

**WELCOME TO GERMANY**  
A Practical Guide

**Helpful information  
for moving to and  
settling into life  
in Germany**

Moving to a new country is much more than a change of address. It is the beginning of a new chapter, filled with opportunities, experiences and discoveries. At the same time, it often comes with many questions, unfamiliar processes and administrative requirements.

This guide has been created to help you and your family navigate the most important steps before and after your arrival in Germany. It provides practical information, useful tips and guidance based on the experiences of thousands of international employees and families who have successfully relocated to Germany.

While every relocation journey is unique, one thing remains the same: settling into a new country takes time. We hope this guide helps you feel informed, prepared and confident as you begin your new adventure.

**WELCOME TO GERMANY – WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE HERE.**

The information contained in this brochure has been carefully researched and compiled to the best of our knowledge and belief. Despite the care taken, we cannot guarantee that the information is up to date, accurate or complete. The operators of any external websites referred to in this brochure are solely responsible for their content. We have no influence over this content and accept no responsibility for it.

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## How to use this guide

This guide follows the typical relocation journey and is designed to support you throughout your first months in Germany.

The information is organized according to the most common timeline:

**Before Arrival** Preparing for your move

**First Week** Completing essential administrative steps

**First Month** Establishing the foundations of daily life

**First Three Months** Settling into your new home and community

**First Six Months** Building long-term stability and connections

Not every step will apply to every family. Your nationality, visa category, family situation and place of residence may influence which requirements apply to you.

Before  
Arrival

Arrival in  
Germany

Visa

Temporary  
Accommodation

Registration

Tax ID

Bank Account

Health  
Insurance

Residence  
Permit

Permanent  
Housing

School/  
Childcare

Integration

# Your first 90 days in Germany

Every relocation journey is unique, but many newcomers encounter similar administrative tasks and milestones during their first weeks and months in Germany.

This **checklist** provides a practical overview of **the most common steps** involved in settling into your new home, workplace and community. It can help you stay organized, track your progress and identify which topics may require your attention next.

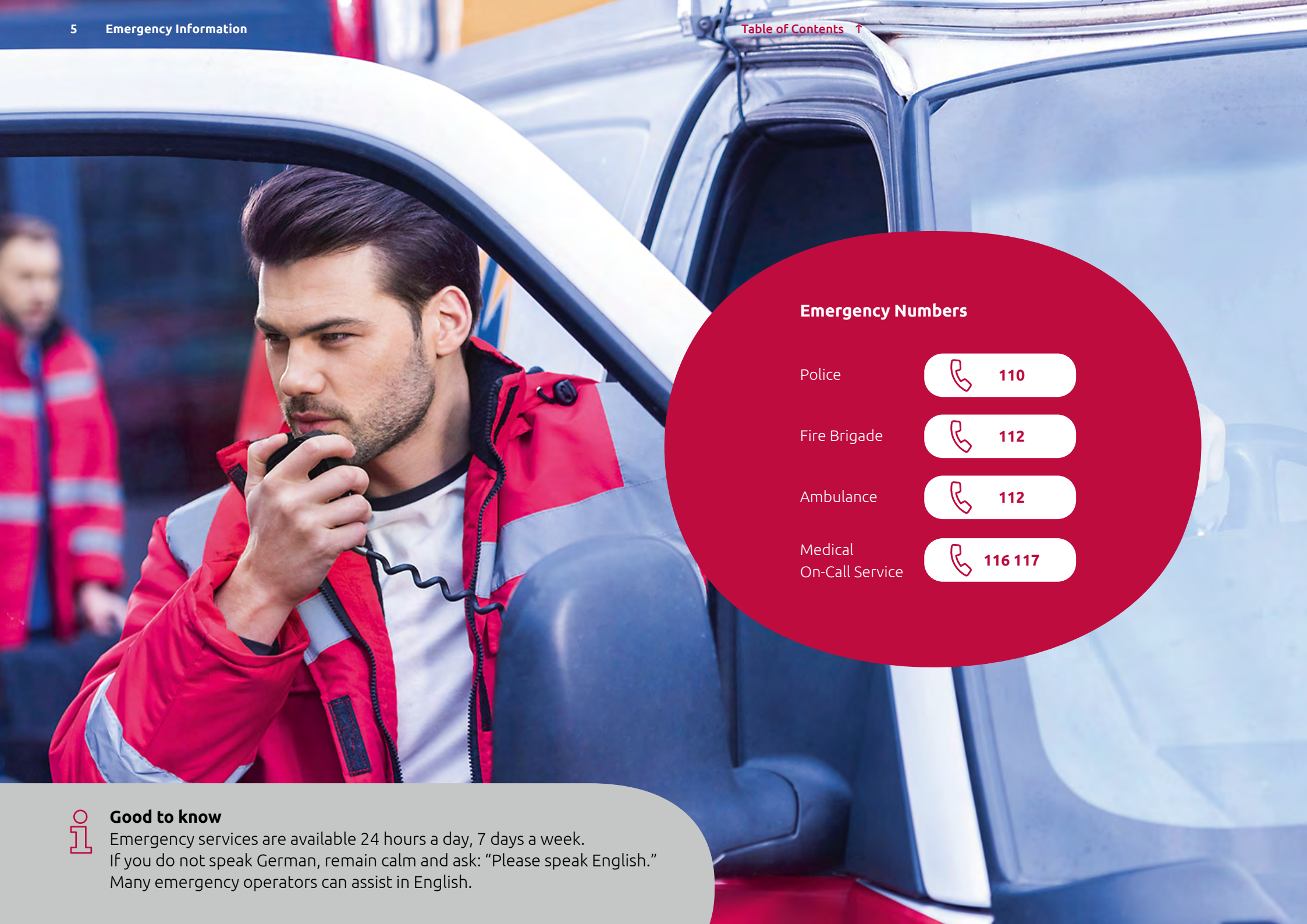
Not every item will apply to every individual or family. Depending on your nationality, visa category and personal circumstances, additional steps may be required.

Use this checklist as a practical companion throughout your first 90 days in Germany – and remember: settling into a new country is a journey, not a race. Completing one step at a time is often the best approach.

## Checklist

- Secure accommodation**
- Obtain health insurance**
- Obtain visa (if required)**
- Register your address (Anmeldung)**
- Receive Tax ID**
- Open a bank account**
- Apply for residence permit/work authorization (if required)**
- Explore your neighborhood**
- Arrange childcare/schooling (if applicable)**
- Set up utilities and household services**
- Build your local network**





### Emergency Numbers

Police



110

Fire Brigade



112

Ambulance



112

Medical  
On-Call Service



116 117



#### Good to know

Emergency services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you do not speak German, remain calm and ask: "Please speak English." Many emergency operators can assist in English.

# Immigration & First Steps in Germany



## Good to know

In most cases, proof of adequate health insurance is already required when applying for a visa.

Tip: With Hallesche, you can sign an insurance policy online in English from anywhere in the world!

## What is it about?

Depending on your nationality, purpose of stay and employment situation, you may require **a visa, residence permit** and **work authorization** to live and work in Germany.

While some nationalities may enter Germany without a visa and complete immigration formalities after arrival, others must obtain the appropriate visa before travelling. Applying for the correct visa before arrival is often recommended, as completing immigration procedures after entering Germany can be time-consuming and may delay the start of employment.

For many **non-EU nationals**, obtaining a **residence permit** after arrival is an additional requirement that allows them to continue living and working legally in Germany.



## Helpful tip

With this [Quick-Check](#), you can check your options of working and living in Germany.

## Why is it important?

Your immigration status determines:

- Whether you may enter Germany
- Whether you may work in Germany
- How long you may stay
- Whether family members may accompany you
- Under which conditions your stay can be extended

Without the appropriate immigration status, it may not be possible to work, study or reside legally in Germany. In addition, **proof of accommodation is frequently required** during visa applications and may also be necessary to complete several administrative procedures after arrival. Without the appropriate immigration status and accommodation arrangements, important relocation processes may be delayed.



### Temporary Accommodation

For many visa applications, proof of accommodation is required before arriving in Germany. Temporary accommodation can also provide a practical solution during the first weeks after arrival while searching for a permanent home.

#### Typical options include:

- Boarding House
- Serviced Apartment
- Furnished Apartment
- Hotel (short-term stays)

Not all temporary accommodations can provide a confirmation of residence (Wohnungsgeberbestätigung). Without this document, registration (Anmeldung) may not be possible, which can delay several follow-up processes such as:

- Tax ID issuance
- Bank account opening
- Residence permit applications
- Payroll processing

Before booking accommodation, it is therefore advisable to **confirm** whether a **Wohnungsgeberbestätigung can be issued** if required.

### Common Residence Categories

**EU Blue Card:** For highly qualified employees meeting specific qualification and salary requirements.

**Employment Residence Permit:** For individuals employed by a German employer.

**Family Reunion Residence Permit:** For spouses and children accompanying a primary permit holder.

### What documents may I need?

Requirements vary depending on your nationality and immigration category, but commonly include:

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ Employment contract
- ✓ University degree (if applicable)
- ✓ Civil status documents
- ✓ Health insurance
- ✓ Proof of accommodation
- ✓ Registration certificate (Anmeldung)
- ✓ Biometric passport photo (with QR code)

A first assessment of visa requirements and suitable immigration categories can often be completed through the German Visa Navigator.

In many locations, appointments with the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) are in high demand and may not be available at short notice. If a residence permit appointment is required after arrival, it is advisable to **begin researching appointment availability as early as possible**.



### Good to know

Civil status documents such as:

- Marriage certificates
- Birth certificates
- Divorce certificates

often require:

- Apostille
- Certified translation
- Original documents

Obtaining these documents can take several weeks or even months, so early preparation is strongly recommended.

### Helpful tip



Keep digital and physical copies of all immigration-related documents, including visas, residence permits, passports, employment contracts and civil status documents.

Having these documents readily available can significantly simplify future applications, renewals and administrative procedures.

# Registration, Tax & Payroll

## What is it about?

Registration of your residential address (Anmeldung) is one of the **first and most important administrative steps** after arriving in Germany. In most cases, registration must be completed within **14 days** of moving into your accommodation.

Your registration serves as the official confirmation of your place of residence and forms the basis for many administrative procedures in Germany. Once registered, you will automatically receive your personal **Tax Identification Number (Tax ID)**, which is required for payroll and tax purposes.



## Why is it important?

Registration unlocks several essential processes required for living and working in Germany:

### Registration (Anmeldung)

### Tax Identification Number (Tax ID)

### Tax Class & Church Tax Information

### Bank Account

### Residence Permit (if applicable)

### Health Insurance & Social Security Administration

### Payroll Processing

Without registration and a Tax ID, your employer may not be able to process your salary correctly and several administrative procedures may be delayed.

## What documents may I need?

Typical documents for registration include:

- ✓ Valid passport
- ✓ Confirmation of residence (Wohnungsgeberbestätigung)
- ✓ Registration form (if required)
- ✓ Marriage certificate and birth certificates (if applicable)

To receive your Tax ID, no separate application is usually required. It is **automatically issued** after successful registration and sent by post to your registered address.



### Good to know

Many important documents are sent by post after registration, including your Tax ID and correspondence from various authorities. To avoid delays, ensure that:

- Your name is clearly displayed on your mailbox.
- Your name is clearly displayed on your doorbell.
- You regularly check your mailbox during your first weeks in Germany.

Failure to receive official correspondence may delay payroll, residence permit applications and other administrative procedures.

### Understanding Tax Classes

Germany uses different tax classes depending on your personal and family situation. Your **tax class** influences the amount of tax deducted from your salary.

### Where can I register?

Depending on your place of residence, registration is usually completed at:

- Citizens' Office (Bürgerbüro)
- Registration Office (Meldebehörde)
- Local Municipality (Rathaus)
- Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde)

Non-EU and EWR nationals additionally may need to contact the **Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde)** after registration.

During registration, you will usually be asked to declare your religious affiliation. Members of certain officially recognized religious communities, such as the Roman Catholic Church or Protestant Church, may be subject to **church tax (Kirchensteuer)**, which is automatically deducted from payroll together with other taxes.

If you do not receive your Tax ID within a few weeks after registration, you may be able to request it through:

- Citizens' Office (Bürgerbüro)
- Registration Office (Meldebehörde)
- Tax Office (Finanzamt)

You may also request a new notification through the Federal Central Tax Office (BZSt).

### Helpful tip



When reviewing your first German payslip, you may notice deductions such as:

- Income tax (Lohnsteuer)
- Church tax (Kirchensteuer, if applicable)
- Statutory health insurance
- Pension insurance
- Unemployment insurance
- Mandatory long-term care insurance

This information can help you better understand your net salary and avoid confusion during your first months in Germany.

If you have private health insurance: Your employer pays your salary into your bank account and also pays you a tax-free contribution towards your private health and long-term care insurance. This contribution is generally up to 50% of your premium (subject to a statutory cap). You pay the full premium for your private health and long-term care insurance directly to your insurer.

Families with children may benefit from **child-related tax allowances (Kinderfreibeträge)**. These allowances are generally recorded automatically by the tax authorities based on the information placed with the registration office and may influence your annual tax situation.

# Opening a Bank Account

## What is it?

A German bank account is often **essential for everyday life** in Germany. It is commonly used for:

- Salary payments
- Rent and utility payments
- Mobile phone and insurance contracts
- Online purchases

Opening a bank account is therefore usually one of the first administrative steps after arrival.

## Why is it important?

A local bank account helps you **manage your finances** efficiently and is **often required** by employers, landlords and service providers. Without a bank account, it may be difficult to receive your salary, set up direct debit payments or manage everyday expenses.

## Types of Banks

**Traditional Banks** offer personal support through local branches and in-person appointments. Some banks may require an appointment for account opening.

**Online Banks** provide fully digital services and often allow faster account opening with lower fees.

The right choice depends on your personal needs and preferences.

## What documents may I need?

Requirements vary by bank and individual circumstances, but commonly include:

- ✓ Passport or ID card
- ✓ Registration certificate (Anmeldung)
- ✓ Tax Identification Number (Tax ID)
- ✓ Tax number country of origin (eventually)
- ✓ Employment contract
- ✓ Visa or residence permit (if applicable)

## Good to know



Requirements can differ significantly between banks. While some providers allow account opening with a valid visa and proof of address, others may require a residence permit first. Many banks also request your Tax ID during or shortly after the onboarding process. Before choosing a provider, compare their requirements and available services.

When selecting a bank, consider more than just fees. Factors such as English-language support, online banking features, international transfer options and customer service availability can make a significant difference during your first months in Germany.

# Healthcare & Health Insurance

## What is it?

Health insurance is mandatory for everyone living in Germany and provides access to medical treatment, hospital care and preventive healthcare services.

## Germany offers two main health insurance systems:

- **Statutory Health Insurance** (Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung): Most employees are insured through the public healthcare system.
- **Private Health Insurance** (Private Krankenversicherung): Available to certain employee groups and often chosen by high-income earners or self-employed individuals (including their children and non-working spouses).



## Helpful tip

Finding a family doctor (Hausarzt) shortly after arrival can make future healthcare needs significantly easier to manage.

## Why is it important?

Proof of health insurance is often required for:

- Visa applications
- Residence permits
- Employment onboarding
- Medical treatment

In Germany, there is a legal obligation to take out insurance as soon as a person establishes their place of residence here. Without valid health insurance, access to healthcare services may be restricted.

## Understanding the Healthcare System

### Germany offers access to:

- **General Practitioners (Hausärzte):** Usually the first point of contact for medical concerns.
- **Specialists (Fachärzte):** Examples include Dermatologists, Orthopaedists, Gynaecologists and Paediatricians.
- **Hospitals (Krankenhäuser):** Provide emergency and specialized medical treatment.
- **Pharmacies (Apotheken):** Dispense prescription medication and provide advice on minor health concerns.



## Good to know



Walk-in appointments are uncommon in Germany. Most doctors require appointments to be scheduled in advance and waiting times may vary depending on the specialization and location. Private health insurance may offer additional benefits such as faster specialist appointments or private hospital treatment. Family members generally require separate coverage.

# Social Security System



## Helpful tip

Review your first pay slip carefully to understand which social security contributions are being deducted and how they affect your net salary.

## What is it?

Germany has a comprehensive social security system designed to **provide financial protection** and **support throughout different stages** of life. Employees and employers contribute to the system through monthly payroll deductions.

## Why is it important?

Social security contributions provide access to important benefits and protection during your working life and beyond.

## Good to know



Most social security contributions are automatically deducted from your salary and shared between employee and employer. Depending on your nationality, assignment type and length of stay, special regulations or exemptions may apply.

## The Five Pillars of Social Security

### Pension Insurance

Provides financial support during retirement and in certain cases of reduced earning capacity.

### Health Insurance

Provides access to medical treatment and healthcare services.

### Long-Term Care Insurance

Helps cover care-related costs due to illness, disability or old age.

### Unemployment Insurance

Provides financial support and employment assistance if you become unemployed.

### Accident Insurance

Covers work-related accidents and occupational illnesses. Contributions are paid entirely by the employer.

# Additional Private Insurances



## Good to know

Personal Liability Insurance is not mandatory but is strongly recommended by many landlords, relocation professionals and insurance advisors.

## What is it about?

While health insurance is mandatory in Germany, several additional private insurance policies can help **protect** you and your family **against financial risks** in everyday life. Although optional, some are highly recommended and commonly used by German residents.

## Common Types of Private Insurance

### Personal Liability Insurance (Privathaftpflichtversicherung):

Covers damage accidentally caused to other people or their property and is often considered one of the most important private insurance policies in Germany.

### Household Contents Insurance (Hausratversicherung):

Protects personal belongings against risks such as:

- Fire
- Water damage
- Burglary
- Vandalism

### Private Accident Insurance (Unfallversicherung):

Provides additional financial protection for accidents occurring outside the workplace.

## Why is it important?

Unexpected events can result in significant costs. Additional insurance coverage can provide financial protection and peace of mind.



## Helpful tip

Before purchasing insurance, compare:

- Coverage limits
- Family coverage options
- Deductibles
- English-language support
- Cancellation terms

The cheapest policy is not always the most suitable option.

# Getting Around Germany

## What is it about?

Germany offers a wide range of transportation options, whether you prefer using public transportation or driving your own vehicle. Understanding the available mobility options can help you travel efficiently, commute to work and explore your new surroundings with confidence.



## Public Transportation

Germany has an extensive public transportation network connecting cities, towns and rural areas.

### Public transportation may include:

- Buses
- Trams
- Underground systems (U-Bahn)
- Suburban trains (S-Bahn)
- Regional trains
- Long-distance trains

Many people use public transportation as their primary means of commuting and travelling.

### Popular Transport Apps

- DB Navigator
- Local transport apps
- Google Maps

These applications provide route planning, ticket purchases and real-time travel information.

## Good to know

The German wide valid "Deutschlandticket" provides access to most local and regional public transportation services throughout Germany for a fixed monthly fee.

Long-distance trains such as ICE, IC and EC services are generally not included.





### Helpful tip

Whether using public transportation or driving, a little preparation goes a long way. Download transportation apps, familiarize yourself with common routes and keep important documents readily available. This can make your first weeks in Germany significantly easier and help you settle in more quickly.

### Driving in Germany

Whether you can continue driving in Germany with your current driving licence depends on:

- The country that issued your licence
- Your nationality
- Your residence status
- The length of your stay

While some foreign licences are fully recognised, others may need to be exchanged for a German driving licence. In certain cases, additional documentation, theoretical tests or practical driving tests may be required.

### Understanding the Rules

#### EU/EEA Driving Licenses

Driving licenses issued by EU and EEA member states are generally recognized in Germany and usually do not need to be exchanged.

#### Non-EU/EEA Driving Licenses

Usually valid for 6 months after arriving in Germany, depending on the issuing country, requirements may include:

- Direct exchange
- Theoretical test
- Practical test
- Combination of both tests

Requirements vary by country and local authority.

### What documents may I need?

Typical documents for a license exchange may include:

- ✓ Valid driving license
- ✓ Passport or ID card
- ✓ Registration certificate (Anmeldung)
- ✓ Residence permit (if applicable)
- ✓ Biometric passport photo (QR code)
- ✓ Certified translation and classification (if required)
- ✓ Driving license records (if required)

Additional documentation may be requested by the responsible authority.

### Where can I get help?

Driving license matters are usually handled by:

- ➔ Driving License Office (Führerscheinstelle)
- ➔ Citizens' Office (Bürgerbüro)
- ➔ Local Municipality (Stadtverwaltung)

### Good to know



If you hold a non-EU driving license, it may be helpful to obtain official driving records or verification documents before leaving your home country. Processing times for license exchanges can vary significantly, so starting the process early is recommended. Insurance requirements may also differ from driving license regulations. Always verify both before driving regularly in Germany.

# Housing Journey

## What is it about?

Finding and settling into a home is one of the most important milestones of any relocation. From identifying suitable neighborhoods and searching for accommodation to signing a lease agreement and moving in, each step plays an important role in creating a successful start in Germany.

Because housing markets vary significantly across the country, **preparation, flexibility** and **realistic expectations** are key to a successful housing search.

# 1

Step 1:

### Explore different areas

Before beginning your property search, take time to become familiar with different neighborhoods.

Consider factors such as:

- Commuting time
- Public transportation
- Schools and childcare facilities
- Shopping opportunities
- Healthcare providers
- Parks and recreational facilities
- Parking availability

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## Why is it important?

Your home will become the **center of your daily life** in Germany. Factors such as commuting times, schools, childcare facilities, public transportation, healthcare services and local amenities can significantly influence your quality of life and overall relocation experience. Choosing the right location is often just as important as choosing the property itself.

### Good to know



There is rarely one “perfect” neighborhood. Successful relocations often begin by identifying what matters most to you and your family and focusing on those priorities when selecting an area.



### Helpful tip

A short personal introduction letter can help landlords better understand who you are and why you would be a reliable tenant. This can be particularly helpful for international applicants who have recently arrived in Germany and do not yet have a German rental history.

## 2

Step 2:

### Start your housing search

Housing availability and competition can vary significantly depending on the region. A structured approach can help improve your chances of success:

#### Recommended approach

1. Define your housing budget.
2. Identify preferred neighbourhoods.
3. Separate your requirements into:
  - Must-haves
  - Nice-to-haves
4. Prepare application documents.
5. Respond quickly to suitable listings.
6. Remain flexible where possible.

## 3

Step 3:

### Review the lease agreement

Before signing, carefully review important topics such as:

- Monthly rent
- Additional costs (Nebenkosten)
- Security deposit (Kaution)
- Lease duration
- Notice periods
- House rules
- Pet regulations
- Parking arrangements

If you are unsure about any part of the agreement, seek clarification before signing.

### Typical documents required

Landlords may request:

- ✓ Passport or ID card
- ✓ Employment contract
- ✓ Proof of income
- ✓ SCHUFA report (German credit history report)
- ✓ Visa or residence permit
- ✓ Personal introduction letter

### Good to know



Housing markets in larger cities and economically strong regions are often highly competitive. Being well prepared and responding quickly can significantly improve your chances of securing suitable accommodation.



## 4

Step 4:

### Move-in inspection

A handover appointment (Wohnungsübergabe) is usually arranged between landlord and tenant.

During this appointment:

- Existing damages and renovation status are documented
- Utility meter readings are recorded
- Keys are handed over
- A handover protocol is signed

## 5

Step 5:

### Set up your new home

Depending on the property, you may need to arrange:

- Electricity
- Heating
- Internet
- Telephone services
- Household contents insurance
- Broadcasting contribution (Rundfunkbeitrag)

In Germany, tenants are often responsible for arranging these services independently.

#### Good to know

In Germany, every household are required to pay the broadcasting contribution (Rundfunkbeitrag), regardless of whether they own a television or radio.

#### Good to know



Before leaving the handover appointment, verify that:

- Existing damages are documented
- Meter readings have been recorded
- All keys received are documented
- You have received a signed copy of the handover protocol



#### Helpful tip

Take photographs of all rooms and document existing damage during the handover. Keep copies of all handover documents together with your lease agreement. These records may help avoid misunderstandings when moving out in the future.

# Family & Education

## What is it about?

For many families, arranging childcare and education is one of the most important steps after arriving in Germany. Depending on your child's age, different childcare and school options may be available. Registration procedures, availability and requirements can vary significantly between cities, municipalities and federal states. Starting your research early can help ensure a smoother transition for the entire family.

## Why is it important?

Access to childcare and education can have a significant impact on:

- Family life
- Work-life balance
- Daily commuting
- Housing decisions
- Long-term integration

In many regions, demand exceeds availability and waiting lists are common. **Early planning** is therefore **strongly recommended**.



## Childcare options (typically 0–6 years)

### Nursery (Kinderkrippe)

Typically for children under the age of 3.

### Daycare (Kita)

Provides childcare and early education before school enrollment.

### Childminder (Tagesmutter/Tagesvater)

Childcare provided in a smaller, homebased environment.

### School enrollment (ages 6+)

School placement often **depends on your registered residential address**.

For older children, the responsible authority may be:

- Local School Administration Office (Schulamt)
- Assigned Public School
- International School Admissions Office

If schooling is an important factor, consider **researching** school options **before selecting permanent housing**.

### What do I need?

Requirements vary by municipality but commonly include:

- ✓ Child's passport
- ✓ Registration certificate (Anmeldung)
- ✓ Proof of residence
- ✓ Birth certificate
- ✓ Vaccination records (if required)

Many municipalities offer **central online registration portals** that allow families to apply for multiple childcare providers simultaneously.



### Good to know

In many regions, childcare registration can only be completed after securing a residential address and completing registration (Anmeldung). Because waiting lists are common, early registration is strongly recommended.

### Where can I get help?

- Local Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt)
- Municipal childcare portals
- Childcare providers
- Family centers (Familienzentren)

# Family Benefits



## Good to know

Neither Kindergeld nor Elterngeld is granted automatically. A separate application is usually required before benefits can be approved and paid. Processing times may vary depending on the responsible authority and individual circumstances.

## What is it?

Germany offers several financial support programs designed to assist families with children. Two of the most common benefits are:

### Child Benefit (Kindergeld)

A monthly payment intended to help cover the costs of raising children.

### Parental Benefit (Elterngeld)

Financial support for parents who temporarily reduce or pause their employment following the birth of a child.

## Helpful tip

If you believe you may be eligible for family benefits, begin gathering the required documents as early as possible after arrival and registration. Early preparation can help avoid delays and ensure that benefits are processed more efficiently.



## Why is it important?

These benefits can provide valuable **financial support** and help families during important stages of family life and childcare. Depending on your individual circumstances, you may be eligible for one or both benefits.

## Common benefit types

### Kindergeld

Supports families with ongoing child-related expenses. Applications are generally submitted to the Family Benefits Office (Familienkasse).

### Elterngeld

Supports parents during the first months after the birth of a child. Common options include:

- Basiselterngeld
- ElterngeldPlus

Applications are generally submitted to the responsible Elterngeld Office (Elterngeldstelle).

## What do I need?

Typical documents may include:

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ Registration certificate (Anmeldung)
- ✓ Residence permit (if applicable)
- ✓ Child's birth certificate
- ✓ Tax Identification Numbers
- ✓ Proof of income (for Elterngeld applications)

Requirements may vary depending on your individual circumstances.

# Building Your New Life & Community

## What is it?

Moving to Germany involves much more than finding a home, completing paperwork and starting a new job. Feeling at home takes time and often begins with **building connections, establishing routines** and **becoming part of your local community**.

Whether you relocate alone or with your family, creating a support network and developing a sense of belonging are important steps towards a successful and fulfilling relocation experience.

## Why is it important?

Research and practical experience consistently show that successful international assignments depend not only on professional success but also on how well individuals and families adapt to their new environment.

Building relationships, participating in community life and creating new routines can significantly contribute to **well-being, long-term satisfaction** and a smoother transition into life in Germany.

## Where can I start?

Germany offers many opportunities to meet people and become involved in your local community.

### Popular options include:

- Sports clubs (Vereine)
- Language courses
- Community events and local festivals
- Church-based community activities
- Volunteer opportunities
- Expat and international communities
- Parent groups and family centres
- Schools and childcare activities
- Hobby and cultural groups

Building connections often starts with simple conversations and a willingness to participate.





### Helpful tip

Try to establish a few regular routines during your first months in Germany.

Examples might include:

- Visiting the same local café
- Shopping at a weekly market
- Joining a sports activity
- Attending a language course
- Exploring a new part of your city each weekend

Small routines often create a sense of familiarity much faster than people expect.

### Practical ideas

#### For Individuals

- Join a sports club or hobby group
- Attend local events and festivals
- Explore your neighbourhood
- Visit cafés, markets and cultural attractions
- Participate in language courses
- Volunteer for local organisations

#### For Families

- Attend school and childcare events
- Visit playgrounds and family centres
- Enrol children in sports or recreational activities
- Connect with other international families
- Explore local libraries and community programs

Many long-lasting friendships begin through shared interests and children's activities.



### Helpful tip for Families

If you have children, consider saying "yes" to invitations whenever possible. Birthday parties, school events, sports activities and neighborhood gatherings often become the starting point for valuable friendships and support networks. Sometimes a single conversation can lead to long-lasting connections and friendships.



### Good to know

You do not need to speak perfect German to start building connections. Being open, curious and willing to participate is often more important than speaking flawless German.

Germany also has a strong club culture (Vereinskultur), and sports clubs, volunteer organizations and community groups often play an important role in local social life.

It is completely normal to experience homesickness, uncertainty or cultural adjustment topics during your first months in a new country. Building a sense of belonging takes time and often happens gradually through everyday experiences and personal connections.

# Helpful Resources

## What is it?

Relocating to a new country often involves navigating unfamiliar processes, authorities and service providers. The resources below provide **reliable and up-to-date information** to support you throughout your relocation journey and during your first months in Germany.

## Immigration & Residence

### Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt)

Official information on visa requirements, entry regulations and German missions abroad.



[www.auswaertiges-amt.de](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de)

### Visa Navigator

Find the visa category that best fits your individual situation.



[digital.diplo.de/navigator/de/visa](http://digital.diplo.de/navigator/de/visa)



[www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/visum-aufenthalt/quick-check](http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/visum-aufenthalt/quick-check)

## Taxes & Social Security

### Federal Central Tax Office (BZSt)

Information regarding Tax Identification Numbers (Tax ID) and tax-related matters.



[www.bzst.de](http://www.bzst.de)

### Deutsche Rentenversicherung

Information about pension insurance and retirement benefits.



[www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de](http://www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de)

### Federal Employment Agency

Employment regulations, unemployment insurance and labour market information.



[www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)



### Good to know

Regulations, requirements and procedures may change over time. Whenever possible, refer to official government websites and local authorities to ensure that you are working with the most current information available. Save important websites and digital copies of your documents on your phone or computer. Having quick access to reliable information can save time and reduce stress during your first months in Germany.

## Housing & Everyday Life

### Rundfunkbeitrag

Information regarding Germany's broadcasting contribution.



[www.rundfunkbeitrag.de](http://www.rundfunkbeitrag.de)

### Deutsche Bahn (DB Navigator)

Travel planning, train schedules and ticket purchases.



[www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de)

### Local Public Transportation

Check your local transport provider's website or app for routes, tickets and real-time information.

# FAQ & Authorities



## Good to know

Many administrative procedures depend on information from previous steps.

## Understanding German Authorities

Authority	Responsible for
Bürgerbüro/Meldebehörde	Registration (Anmeldung)
Agentur für Arbeit	Labor office
Ausländerbehörde	Residence permits and immigration matters
Finanzamt	Tax matters
Familienkasse	Child Benefit (Kindergeld)
Elterngeldstelle	Parental Benefit (Elterngeld)
Krankenkasse	Health insurance
Jugendamt	Childcare and family support
Führerscheinstelle	Driving licence matters
Deutsche Rentenversicherung	Pension insurance

## Frequently asked questions

**When will I receive my Tax ID?** Your Tax Identification Number (Tax ID) is usually issued automatically after registration (Anmeldung) and sent by post within a few weeks.

**Can I open a bank account before receiving my Tax ID?** Some banks allow account opening before the Tax ID has been issued, while others may require it during or shortly after the onboarding process.

**Do I need a German driving license?** This depends on the country that issued your license, your residence status and the length of your stay in Germany.

**How do I find a doctor?** You may search online, contact your health insurance provider or ask colleagues, neighbors or friends for recommendations.

**How do I find childcare?** Many municipalities operate central childcare registration portals. Your local “Jugendamt” can often provide additional guidance and support.

**What should I do if I move to a new address?** Update your registration and inform relevant institutions such as your employer, bank, insurance providers and immigration authorities (if applicable).

**Can I simply walk into authorities, banks or medical practices?** In Germany, appointments are strongly recommended and often required, especially in larger cities. Walk-in visits are generally uncommon and may not be possible. Whenever possible, arrange an appointment in advance to avoid delays and unnecessary waiting times.

## Ready for your new beginning

We hope this guide has provided you with the information and practical insights needed to navigate your relocation to Germany.

From administrative requirements and housing to healthcare, banking and everyday life, this guide is designed to support you throughout your transition.

While every relocation experience is unique, being well prepared is the first step toward a successful start.

**We wish you a smooth arrival, a successful settling-in period, and many positive experiences as you begin this new chapter in Germany.**

## Follow us



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