road safety are all part of what we do.

Traffic should flow smoothly and safely, but it may not disturb residents or have a major impact on natural and cultural landscapes. Our role is to assess the consequences of various road plans and ensure that we save land and water resources. We also carry out similar assessments when expanding sea and air travel within the county.







Gender equality

Gender equality means that women and men should have the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all areas of life. All social development should be characterised by consideration for gender equality.

In order for men and women to have equal power to shape society and their own lives the government has established four long-term interim objectives for gender equality policy:

- an equal distribution of power and influence
- economic equality between women and men
- an equal distribution of unpaid care and household work
- men's violence against women shall come to an end.

The County Administrative Board's task is to promote equality in the county based on the government's national gender equality policy. We coordinate, support and follow

up work for gender equality in the county and are responsible for social analyses, seminars and project activities, for example.

We provide information and support the county's employers and the trade union organisations so that they are able to meet the requirements of the Swedish Equal Opportunities Act.

The County Administrative Board monitors and observes how the social services work with issues relating to men's violence to women. The County Administrative Board has been specially tasked by the government to combat honour-related violence. For example, we work with prevention and support, action plans in schools and training staff who work with children and young adults or young women. We cooperate with a number of different authorities and organisations.





Good opportunities for all

There are many reasons why people from different parts of the world come to Sweden. For example, it may be that they are searching for asylum, they are family members of Swedish citizens that were born abroad, or they may have found a job or a partner in Sweden.

The municipalities have the primary responsibility for welcoming new immigrants who have received residence permits and for introducing them to Swedish society. The initial period is vital if new arrivals are to have a positive start in their new country. Good integration needs a good beginning with Swedish language skills and knowledge about Swedish society. These are the things that make it possible to be part of the community and to earn your own livelihood.

There is a great deal of immigration to the counties with big cities, which means it can be difficult to meet the need for housing and for Swedish classes. Meanwhile, smaller municipalities welcome immigration. In these municipalities immigration can help to maintain and improve services, especially where the average age is increasing and the population declining.

The County Administrative Board has the operative responsibility for negotiating and drawing up agreements with municipalities about the reception and introduction of new arrivals in the county. The task of the County Administrative Board is also to develop and follow up this introduction, which we do together with authorities, municipalities and the county council. The County Administrative Board should also work to promote integration policy objectives.

These objectives refer to equal rights and responsibilities regardless of ethnic background, and society's development towards mutual respect for everyone, regardless of background.

The objectives are:

- equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for everyone, irrespective of ethnic and cultural background
- social cohesion built on diversity
- social development characterised by mutual respect for differences within the boundaries that follow from society's fundamental democratic values in which everyone, irrespective of background, should take an active and responsible part.





We're on your side

People who have extra need of help and support should receive this from the municipal social services. It is the municipalities that are responsible for helping the disabled, substance abusers and children at risk.

The County Administrative Board is the supervisory authority and must ensure that the municipalities comply with legislation and regulations. We issue permits and supervises individual organisations within the social services, such as treatment centres for young adults and adults, as well as various forms of accommodation for the elderly and disabled.

We also supervise municipal activities in accordance with alcohol legislation. This includes awarding licences for serving alcohol and monitoring that alcohol is served in compliance with the law.







Traffic safety

The road to your driving licence starts with us. It is the County Administrative Board that grants provisional driving licences and approves your instructor.

On the driving licence portal, www.korkortsportalen.se, which is a collaboration between the County administrative Boards and Vägverket (the Swedish Road Administration) you can read about how to take your driving licence and what happens if you lose your licence or have it rescinded. You can also download forms, book tests or report lost driving licences.

We work to promote traffic safety, which is why the County Administrative Board is able to issue a warning to or to rescind the driving licence of someone who behaves irresponsibly in traffic. A person who abuses drugs or commits other crimes may also lose their licence. A driving licence may also be rescinded for medical reasons.

A person who is suspected of drink-driving may apply for participation in an alco-lock programme instead of

losing their licence. We check people who are required to have alco-locks on their vehicle.

Imposing speed limits, stop junctions and other traffic regulations on certain roads is also part of our job. You should turn to us if you wish to put up a sign on the roadside.

You must have a commercial traffic licence if you wish to run a taxi or bus company. The same applies if you run a haulage firm and transport goods. All taxi drivers must also hold a taxi licence.

People who have professional skills and the opportunity to run a financially stable business may turn to the County Administrative Board to apply for a licence for commercial traffic.

The County Administrative Board may rescind taxi licences and commercial licences for people who act negligently. Our job is one element in creating safer commercial traffic.



Emergency preparedness in the community

We live in a society that has many risks. Serious accidents occur, environmental disasters and storms; extensive power cuts and other difficulties place society under great strain. In order for us to be able to better manage such events, society must be well prepared. At most incidents it is the municipal fire and rescue service which is responsible for leading and executing the emergency response.

For incidents that require a greater response the County Administrative Board is able to take over the leadership of the operation in order to ease cooperation. In difficult situations, where a number of municipalities are affected and several authorities and organisations are involved, the County Administrative Board ensures the coordination of the operation and of information. We therefore cooperate with many authorities, including the Police, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute and the county council.

The County Administrative Board checks that the municipal fire and rescue service can perform the tasks it is assigned. It is also our job to use aerial fire patrols to detect forest or wildfires. In order to prevent serious incidents we inspect facilities that handle hazardous chemicals and carry out dangerous processes.

We are continuously working on the long-term creation of a less vulnerable society. Examples of preventive measures are burying overhead wires to reduce the risk of power cuts and not building houses in flood-prone areas. The County Administrative Board is a member of various networks in order to learn about and to practice emergency management skills.









Free elections – the foundation of Swedish democracy

Every fourth year we vote for the politicians and political parties that will lead the municipalities, county councils and the Parliament. Every fifth year we vote for the people who will represent Sweden in the European Parliament. The County Administrative Board is one of the authorities that ensure that the election is properly held and that voting is done correctly.

We make sure the electoral area is the right size, that the municipality's election officials receive training and

support and that ballot papers are printed. After the election we recount all the ballot papers and make decisions about which papers should be rejected. The County Administrative Board allocates seats and appoints members and substitutes to the county council and municipal authority. The Swedish Election Authority does the equivalent work for the Parliament. When a politician retires during a term of office we appoint new delegates on the request of the municipality and county council.

Permits issued by us

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- environmentally hazardous activities
- management of hazardous waste
- sale of hazardous chemicals
- extraction of gravel, rock and peat
- exemptions for construction on protected shorelines
- consultation on actions and activities that affect the environment
- permits for digging drainage ditches

ANIMAL WELFARE

- preliminary examination of buildings and some animal stalls
- permission to feed game with animal waste
- granting an exception to the prohibition on burying dead horses

HUNTING AND FISHING MANAGEMENT

- elk hunting (registration of areas, licences)
- protective hunting (e.g. destruction of beaver dams)
- game enclosures and game preservation areas (founding, alteration)
- appointment as hunting and fishing supervisor and nature and conservation rangers
- introduction permits for fish and crayfish
- farming permits for fish and crayfish
- permission to use certain commercial fishing equipment
- permission to use forbidden fishing methods or capture protected species as part of biological surveys

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HIGHLANDS (NOT ALL COUNTIES)

- hunting and fishing on state land in highland areas

PRESERVING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

- permission to make alterations to objects protected by the Swedish Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds

WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE

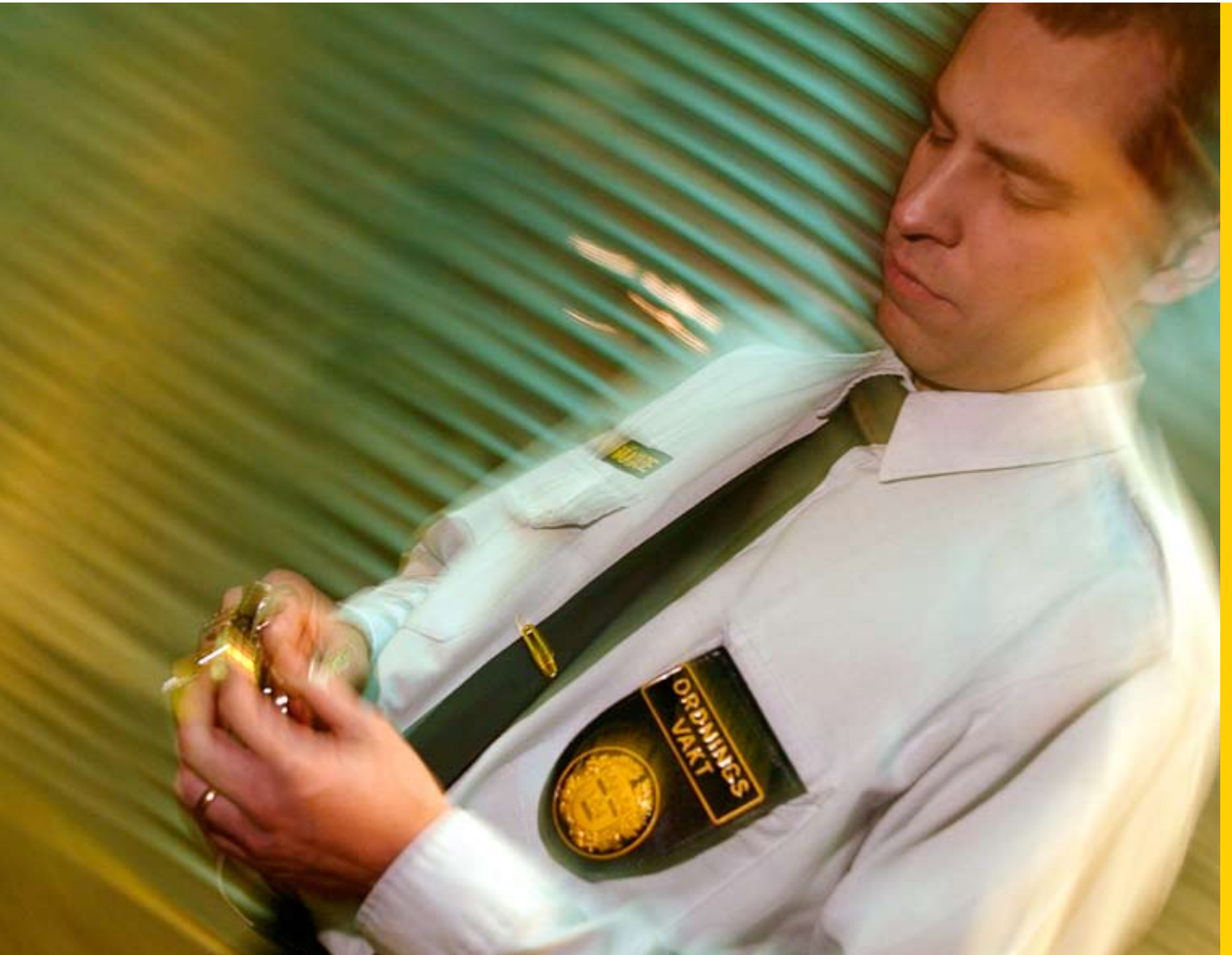
- treatment centres, homes for the elderly, sheltered accommodation etc
- dispensation for those under 18 who wish to marry

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- provisional driving licence
- taxi licence
- permit to instruct learner drivers
- permit to operate commercial traffic
- participation in alco-lock trials
- permission to erect signs on the roadside

OTHER

- security companies
- bingo and some other gambling activities
- permission to spread cremated remains
- pawnshops
- surveillance cameras



Our supervisory responsibilities

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- large, environmentally-detrimental activities
- chemical management
- dams and other water regulation
- protected natural areas

ANIMAL WELFARE

- animal protection
- foodstuff controls
- veterinary activities

HUNTING AND FISHING MANAGEMENT

- hunting (overall)
- game enclosures

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HIGHLANDS (NOT ALL COUNTIES)

- monitoring the number of reindeer in the Sámi villages
- hunting and fishing supervision on state land in highland areas
- trails (walking and snowmobile trails on state land in highland areas)

PRESERVING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

- compliance with the Swedish Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds

EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO ATTRACTIVE HOUSING IN GOOD SURROUNDINGS

- some issues according the Swedish Planning and Building Act

WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE

- social services support for individuals
- treatment centres, homes for the elderly, sheltered accommodation etc municipally and privately owned
- municipal application of the Swedish Alcohol Act

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- commercial traffic
- alco-lock activities

OTHER

- surveillance cameras
- foundations
- chief guardian committee
- pawnshops
- authorised security companies



Grants available from us

NATURE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

- liming lakes and waterways
- fish conservation funding 43:9 for fish conservation
- fish conservation funding 43:9 for fish supervision
- structural funding, EFF, European Fisheries Fund 2007-2013
- biological restoration in limed areas
- preventive measures for game damage
- compensation for game damage
- compensation for seal damage

THRIVING RURAL AREAS

- direct subsidies for agricultural land
- environmental compensation payments
- business subsidies
- project subsidies

HUNTING AND FISHING MANAGEMENT

- measures for preventing damage due to protected animals
- compensation for game damage
- contributions from the elk conservation fund (inventory, information, training)
- contributions to fish conservation measures
- EU structural funding for the fishing industry
- fishing in various lakes
- fish species and strains in fish farms

PRESERVING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

- grants for ancient remains, buildings and cultural landscapes

EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO ATTRACTIVE HOUSING IN GOOD SURROUNDINGS

- replacing windows
- radon decontamination
- heating with solar energy
- switching from electric heating to another energy source
- investment grants for homes for the elderly
- energy efficiency measures in public buildings
- biofuel facilities in newly built houses

DEVELOPING TRADE AND INDUSTRY

- business subsidies to strengthen competitiveness, provide economic growth and increase employment
- funding for projects in regional growth (not all counties)
- EU subsidies for trade and industry, authorities and organisation, which can contribute to increased employment and entrepreneurship through project work (not all counties)
- subsidies for commercial service provision in rural areas

WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE

- grants for personal representatives
- funding for alcohol and drug prevention and subsidies to care programmes for the young and substance abusers
- subsidies for the development of care and treatment of heavy substance abusers
- subsidies for women's crisis centres
- subsidies for efforts to combat honour related violence and oppression
- subsidies for permanent forms of support for relatives



County Administrative Board of Blekinge
371 86 KARLSKRONA
Tel: +46 (0)455 87000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@k.lst.se
www.k.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Dalarna
791 84 FALUN
Tel: +46 (0)23 81000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@w.lst.se
www.w.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Gotland
621 85 VISBY
Tel: +46 (0)498 292100
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@i.lst.se
www.i.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Gävleborg
801 70 GÄVLE
Tel: +46 (0)26 171000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@x.lst.se
www.x.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Halland
301 86 HALMSTAD
Tel: +46 (0)35 132000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@n.lst.se
www.n.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Jämtland
831 86 ÖSTERSUND
Tel: +46 (0)63 146000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@z.lst.se
www.z.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Jönköping
551 86 JÖNKÖPING
Tel: +46 (0)36 395000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@f.lst.se
www.f.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Kalmar
39 1 86 KALMAR
Tel: +46 (0)480 82000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@h.lst.se
www.h.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Kronoberg
351 86 VÄXJÖ
Tel: +46 (0)470 86000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@g.lst.se
www.g.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Norrbotten
971 86 LULEÅ
Tel: +46 (0)920 96000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@bd.lst.se
www.bd.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Skåne
205 15 MALMÖ
291 86 KRISTIANSTAD
Tel: +46 (0)40/044 252000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@m.lst.se
www.m.lst.se

County Administrative Board of
Stockholm
Box 22067
104 22 STOCKHOLM
Tel: +46 (0)8 7854000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@ab.lst.se
www.ab.lst.se

County Administrative Board of
Södermanland
611 86 NYKÖPING
Tel: +46 (0)155 264000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@d.lst.se
www.d.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Uppsala
751 86 UPPSALA
Tel: +46 (0)18 195000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@c.lst.se
www.c.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Värmland
651 86 KARLSTAD
Tel: +46 (0)54 197000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@s.lst.se
www.s.lst.se

County Administrative Board of
Västerbotten
901 86 UMEÅ
Tel: +46 (0)90 107000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@ac.lst.se
www.ac.lst.se

County Administrative Board of
Västernorrland
871 86 HÄRNÖSAND
Tel: +46 (0)611 349000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@y.lst.se
www.y.lst.se

County Administrative Board of
Västmanland
721 86 VÄSTERÅS
Tel: +46 (0)21 195000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@u.lst.se
www.u.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Västra
Götaland
403 40 GÖTEBORG
Tel: +46 (0)31 605000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@o.lst.se
www.o.lst.se

County Administrative Board of Örebro
701 86 ÖREBRO
Tel: +46 (0)19 193000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@t.lst.se
www.t.lst.se

County Administrative Board of
Östergötland
581 86 LINKÖPING
Tel: +46 (0)13 196000
e-mail: lansstyrelsen@e.lst.se
www.e.lst.se

The County Administrative Boards' web portal with joint services:
www.lansstyrelsen.se



Länsstyrelserna

