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Daily Life

Information

Are you new to Germany? Moving to a foreign country involves many questions and a lot of work. Everyday life (or some German ways of life) must seem unfamiliar to many refugees and immigrants. To make it a little easier for you to navigate everyday life, here are a few practical tips.

Mobility

School transport

School transport means that pupils are brought to school. Costs cannot be covered for all pupils. Normally, parents have to pay for it. You can find out whether the costs can be covered for your children by contacting the community of Artland.

The providers of school transport decide on their own responsibility how to fulfil this obligation of transport or reimbursement. In doing so, they can determine both the mode of transport (school buses, public transport) and the minimum distance between home and school. This is used in different ways; as a rule, distances are set between about 2 and 5 km, depending on age and local conditions.

Contact:

Community of Artland



[Markt 1 49610 Quakenbrück](#)
@info@artland.de

Bus, train and bicycle

All places in your new city/town and the surrounding areas can be easily reached by public transport. A healthy, inexpensive and environmentally friendly alternative to get from A to B is a bicycle.

Public transport

Public transport is available to you so you can make your way around the community of Artland and District of Osnabrück. These are, for example, the [Nord-West-Bahn](#) and the [Verkehrsgemeinschaft Osnabrück](#) (VOS).

Travelling without a ticket is punishable by a fine! A valid ticket is required for every trip. Otherwise you will pay a large penalty.

Bicycles

If you know that you will be living in the community of Artland for a longer period, it is worth

buying a bike. This is cheaper than travelling with public transport.

💡 Important road rules for cyclists (excerpt):

- Always ride on the right-hand side of the road
- Do not ride next to each other, but one behind the other
- If there is a cycle path, you must ride on the cycle path (always on the right side of the road in the direction of travel).
- Only children up to the age of 11 are allowed to cycle along the walkways
- Using a mobile phone on a bicycle is prohibited.

💡 Purchase and repairs: When you buy your bike, make sure that it is equipped as follows and, therefore, safe to ride. Otherwise, you will have to pay a fine when subject to a police check.

- Front and rear lights
- Front and rear reflectors
- Reflectors in the spokes (2 per wheel)
- Reflectors on the pedals
- Bell
- Two independent brakes

Driving licences and cars

The Führerschein (driving licence)

Everyone needs an international driving licence or a national driving licence with a translation of the document made by an officially certified translator in order to drive a car in Germany. This regulation does not apply to EU citizens.

1. Have a foreign driving licence transcribed

Do you already have a driving licence from your home country?

With a foreign driving licence (not EU/EEC), you may in general drive a vehicle for half a year after taking residency in Germany.

After that, you must have your foreign driving licence converted.

That means that you must retake the theoretical and practical exams once more.

Find more information about this at the Führerscheinstelle (Driving Licence Office) of the [district](#).

Generally speaking, if an EU citizen has a driving licence from another country for a car, it is recognised. You can have your driving licence converted voluntarily, without having to pass the theoretical and practical test again. These regulations do not apply for the driving licence for lorries or buses. Here, you will have to have the driving licence converted after a deadline has expired.

2. Retaking your driving licence

If you want to drive in Germany and do not have a recognised driving licence, you need to attend a driving school. There you will take theoretical and practical classes to learn the traffic regulations in Germany and how to drive a car.

The driving lessons and driving tests are subject to a fee. Check the costs with your driving school before you start!

You can obtain further information and the application forms from the driving school or [Führerscheinstelle \(Driving Licence Office\)](#).

Buying a car

If you have bought a car, then you must register it at the Kfz-Zulassungsstelle (vehicle registration centre) .

You will need for this:

- Personal identification, passport or Aufenthaltstitel (residence permit)
- The vehicle's registration book
- Zulassungsbescheinigung Part II (Registration certificate part II)
- SEPA direct debit mandate for the vehicle duty
- Vehicle insurance

The Citizens' Advice Bureau of the community of Artland is responsible for this. Appointments can be booked online [here](#).

■ Everyone who owns a vehicle and wants to drive (the vehicle owner) in Germany must have vehicle insurance. The car is not licenced without insurance. In this way any damage that you cause to other vehicles or persons will be insured. This also applies to motorbikes.

Information in different languages can be found here:

[Make it in Germany](#)
[Handbook Germany](#)

Insurance

In Germany, anyone who causes damage to a third party is liable by law to pay compensation – even if it happened by accident. This applies to personal injury, damage to property and financial losses of a private nature – if you cause a traffic accident, for example, or your child accidentally breaks a window while playing with a ball.

You can take out a personal liability insurance policy that pays for these damages for you and your family. You do not need to take out a personal liability insurance policy, but it is the most important private insurance and is highly recommended. In the event of any damage, you may be liable for high costs otherwise. Many tenants wish that they had a private personal liability insurance.

You can get more information on insurance from the [Consumer Advice Centre](#).

Broadcasting fees

Germany has independent radio, television and online services from ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. They report in a way that is free from economic and political influences. For this, all people pay money together. This is called “broadcasting fees”.

According to the law: In Germany, a broadcast licence fee must be paid for each flat. However, only one person per flat has to pay the broadcast licence fee. This costs €18.36 per month and must be paid to the Fee Services department (Beitragsservice) of ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. You can find more information on the [broadcast licence fee website](#) (also in English, French, Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Ukrainian and Russian).

Some people can be exempted from this payment. For example, if you receive benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act or other social benefits. An application must be submitted for exemption from the broadcasting fee.

You can find the application for an exemption [here](#).

Internet

Public, free Wi-Fi hotspots in the community of Artland

Free Wi-Fi is available in several locations in public areas, for example in inner city areas, libraries, restaurants or media companies. In these places, you can surf the Internet with your own device.

In Quakenbrück, there is free Wi-Fi on the market square.

Mobile internet

For mobile internet via your mobile phone, you need a contract or a prepaid card.

Note: Be cautious with [mobile phone contracts](#). A contract that you can always cancel is better than a contract that is valid for a long time (for example 2 years).

If you have any questions about mobile phone contracts, you can turn to the following bodies: Your [community](#), the [Migration Counselling Centre](#) or the [Youth Migration Service](#).

Private Wi-Fi

You can conclude a contract for Wi-Fi for your flat yourself. Talk to your landlord before entering into a contract, ask whether Wi-Fi is technically possible and how you can give the technician access to the building.

Information for asylum applicants

As an asylum applicant in Germany, you unfortunately have no legal right to internet access (Wi-Fi) in your accommodation. There is therefore usually no Internet access (Wi-Fi) in the accommodation facilities. If there is a telephone connection in the accommodation, it is possible that you can sign up for a Wi-Fi contract yourself.

Bank account

A current account (Girokonto) is an account for people who want to make payments via a bank. Your money is available in your current account (Girokonto) at any time. Make sure you have

enough money in your account for all withdrawals and payments.


With a current account (Girokonto), you can:


- transfer money
- Receive cashless payments (disbursements from agencies/authorities/social benefits are often cashless, meaning they are transferred directly to a personal current account (Girokonto))
- set up standing orders
- Use direct debit services
- Cash cheques
- Make cashless payments with the EC/Maestro card
- withdraw money at the bank counter or an ATM
- print your bank statements

Opening an account

Decide which bank you want to open an account with. Make an appointment to open the account. Please bring one of your identity documents with you: "Ankunftsnachweis" (proof of arrival), "Aufenthaltsbewilligung" (residence permit), identity card. If there is no current address on the identification document, please also bring a certificate of registration or a comparable document.

- Once the account has been opened, you will receive an EC card with a four-digit PIN code. Sign the back of the EC card and memorise your PIN code. You will need the PIN code for cashless payments and to withdraw money from ATMs. **Make sure you keep your card and your PIN code separate!**
- If you wish to withdraw cash, it is best to use the ATM of the bank where you have your account. Withdrawals are then free of charge. If the PIN code is entered incorrectly three times at the ATM, the EC card is withdrawn and blocked. In this case you must ask your bank.
- If you lose your EC card or it is stolen, have it blocked immediately. Tell them your sort code and your account number. Then ask your bank for a new EC card.

 [116116](tel:116116)

 Around the clock.

Different banks offer current accounts with different conditions. Find out exactly how much a Girokonto costs each month and what services the bank offers.

If you do not speak German or English, please bring an interpreter with you.

Contracts and mobile phones

Mobile phones

There are basically two different mobile phone contracts in Germany: Prepaid contracts and fixed-term contracts. The prepaid contract does not have a fixed contract term; a fixed-term

contract has a minimum contract term. This contract is automatically renewed if you do not cancel. To terminate a fixed-term contract, a written timely notice of termination is required. Unlike fixed-term contracts, prepaid contracts have no monthly fee.

10 important questions for the conclusion of a contract:

- What is the basic fee? Does the fee increase after a certain period?
- Is there a minimum monthly fee?
- How long is the contract period (e.g. 12 or 24 months)?
- When do I have to cancel if I do not want to extend the contract?
- How much does a minute cost (different/own network)?
- What are the costs for buying a mobile phone with and without a contract?
- How much does Internet access cost?
- How much does it cost to call abroad?

Contracts

In Germany, some situations where you need to sign a contract are: starting a new job, moving into a new home, buying a car or mobile phone, or joining a gym. Always pay close attention to what the contract says: How is the total price calculated? Are there additional monthly fees besides a one-off payment? Contracts are binding and have to be followed. You can only terminate a contract within the notice period stated. If I don't cancel the contract, it may automatically renew.

Children and adolescents under the age of 18 cannot conclude any contracts. It is essential to make sure that your children cannot access your account data.

If you are not sure if you can pay the ongoing costs or whether you have understood everything correctly, do not sign the contract!

Once you sign the contract, it is legally binding. Therefore, it is always good to take the time to read a contract carefully and to make sure you are completely sure what everything means before you sign it.

Especially important:

Never sign anything you have not understood or cannot read. Otherwise, you may sign a contract or agreement that requires you to pay something. It is sometimes very difficult to undo this. Always check and compare several offers and decide at your leisure.

Do not let anyone push you for a signature. If you are placed under pressure then the salesperson is not being honest.

Do not conclude any contracts on the telephone, on the street, in front of a supermarket or at the door of your house!

Never give anyone your bank information over the telephone!

You can also find additional information on the website of the [Verbraucherzentrale \(Consumer Advice Centre\)](#).

Waste disposal

Everything at a glance!

Proper separation and disposal is not that difficult. [Here](#) you will find an overview of the types of waste and how to dispose of them correctly. You can also use this [link](#) to view the collection calendar for your community or town in the District of Osnabrück.

Residual waste (black bin)

This belongs in the residual waste bin (black bin):

Other normal household waste, e.g. Hoover bags, cigarette butts, sweepings, nappies, hygiene articles, also raw bone, meat or fish waste, cat litter, carpet and wallpaper residues, etc.

Not part of it:

Everything that is compostable or belongs in the yellow bag as packaging. Please dispose of waste containing hazardous substances and electrical appliances via the mobile collection service or take them to one of the recycling centres. Other recyclable materials such as scrap metal, wood scraps etc. can also be handed in here.

Organic waste (brown bin)

This belongs in the organic waste bin:

Exclusively compostable waste such as fruit and vegetable waste, leftover cooked food, garden waste, tea and coffee grounds with filter paper, kitchen paper in small quantities.

Not part of it:

Anything that is not compostable, e.g. plastic waste bags. Please put raw bone, meat or fish waste and cat litter in the residual waste bin.

Larger quantities of green waste can be taken to the [recycling centres for](#) a fee.

Light packaging (yellow bin)

This belongs in the yellow bin:

Empty packaging made of metal or plastic, e.g. empty yoghurt pots, tubes, beverage cartons, foil packaging and empty personal hygiene or cleaning product bottles. Also packaging for snack foods, such as hamburgers or hot dogs.

Not part of it:

Glass, paper and cardboard (please put in the appropriate containers or collections). Also, residual waste, even if it is made of plastic or metal, such as toys, toothbrushes or screws, etc.

Paper (green bin)

This belongs in the waste paper bin/container:

Paper and cardboard, e.g. newspapers, magazines, cardboard boxes, office paper, etc. In the District of Osnabrück you can dispose of your waste paper in the green bin.

Not part of it:

Anything that is not pure paper or pure cardboard, including plastic bags or composites such as beverage cartons.

Glass

This belongs in the bottle bank:

Emptied white and coloured glass, e.g. disposable bottles and jars.

Not part of it:

Everything that is not made of pure glass, including ceramics or porcelain (both belong in the residual waste bin).

Hazardous waste and hazardous waste mobile

The hazardous waste mobile is on the road for you in the District of Osnabrück more than 75 times a year - the opportunity for all private households to rummage through cellars, cupboards and garages for problem waste and to hand in the hazardous waste found to the hazardous waste mobile in an environmentally conscious manner and free of charge.

This belongs in the hazardous waste and the hazardous waste mobile

Private waste containing hazardous substances such as household chemicals, old medicines (without packaging), mercury thermometers, rust and antifreeze agents, paints, thinners.

Not part of it:

Commercial waste and large electrical appliances such as cookers, washing machines, dishwashers as well as refrigerators and monitors.

Electronic waste

Everything that has a cable! To dispose of electronic waste, there are several options available to you in the District of Osnabrück. We collect many items from your home free of charge after you have [registered](#) (online or by telephone). In addition, our green spaces and recycling centres also accept quite a bit.

This is part of electronic waste:

Tvs, screens, Pcs, microwaves, hoovers, ovens, dishwashers, refrigerators, washing machines;

Bulky waste

In the district, you can dispose of your bulky goods in two ways: Either you hand it in at one of our AWIGO recycling centres (**subject to a charge**, not possible in Dissen) or we collect it from your home **free of charge**. After registering by telephone or in writing at the [Service Centre](#), you will receive a collection date.

This belongs in the bulky waste collection:

Furniture such as sofas, chairs, cupboards, tables, wooden shelves, bed frames, also mattresses, slatted frames, duvets, bicycles;

Not part of it: Electrical and electronic equipment, commercial waste, household waste in bags, boxes, cartons, objects that are predominantly made of metal, construction waste, doors/windows, sanitary ceramics, car and motorbike parts, old tyres, old textiles, green waste, wallpaper, recyclable materials such as glass, paper/cardboard, packaging waste, harmful substances such as paints, solvents, wooden pallets etc.

Further information on the subject of waste disposal can be found at: www.awigo.de

Living

Housing allowance payments

Housing assistance

“Wohngeld” (housing assistance) serves to economically secure adequate and family-friendly housing. It is paid as a rent subsidy (Mietzuschuss) for tenants or as a property subsidy (Lastenzuschuss) for owner-occupied housing. Every resident has a legal claim to housing assistance if the legal requirements are met.

Whether there is a claim to housing assistance, and if so, how much, essentially depends on three factors,

- The number of household members to be taken into account,
- The amount of the rent or cost to be taken into account and
- The amount of the total income.


Detailed and more extensive information on housing assistance is available on the website of the [community of Artland](#).

You can also download the application for housing assistance on the page of the community of Artland or pick it up in person at the town hall.

Contact person

Ms Mosting

 [Markt 2, room 134 49610 Quakenbrück](#)


 [05431/182146](tel:05431/182146)

@mosting@artland.de

Mr Teichmann



[Markt 2, room 133 49610 Quakenbrück](#)

 [05431/182133](tel:05431/182133)

@teichmann@artland.de

Important terms and costs

You can search for a place to live in the local newspapers or online.

You can find an email address or phone number in the ads. You need to call the person and make an appointment to view the accommodation. You will then take a look at it with the landlord or landlady. If you don't speak enough German to do this alone, bring a friend or acquaintance to help you.

Here are some examples of questions to ask while viewing the apartment:

- What does the monthly rent cost?
- How much would the water, electricity, heating and gas cost?
- Does the property use a lot of energy?

💡 After the appointment, you should quickly give the landlord or landlady feedback on whether you want to rent the flat.

If the landlord or landlady wants to rent the flat to you, they should provide you with an overview of the rental costs and additional costs or a rental contract. It must be specified in the rental contract how large the flat is, how high the rent is and what costs the rent comprises.

Important terms and costs

Explanation of important abbreviations in German accommodation ads:

Whg. = Wohnung (flat), App. = Appartement (apartment), WG = Wohngemeinschaft (shared property/flatshare), Zi. = Zimmer (bedroom), ZKB = Zimmer-Küche-Bad (bedroom-kitchen-bathroom), EG = Erdgeschoss (ground floor), 1. OG = "1. Obergeschoss". English: first floor. Wohnfl. = Wohnfläche (living space), EBK = Einbauküche (equipped kitchen), teilmöbl. = teilmöbliert (partially furnished), inkl. = inklusive (included); MM = Miete pro Monat (monthly rent), NK = Nebenkosten (additional costs), HK = Heizkosten (heating expenses), Kaut. = Kautio (deposit)

Rental contract

A promise to accept a flat only becomes binding with a rental contract. The rights and obligations of the landlord and the rights and obligations of the tenant must be clarified in the rental contract. The rental contract will also contain important additional details that you must read through carefully (the invoicing of the heating and operating costs, notice periods, the keeping of animals, subletting and much more).

Read the rental contract carefully before you sign it. Also have the rental contract read through an acquaintance with good German language skills, or obtain professional support, for example from the Mieterschutzbund (tenants protection association). They support tenants with regards to legal questions involving rent.

House regulations

The regulations for living together in the building are described in the house rules. This will include for example quiet times in the house from 10 pm to 8 am, clearing the snow in winter, regular cleaning of the staircase and much more. Read through the regulations in the house rules carefully.

Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung (Landlord confirmation)

Your landlord or landlady must fill out this form. You will need this confirmation for your Ummeldung (changing of your address) in your community, or at the Einwohnermeldeamt (Residents' Registration Office).

You must confirm your address in your new community as quickly as possible, at the latest within two weeks.

Cold rent

The Kaltmiete (cold rent) refers to the costs for the flat without any additional costs such as water, heating, water heating, the caretaker and the Grundsteuer property tax. The Kaltmiete

(cold rent) is always less than the Warmmiete (warm rent).

Total rent

The Warmmiete refers to the total costs for the flat, that is the Kaltmiete (cold rent) plus the additional costs. However: Sometimes there are also further costs in addition to the Warmmiete (warm rent), for example electricity, broadcasting fees for radio and television and rubbish disposal.

When looking for a flat, you should always consider whether it is the cold rent or the warm rent that is displayed in the advert. Some adverts for flats may be deceptively cheap if the additional costs are not displayed. You should therefore clarify in advance which costs are included in the rent.

Deposit

The security deposit provides the landlord or landlady with financial security if anything in the flat was to break. The security is frequently 2-3 months of "cold" rent.

At the end of the rental period, the security deposit will be repaid if the flat has been handed over clean and without any defects to the landlady or landlord, or to the next tenant.

If possible, take photographs of the state of the flat when moving in, and when moving out of the flat. You will then be able to demonstrate when moving out which defects were already present when you moved in.

Tenant self-disclosure

The tenant self-disclosure is a type of questionnaire that is requested by the landlady or landlord. The landlady or landlord would like to check in particular if the tenant is in a position to be able to pay the rent. You can draw up the tenant self-disclosure yourself. It contains the following information:

- First and last name
- Birthday
- Current address
- Contact details (telephone and e-mail)
- Current career and employer
- Monthly income
- SCHUFA information

The SCHUFA information provides information about your ability to pay. You can request the SCHUFA information online. Please take care of it early so that it will arrive in time for your flat search.

The free version of the Schufa information is called "[Datenkopie nach Art. 15 DS-GVO](#)". This will be sufficient for the landlord.

Religion

Freedom of religion

The principle of the freedom of religion is in force in Germany. It is guaranteed by the Basic Law. You can practise your faith as you see fit, as long as you do not violate the Basic Law. It

is also prohibited to discriminate against people on the basis of their religion, for example when looking for a job. Religious freedom also includes accepting the faith of others. Germany does not have a state church. The state and religion are separate.

This means, for example:

- All people are allowed to freely choose and practice their own religions and beliefs
- Everyone also has the freedom not to be religious – those who do not believe in God are allowed to say so publicly
- People of different religions and faiths may marry among themselves
- Marriage only counts as legally binding if it is entered into at the Register Office (Standesamt). Marriages entered into exclusively within the framework of a religion are not legally binding in Germany.
- Religious laws do not govern the legal system in Germany

Religious Practice

Many religious communities are organised in their own local church congregations.

Being in contact with a religious community is not only important for celebrating mass together, but also for interacting with others in different groups or meetings. You can find out about all the different offers of the respective religious community on their website, over the phone or in person. You can find an overview of different religious communities [here](#).

Leisure and sport

The range of leisure sports on offer in the town of Quakenbrück and the Artland region is very diverse. Whether tennis, fishing, horse riding, cycling, swimming or canoe tours on the Hase, there is something for everyone here.

Would you rather experience something exciting? Then how about a round of Swin Golf at the impressive Gut Vehr on the outskirts of Quakenbrück. Everyone can learn the simplified version of golf here. Fun is guaranteed - whether alone or in a group. Or ride one of our hand lever, bicycle or club trolleys on the disused railway line between Quakenbrück and Fürstenau.

Find out [here](#) where you can find sports halls and sports fields as well as riding halls and tennis courts in Artland.

Libraries

A library is an institution where you can borrow books, CDs, learning materials and learning aids to use at home. It is also a quiet place where you can go to read or study.

The community of Artland has its own library. You will find it at [Quakenbrück, Markt 5](#). You can find the library's offer and further information at:
<http://www.samtgemeinde-buecherei.de/>

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer and intersex* (LGBTQI*) people

People of different religions, different genders, different places of origin and different political views all live together peacefully in Germany and have the same rights. This also applies to sexual orientation and gender identity. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender*, queer and intersex* (LGBTQI*) people have the same rights as anyone else in Germany.

For official documentation, Germany has recently added a third option, “divers”, to the traditional “female” and “male”. In Germany, transgender individuals can have their name and gender legally changed. Women are allowed to fall in love with and marry other women in Germany; the same is true for men.

👤 Many LGBTQI+ people have fled their countries of origin due to discrimination and travelled to Germany. If you are a refugee who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender*, queer or intersex*, you can find support, community and social contact and information from the many LGBTQI* organisations in Germany. The “Queer Refugees Deutschland” project from LSVD can provide contact details and other information:

Lesben- und Schwulenverband in Deutschland (LSVD) (Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany)
“Queer Refugees Deutschland” project

🌐 www.queer-refugees.de

@ queer-refugees@lsvd.de

In the **District of Osnabrück**, Trans*Beratung Weser-Ems offers support in social, economic and legal matters for those affected, their relatives and acquaintances. Consultations with translation and co-counselling are also possible by appointment. Counselling takes place in Bramsche in the communal counselling rooms run by the City of Bramsche.

Bramsche advice centre

📍 Room E 0.4

[Heinrich-Beerbom-Platz 2 49565 Bramsche](#)

@ weser-ems@trans-recht.de

☎ [01605889070](tel:01605889070)

Further information is available on the following website: [Our offer - Counselling for transgender | transsexuals Oldenburg area](#)