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## Everyday Life and Housing

### Living in Germany

#### The Rule of Law

Germany is a democratic constitutional state. The Grundgesetz (Basic Law) guarantees human dignity, freedom and justice. There are laws to ensure that human rights are respected.

Political decisions are made by representatives of the people. The representatives of the people are elected by the citizens of Germany in free elections.

The laws apply equally to all people in Germany. The state must abide by the laws. All people living in Germany must also abide by German laws.

This means, for example:

- If people think that other people or the public administration is doing them an injustice, they can take the matter to a court. These courts are independent. This means that the government cannot tell the courts how to decide.
- State courts decide whether someone is to be punished. Penalties include fines, community service and imprisonment. There is no death penalty in Germany.
- The police have the task of ensuring that all people can live in freedom and security.
- The practice of religion must not offend against German law. Law always takes precedence over religion.

The following are not permitted in Germany:

- to call for hatred or violence.
- to fight against the democratic system and its values.

These offenses can lead to imprisonment.

After serving the sentence, non-German citizens may, under certain conditions, lose their right to stay in Germany and will be expelled.

#### Personal freedom

All adults are allowed to decide about themselves and their own lives, no matter whether man or woman, young or old, with or without disability, and no matter what skin color or religious affiliation.

All people may do what they want, as long as they abide by the laws and do not restrict others in their freedom.

This means, for example:

- All people are allowed to decide what they want to wear
- All people are allowed to eat what they want and what they like

- The consumption of alcohol is allowed for adults. The consumption of alcohol is prohibited for children and adolescents
- Every woman and every man may decide for himself or herself whether and who he or she wants to marry
- Every woman and every man may divorce
- Unmarried couples may live together and have children
- Members of different religions and faiths may marry and have children
- Contraception is allowed for both sexes. A person's decision to use contraception must be respected
- Same-sex partnerships are accepted
- Everyone decides for themselves how and where they want to live. For non-Germans, this right may be restricted until an asylum application has been approved and officially recognized
- Sexual acts between adults may only take place by mutual consent. Any sexual intercourse with children is prohibited

Important:

Your own freedom ends where it violates the freedom or human dignity of others or violates laws.

## **Equal rights for men and women**

Women and men have equal rights. This is reflected in the laws and in daily life.

This means, for example:

- Girls and boys go to school together and receive the same education. They take part in physical education classes together
- Women are allowed to study at a university or learn a profession. In principle, all professions are open to women
- Women assume responsibility in society, e.g. as policewomen, doctors, teachers or in government offices and bureaus. Their instructions must be followed as if the instructions had been given by a man in a similar position
- Women decide for themselves whether they want to work. They themselves can do what they want with the money they earn
- Women do not need to ask their husbands, parents or other family members for permission when they want to work, open a bank account or sign a contract
- Women are allowed to dress as they please
- Women decide for themselves if, when and who they want to marry
- Mothers are especially protected. They are not allowed to work six weeks before and eight weeks after birth. They may not be fired because of their motherhood
- The tasks and roles in the family are not prescribed
- Women participate in public life. They attend cultural, political or sporting events, restaurants and bars
- Women can vote and be elected to political office
- Women and men are equal in inheritance law. This applies to daughters as well as sons

- Sexual advances, comments or requests are only allowed if all parties agree. A "stop," "no," or "I don't want to" must be respected at all times

The following are not allowed in Germany:

- any form of violence against women, including in marriage
- sexual harassment at any time against anyone
- rape, even within the marriage
- forcing someone to marry. Marriage by force or threat is, like all the other acts in this list, against the law

## **Freedom of expression**

All people may form , freely express and disseminate their own opinions. These opinions may also be expressed in public. All media are also free; all people can inform themselves there. Whoever expresses his or her opinion freely must pay attention to the protection of the personal honor or the personal dignity of other people.

This means, for example:

- Religion may be criticized
- Artistic works may provoke. No one may dictate to writers, musicians or visual artists how they should work
- The government and the various religions may also be the subject of satire and critical art
- Anyone who feels slandered, insulted, defamed or violated in their personal honor or dignity can turn to the police or to a court.

The following are not allowed in Germany:

- the use of anti-constitutional symbols and calls to overthrow democracy
- Insulting expressions of opinion that demean others
- slander or defamation against other people
- calls for hatred and violence

## **Children's rights**

Children and young people have rights. These rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also applies in Germany to all children and young people under the age of 18. In addition, there are many laws in Germany that protect the life, health and rights of children in various special ways. The protection of children always comes first.

This means, for example:

- All children have the same rights. No matter where they live, where they come from, what skin color they have, what their parents do, what language they speak, what religion they practice, whether they are boys or girls, in what culture they live, whether they have a disability, or whether they are rich or poor

- Children have the right to a name, a birth certificate, a nationality and a family. The state generally helps when children lack one or more of these
- Children should be able to live with their parents, unless this puts them in danger. Parents may and must care for their children, and protect and promote their health and well-being
- Children who are refugees have the right to special protection and assistance
- Children must be protected so that they can grow up properly
- Children must and are allowed to go to school. There is compulsory schooling. Parents must support their children in attending school. School education in Germany is free of charge
- Children are allowed to form their own opinion
- At the age of 14 at the latest, children are allowed to decide entirely on their own whether they belong to a religion and which religion they belong to
- Children should be able to develop well. Parents are responsible for this. If they need help, the state must help and, for example, provide food, clothing and an adequate place to live
- Children whose parents are not married have the same rights as children living with married parents

The following prohibitions exist in Germany:

- Children must not be neglected or abused
- Children must not be beaten or subjected to any physical or mental abuse in any way
- Children up to the age of 13 may not be used as laborers or other kinds of workers. If they are older, they are only allowed to work to a very limited extent. This must not impair health and personal development
- Children may not be abducted or used as commercial objects
- It is forbidden to perform sexual acts on children

## **Non-violence**

Everyone has the right to a life without violence. This means that all people have the right to life and physical integrity. This is understood to mean both the physical and mental health of a person. This also applies to the private sphere.

This means, for example:

- Conflicts should be resolved without violence
- If you need help with danger or conflicts, you can call the police
- All instructions of the police are to be obeyed
- Vigilante justice is not allowed. If one's own rights have been violated, a state court rules on the case
- The state must act non-violently. It may only use force in exceptional cases when all other means have been exhausted. There is no death penalty and no corporal punishment; torture is forbidden


The following is not allowed in Germany:

- physically abusing, hurting or killing another person (this also applies within the family, at school and on the street)

- participation in a brawl that results in people being killed or seriously injured
- blood vengeance and murder in the name of honor
- violence against women and children (always and everywhere)
- trafficking in human beings, slavery and the coercion to prostitution
- closing, circumcising, cutting, or otherwise mutilating the female genitals in in any way

## **Holidays and opening hours**

In Germany, opening hours and public holidays are regulated by law in each federal state. In Bavaria, most large shops are usually open from Monday to Saturday from 8:00 to 20:00.. The smaller shops in Kaufbeuren usually close earlier in the evening and on Saturdays. Sunday is a day of rest on which all shops are closed, although restaurants, cafés and some bakers are still open at varying hours.

Holidays and school holidays in Bavaria can be found  [here](#).

## **Religious practice in Kaufbeuren**

### **Freedom of religion**

Religion and faith are private matters in Germany. The state does not dictate to anyone whether or in which God he or she should believe. State and religion are separate.

#### **This means, for example:**

- All people may freely exercise their religion and their faith and choose for themselves
- All people have the freedom not to be religious and to say so. Anyone who does not believe in God may also say this publicly
- Members of different religions and faiths may marry
- Marriage counts as a legally binding marriage only after a civil ceremony at the Standesamt (Municipal Registry Office). Marriages entered into exclusively within the framework of a religion are not legally binding in Germany.

#### **The following is prohibited in Germany:**

- No one may place religious regulations or traditions above applicable laws. For example, to be married to several women at the same time or to slaughter an animal without special permission is illegal
- Boys may be circumcised only if this does not endanger their health or well-being

Many people in Germany today are committed to dialog between religions. The aim is the peaceful coexistence of religious people, believers, and people who do not belong to any religion. The state is committed to ideological neutrality. As long as the practice of a religion neither endangers democracy nor the separation of religion and state, it is protected.

## Houses of Worship

In addition to Catholic and Protestant churches, Kaufbeuren is also home to free churches and Islamic, Christian Orthodox etc. houses of worship.

Mosques in Kaufbeuren can be found here:

Kaufbeuren Camii

■ [Augsburger Straße 15](#)

Ulu Camii

■ [Danziger Straße 9](#)

Alevitisches Gemeindezentrum Kaufbeuren e.V.

■ [Hüttenstr. 77](#)

Keywords: Religion (religion), Religionsfreiheit (freedom of religion), Staat (state), Schutz der Religion (protection of religion), Gebetshäuser (houses of worship))

## Smoking ban in public buildings, restaurants and workplaces

Since 01.08.2010 smoking in public buildings and restaurants has been forbidden in Bavaria.

■ [Information on the smoking ban](#) (Informationen zum Rauchverbot)

Smoking is also not always allowed in workplaces.

■ [Non-smoker protection at the workplace](#) (Nichtraucherschutz am Arbeitsplatz)

## Housing

### Searching for a place to live

#### Government-supported dwellings and housing allowances

If you and the people living with you in the household earn little money, you can get a government-supported place to live. To do this, you will need a Wohnungsberechtigungsschein (residence entitlement certificate). Under certain circumstances, you are also entitled to Wohngeld (housing benefits). If you receive money from the state for yourself and your family, you usually do not need to apply for housing benefits.

You can obtain an application for the housing entitlement certificate here:

Stadt Kaufbeuren

Bauverwaltung( Building Administration),Room 200 N

■ [Kaiser-Max-Straße 1, 87600 Kaufbeuren](#)

■ [08341 437 413](#)

■ [Residential Entitlement](#) (Kontakt Wohnberechtigung)

■ [Application for residence entitlement](#)

### Housing offers

Rental apartments (Br. flats) can be found on the usual websites, e.g. at

- [Immobilienscout24](#)
- [Meine Stadt Immobilien](#)
- [ebay Kleinanzeigen \(small ads\)](#)

and in the local newspapers.

- **Real estate of the city of Kaufbeuren**

The city of Kaufbeuren rents out its own apartments.

You can apply for an apartment here:

Liegenschaftsamt der Stadt Kaufbeuren (Real Estate Office of the City of Kaufbeuren)

Frau Bubenik, Room 216 N

- [Kaiser-Max-Str. 1, 87600 Kaufbeuren](#)
- [08341 437 248](#)
- [Contact Liegenschaftsamt](#)
- [City Real Estate Office \(Liegenschaftsamt\)](#)

- **Vermieter in Kaufbeuren (Landlords in Kaufbeuren):**

■ [Non-Profit Building Cooperative](#) (Gemeinnützige Baugenossenschaft) Kaufbeuren

- [Hochstadtweg 3, 87600 Kaufbeuren](#)
- [08341 9662250](#)

■ [Gablonz Housing Estate](#) (Gablonzer Siedlungswerk)

- [Sudetenstraße 105, 87600 Kaufbeuren](#)
- [08341 96360](#)

■ [Dawonia Oberbayern und Schwaben GmbH](#)

- [Dom-Pedro-Str. 19, 80637 Munich](#)
- [089 30617 618](#)
- [info@dawonia.de](#)

- **WG-Zimmer (room in a flat- or house-sharing commune)**

Are you looking for a room in a shared dwelling?

At ■ [www.wg-gesucht.de](#) you will find a wide range of different rooms.

- **Important abbreviations**

1. OG= first floor (Br.), second floor (U.S.)

App. = apartment (U.S.), flat (Br.)

DB/D'bad = shower

EG = ground floor

EBK = kitchen with built-ins (U.S.) fitted kitchen (Br.)

HK = heating costs

incl. = inclusive

Kaut.. = deposit



MM = rent per month  
NK = additional costs  
sof. frei = immediately free  
teilmbf. = partly furnished  
WG = shared dwelling, commune  
Whg. = apartment/flat  
Wohnfl. = living space (usually in square meters)  
Zi. = room  
ZKB = room-kitchen-bathroom

## House rules

In a list of house rules, certain rules of living together are fixed. These rules apply to all persons who live in shared accommodation. The most important concerns are:

**Noise:** Everyone in the house is responsible for avoiding noise as much as possible. You must take special care to avoid noise from 13:00 to 15:00 and from 22:00 to 6:00, for this is rest time. On Sundays and holidays the whole day is rest time.

**Waste disposal:** The garbage must be disposed of in the designated bins. There are different bins for plastic, paper and cardboard, fruit and vegetable waste (biowaste) and other waste. Please keep to the waste separation, as a large part of the waste is recycled and thus is an important part of environmental protection.

■ [Information on disposal](#)

■ [waste consulting](#) (Kontakt Abfallberatung)

- **Sanitation:** No leftovers or any other food should be disposed of in the toilet, as this is the food source for rats. The biowaste bin is available for the disposal of food scraps. The toilet is not a garbage can. Therefore, do not dispose of your hygiene articles (bandages, wet wipes etc.) in the toilet, but in the garbage can.
- **Ventilation:** You should open the windows regularly to let in fresh air. This will prevent mold from forming,

All these topics are discussed below in [Kaufbeuren Tenant Qualification](#).

## Telephone connection

### Mobile telephones

There are two different mobile phone contracts in Germany: Prepaidvertrag (prepaid contract) and Laufzeitvertrag (fixed-term contract). The prepaid contract has no fixed term. A fixed-term contract has a minimum contract duration. This contract is automatically extended and then often becomes more expensive. If you do not want the contract to be extended automatically, you must cancel in writing. Pay attention to the notice period, usually 3 months before the termination of the contract (ATTENTION: The inbox at the telephone company applies.)

Ask your circle of helpers for assistance so that you can choose and conclude a good contract.

### 10 important questions for the conclusion of the contract:

- What is the basic fee? Will the fee increase after a certain time?

- Is there a minimum monthly turnover (minimum cost per month)?
- How long does the contract last (e.g. 12 or 24 months)?
- If I do not cancel the contract, the contract is automatically renewed. When do I have to cancel if I don't want to renew the contract?
- How much does it cost to set up, change and deactivate?
- What time interval (60/1, 10/10) is charged?
- How much does the minute cost (external / own network)?
- How much does a mobile phone with a contract cost and how much does a mobile phone without a contract cost?
- How much does the Internet cost?
- How much do international calls cost?

Keywords: Handy (mobile phone), Handyvertrag (mobile phone contract), Prepaid, Vertragslaufzeit (contract duration), Mindestlaufzeit (minimum contract duration), Kündigungsfrist (notice period for termination of contract)

### **Moving into one's own dwelling (for refugees)**

As soon as you have a residence permit, you are generally obligated to move out of the shared or decentralized accommodation facility. You must find your own place to live. As long as you do not have a job and therefore do not earn any money, the [Job Center](#) will pay your rent. However, only if you are in need of help.

Important: If you have found a place to live, you are not allowed to sign the lease immediately. The Job Center must check and approve the lease before you sign it. The rental agreement must contain the following points:

- Kaltmiete (literally, "cold rent"), the basic rental costs for the living space per month
- Nebenkosten, additional costs: also operating costs like staircase cleaning, garbage fees, caretaker costs, cable connection etc.
- heating costs: costs for heating and hot water (Please note: electricity and heating costs must always be paid by yourself)
- size of the dwelling, number of rooms, address, landlord

Warmmiete (literally, "warm rent"), consisting of the "cold rent" plus all the above components, and therefore significantly higher than the "cold rent."

### **Deposit, initial furnishings, payment for articles left by previous tenant, and reassignments**

The deposit is a security for the landlord. The amount for the deposit is a maximum of 3 months cold rent. If you move out of the apartment, you will get your money back. There may be deductions if any damage has been done.

Important: You must not leave any damage behind when you move out.

You are not allowed to take the furniture from your asylum accommodation with you. That is why you will need new furniture. You can apply to the [Job Center](#) for initial furnishings. You will then receive a lump sum from the Job Center, which may vary depending on the number of people and the size of the dwelling. If your previous tenant leaves different things behind, you can buy them from him or her (compensation).

Caution: It can take several weeks before the money is paid out by the Job Center!

Please remember to change your registration; i.e. you must report your new address (personally) to the Einwohnermeldeamt (Residents' Registration Office).

## Radio and television fees

### Radio licence fees

Germany has independent radio, television and online services from the networks ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. Their transmissions and broadcasts are free of economic and political influences. All people together pay money for this. The payment is called a Rundfunkbeitrag (radio and TV license fee).

The law stipulates that a license fee must be paid for every dwelling in Germany. However, only one person per dwelling has to pay the fee. This currently costs 17.50 euros per month and must be paid to the Beitragsservice (license-fee service) of ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. Further information can be found on the website of the [radio and TV license fee](#) (Rundfunkbeitrag).

Also available in several languages:

[Information on the radio and TV license fee in different languages](#) (Informationen zum Rundfunkbeitrag in verschiedenen Sprachen).

Do I have to pay?

Some people can be exempted from the payment, for example, if you receive benefits under the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (Asylum Seekers Benefits Act) or other social benefits. An application must be made for [exemption from the radio and television license fee](#). The diagram in the following [flyer](#) (here also in [English](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#), [Tigrinya](#), [Somali](#) and [Farsi](#)) shows you what you have to do.

## Internet

### Internet / WIFI

As an asylum seeker in Germany, you are unfortunately not legally entitled to Internet access (WIFI, in Germany referred to as WLAN) in your accommodation. Therefore, there is normally no WIFI (WLAN) in the accommodation.

If there is a telephone connection in the accommodation, it is possible for you to make a contract for WIFI yourself. Ask your circle of helpers to choose a good contract with you. Talk to the people living in the accommodation about the payment beforehand. Consider whether a contract that you can cancel at any time is better than a contract that is valid for a long period of time (e.g. 2 years).

Important: Before you sign a contract, ask your accommodation advisor whether WIFI is technically possible and how you can provide access for the technician.

You will find free hotspots for Kaufbeuren and the surrounding area under :

■ [Bayern WLAN](#)

■ [www.europakarte.org](http://www.europakarte.org)

■ [www.yellowmap.de](http://www.yellowmap.de)

If you move into your own dwelling, you can rent Internet access from the telephone companies in Germany.

## Drinking water in Kaufbeuren

Kaufbeuren has a very good water supply and water quality.

In principle, the water from the tap in the flat can be drunk without hesitation.

If this is not the case, your landlord must make you aware of this.

■ [Kaufbeuren drinking water](#)

■ [8 good reasons to drink drinking water](#)

## Means of transport

### Public Transportation

#### Bus

Within Kaufbeuren there is a well developed bus network. Timetables and information can be found ■ [here](#).

Important: riding without a ticket is illegal and will be punished! A valid ticket is required for each trip. Otherwise you pay a fine of € 60 .

#### Train

From the station in Kaufbeuren you can reach Augsburg in about 50 minutes and Munich in about 60 minutes. Timetable information and prices can be found ■ [here](#).

Within Kaufbeuren, however, most places can be easily reached on foot or by bicycle.

### Bicycle

If you know that you will be residing for a longer time in Kaufbeuren, it is worth buying a bicycle. This is cheaper than riding a bus.

#### Important traffic rules for cyclists (selection):

Always drive on the right-hand side of the road

Do not drive two abreast, but one behind the other

If there is a bicycle path, you should ride on the bicycle path (such paths are only on the right side of the street in the direction of travel)

If you see the following traffic signs, you must use the bicycle path.

Only children up to the age of 11 are allowed to use the footpaths and sidewalks by bicycle.

### **Acquisition and repairs**

When buying your bike, make sure that it is equipped as follows and therefore safe to ride; otherwise you will have to pay a fine (penalty) if you are checked by the police:

- front and rear lights
- reflector front and rear
- reflectors in the spokes (2 per wheel)
- reflectors on the pedals
- bell
- two brakes independent of each other

### **Addresses of used bicycle shops and repair shops**

#### **Bicycle workshop Kaufbeuren**

The bicycle repair shop Kaufbeuren is located in the Adolph-Kolping-Straße 1 at the rear entrance on the grounds of the state vocational schools.  
The opening hours are always Saturdays from 11:00 - 12:30.

■ [Bicycle workshop Kaufbeuren](#)

### **Free and inexpensive help in Kaufbeuren**

In addition to counseling and support services, Kaufbeuren also offers material help, i.e. free or inexpensive things for everyday life.

■ [Hilfe für Familien in Kaufbeuren](#)

New in Kaufbeuren: the Family Center with the Family Store:

Family Store

■ [Hüttenstraße 10, 87600 Kaufbeuren](#)

■ [08341 97 280 92](#)

■ [info@family-store.org](mailto:info@family-store.org)

■ [family store](#)

### **News in different languages**

#### **News for Refugees**

 [Radio for refugees](#)

In Arabic

 [Listen to news in easy language](#)

 [German Wave](#)