



European Consumer Centres Network TOURISM IN GERMANY

This Brochure will provide you with information on driving in Germany. You will find practical advice and important legal information of covering the different topics. We have tried to include all the relevant information concerning travel to Germany and your stay in Germany, however the information provided is not fully detailed on all points and should be viewed as a guide not as a verbatim statement of the law.

Driving in Germany

Papers

- ◆ It is compulsory to carry your driving license, car registration papers and insurance documents. EU driving licenses or International driving licenses are accepted for driving in Germany.
- ◆ The minimum age of driving in Germany is 18 years.

Speed limits

- ◆ On the German roads your speed is limited to, if nothing else is indicated on the signs along the road:

50 km/h in built-up areas

100km/h for cars without trailers outside built up areas

130 km/h on the motorways (Richtgeschwindigkeit – recommended speed)

80 km/h for cars with trailers (including caravans) on any roads including autobahns

- ◆ Please note! In Germany, there are fixed radar traffic detectors all over the country which photograph vehicles not complying with the speed limits. There are also mobile radar speed checks.
- ◆ If you exceed the speed limit, you may be fined from 10 € to 425 €. Be aware also that, depending on the speed, your license as well as your vehicle can be confiscated.
- ◆ Please be aware that you have the possibility to object to the imposed fine if you think that this measure is ill-founded. But please make sure that the fine is really ill-founded.
- ◆ For French drivers: an agreement has just been concluded between France and Germany. French motorists not respecting the speed limits in Germany will receive the notification of their fine sent directly to their home.

Traffic rules and Safety

- ◆ Vehicles from other countries which do not have a European registration plate incorporating the country code are required to display a sticker showing their country of origin.
- ◆ Priority to traffic coming from the right applies, unless there is a road marking indicating that you have priority.
- ◆ Please make sure that your tyres are not too worn: The profile has to have a minimum-depth of 1,6 mm (however, car experts recommend 4 mm). Shouldn't you comply with that rule, you risk a fine up to 50 €. Your tyre must have minimum 1,6 mm profile.
- ◆ If you travel to Germany in winter and if the road conditions make it necessary, you need to have winter- or all-season-tyres, otherwise you may be fined up to 40 €.
- ◆ Motorcyclists have to switch their headlights on even when driving by daylight.
- ◆ Motorcyclists must wear helmets.
- ◆ Safety belts are compulsory for all the occupants of the vehicle that is to say for front- and rear- seat passengers. There must be one safety belt per passenger. In the event of a police check, there will be a fine of a 30 € for anyone not wearing safety belt.
- ◆ Mobile phones may only be used in conjunction with a hands-free system. In the case of a police check, you may be fined up to 40 € license for an infringement. Also cyclists can be fined!
- ◆ Children must be at least 12 years old or 150 cm tall to sit in the front seat and to use a normal seat belt. Under 12 years or 150 cm, they must use an approved child seat. Otherwise, you may be fined up to 40 € and one point on your driving license.

Alcohol and drugs

- ◆ Germany has strict rules concerning the drink driving. The blood alcohol limit is 0,5 per mill. If your level of alcohol is found over the limit, you may have to pay a fine of up to 1.500 €, you also risk that you are not allowed to drive for several months.
- ◆ However, please note that even with 0,3 per mill you might incur a penalty if you have neurological deficits; the penalty is either a monetary one or up to one year in prison. The monetary penalty depends on your income. If during a police check, your level of alcohol is over 1,1 per mill you will always commit a criminal offence and you risk to go one year to prison too or to pay a monetary penalty. The maximum penalty is 5 years of prison if the driver acts voluntarily and if he is endangering persons or valuable goods.
- ◆ New regulation: Beginners beware! If you have just got your driving license for 2 years or less or if you are under 21 years old, there is a new rule: 0,0 per mill when driving (applicable from the 1st of August, 2007 on).
- ◆ The police are also able to search for drugs. The smallest trace of illegal drugs can result in punishment. Driving under the influence of drugs is forbidden too and you risk penalties.

Traffic accident

- ◆ If you are involved in an accident in Germany, your insurance should cover any injury or damage that you may cause to another party and may include cover of any legal costs that may be incurred. Please check details with your insurer before travelling to Germany.
- ◆ Your agent should provide you with an international insurance card, the green card ("Grüne Karte"). This serves as proof of valid liability insurance and is accepted throughout Europe in countries which are signatories of the Green Card System. It is not mandatory to have a Green Card when travelling within the EU if you bring your certificate of insurance. However, an international insurance motor card can serve as easily recognisable proof of third party insurance.
- ◆ In the event of accident or breakdown the German Automobile Association Club (ADAC) can provide assistance throughout Germany. Members of an international partner organisation may receive free assistance (depending on the case, it is possible that you will have to pay a part of the costs). For further information you should contact your national club and/or the ADAC.
- ◆ In the event of an accident with no serious injuries and if both drivers agree on the facts, there is no obligation to contact the police, however all parties should still complete the accident report in order to benefit from insurance.
- ◆ The report is to be filled out at the scene of the accident. It is purely a statement of facts not an establishment of blame. However, try to be as precise as possible when describing the accident. If more than two cars are involved, a separate report should be completed with each party. Do not sign anything if you do not really understand it. There is the possibility to draw a picture. And don't forget to make photos if you have camera on board.
- ◆ Both parties then sign the completed document.
- ◆ If a driver refuses to sign the document, write down the number of his registration plate, take the details of any witnesses and call the police (Phone number 110).
- ◆ If it is a serious accident and you need to be hospitalised, the authorities will deal with the paperwork on your behalf. You can call an emergency doctor on 112. Don't forget to take your European Health Insurance Card with you when going to Germany.
- ◆ In case of an accident in Germany, as a general rule, German law will apply to determine responsibilities and compensation of damages.
- ◆ Your insurer, or yourself should contact the representative of the opposite insurance company in your country. Every European insurer has to appoint a competent correspondent in the other member states. You can ask the Green Card Bureau of your home country for further information.
- ◆ If the accident was caused by an uninsured or unidentifiable car, you are entitled under community law to compensation from the motor vehicle guarantee fund of your country.

Toll Roads?

There are no tolls on Germany's autobahns. Germany has only introduced a toll for all trucks of twelve tonnes gross vehicle weight and above.

Petrol/Fuel

The fuel is more expensive along the autobahn than at other roads. Modern cash machines accept a variety international banking and credit cards.

DE	EN	FR
Bleifreies Benzin 95 oder 98	Unleaded gasoline 95 or 98	Sans Plomb 95 ou 98
Diesel	Diesel fuel	Gazoile
LPG	LPG	GPL

Parking in Germany

- ◆ Do not park your car illegally, because you may be wheel-clamped or towed.
- ◆ Parking-meters are common throughout Germany. The tariff and time limit are written on the machine or on a sign nearby. Smaller towns often offer free parking. In larger cities you will also find billable parking garages. You should also have a parking disk in your car, because some parking spots are free for a certain time if you use a parking disk.

Car rental

- ◆ You can rent a vehicle any time of day or night in most towns and cities and at more than 40 railway stations, from different companies. Rental cars can also be picked up from hotel, airport or railway stations.
- ◆ It is also possible to rent a car on Internet. You get further information by the companies. However, please be careful if you are signing documents when picking up the car.
- ◆ Have a close look at the car and report immediately any damage, bump etc. you discover.
- ◆ Another advice: ask for the opening hours of the agency. If you just leave the vehicle on the parking of the company outside the opening hours, you risk to be held responsible for damages caused to the vehicle.

If you, as a foreign consumer, are feeling mistreated by a German professional, the European Consumer Centres (ECCs) will be pleased to help you to find an amicable settlement of the dispute. You can find further information and a complete list of all ECCs under: http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/ecc_network/index_en.htm

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