



HAMILTONS

An essential guide to relocating in

# Germany

Our guide below provides additional information on choosing schools, obtaining visas, starting a business and more. Please note this information is believed to be accurate at the time of printing. Please check with our European removals department prior to your departure.

We offer three main types of removal services to Germany - a dedicated service, which means that you have sole use of a vehicle, a special service, which allows you to specify collection and delivery dates and a part load/groupage service. Part load/groupage means that several loads are grouped together and share the same vehicle. Please note delivery times for this service vary depending on how quickly consignments are consolidated.

Germany, officially called the Federal Republic of Germany, was a founding member of the EU and with over 82 million inhabitants it has the largest population among EU countries. Made up of sixteen states, the capital and largest city is Berlin, with a population of 4.3 million. Berlin is a modern vibrant city, well known for its historic associations as well as its many bars, clubs, restaurants and museums.

The world's third largest economy and leading exporter of goods in 2006, German exports include a range of quality cars, Mercedes Benz, Porsche and BMW, kitchen appliances from AEG, Blanco and Miele, pens from Montblanc and Nivea creams, to name but a few.

Great cuisine and fine wines, festivals, celebrations and inspiring architecture, Germany has it all and is far removed from any clichés concerning lederhosen and sauerkraut, but then the numerous visitors from abroad who are increasingly discovering Germany, already know this. Not just because of the wealth of cultural and historical sights, but also because of the wide-ranging regional cuisine and the changing landscapes. In fact, although the Germans are the undisputed world champions when it comes to foreign travel, they still prefer to holiday between the North Sea and the Alps and who can blame them?

## Visa and Work Permits

People moving to Germany from the UK or another EU country are automatically issued with a residency permit when they register their residential address with the Bürgeramt. They do not require a permit to work providing that they have a valid passport or identity card. EU nationals are given the same rights as Germans in terms of equal pay, working conditions, access to housing, vocational



training, social security and trade union membership. Family members and immediate dependants may move with the working member and will be given the same rights.

Germany has the largest economy in Europe, and an excellent social security system. This ensures its citizens can live comfortably even if they are ill, unemployed, retired or disabled. Working people pay approximately 20% of their gross income to the system and their employer matches their payment.

## Setting up a business in Germany

German law does not make a distinction between Germans and foreigners in the establishment of companies. In addition German company law is very similar to other EU countries, which can make it relatively straightforward to start a business here if you have enough capital. You will however have to deal with a certain amount of bureaucracy.

Like the UK, there are the equivalent of limited liability companies, public limited companies and partnerships. A lawyer can help you decide which is the best type of company type to suit your business.

The first steps in starting a business are to hire a notary and register the business at the local court. Then you will need to arrange two sets of tax registration, one for commercial tax and one at the local tax office. After these steps have been completed, you will obtain a certificate of registration and you can start trading.

## Moving House in Germany

Every time that you move house in Germany, you are required by law to report your change of residence to the registry offices. Both German nationals and migrants must do this.

## Schools

Schooling is compulsory in Germany from the age of 6, and lasts for 12 to 13 years depending on which state the school is in. Education in public schools is free of charge even to expats. However some of the classes will be taught in German which may pose a problem for students, particularly older children. There are also an excellent range of private and international schools. Home schooling is not allowed in Germany.

Before compulsory schooling, children have the opportunity to attend kindergarten between the ages of 3 and 6. Fees are charged for this.

Primary education is provided in the child's area of residence. To move up to the subsequent year they must fulfill certain minimum requirements in all of their subjects. Following this, students attend lower secondary school, vocational colleges and higher education.



## Health Care

Health care in Germany is of an excellent standard and there are many clinics, hospitals, specialist doctors and pharmacies located throughout the country. It is expensive and therefore some kind of insurance, depending on your work arrangements should be taken out.

Health care insurance is obligatory for everyone who works in Germany. It is deducted through the salary, and the contribution is matched by the employer. Whilst there is a choice of insurance providers, it is recommended that a person goes with one of the big companies such as AOK or TKK. Self employed / freelancers must make their own arrangements.

There are two types of health care insurance, which are public health care insurance and private health care insurance. Which of these you are eligible for depends on your monthly income. Those earning less than the threshold amount, are automatically insured in the public health care system. Private health care insurance offers some additional cover but it is not necessarily better than the public option. For expats moving to Germany, it may be better for them to take out an international carrier policy instead of a German insurance policy. This is because an international policy can allow the holder to receive treatment in their own country and the policy can be ported from one country to another.



## Driving in Germany - regulations

- As with most of Europe, you must carry a high visibility jacket and a warning triangle at all times. The high visibility jacket must be worn if you leave the vehicle on the carriageway of a motorway or highway at any time of the day or night. The warning triangle must be positioned in front of the car to alert passing traffic of your presence. We would advise that you carry a second one, for the rear of the vehicle.
- Headlamp beams must be adjusted for driving on the right hand side of the road.
- You are advised to carry a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher and replacement bulbs for your car when driving in Germany.
- All UK vehicles must display either a GB sticker or carry the new style number-plates featuring the GB emblem.
- Children under 12 years of age or 1.5metres in height are not permitted to travel in the front seat of the car.
- The alcohol limit in Germany is 0.25mg/l and random breath tests are carried out frequently.
- Mobile phones may not be used while driving.
- Radar detectors are strictly forbidden.
- You must carry your driving license, vehicle registration document (V5) and insurance documents with you at all times when driving in Germany. A Green Card, whilst not essential, is recommended.

- Your UK insurance may only cover you for third party, fire and theft whilst driving in Germany. It is therefore important to check the level of cover with your insurance company prior to departure. Similarly your UK breakdown cover may not cover your journey, unless a supplement is paid.

## Fuel

Diesel in German is "Diesel"  
Unleaded fuel is "Super Bleifrei"

## Speed Limits

The speed limit on some roads will vary in Germany, depending on the weather conditions. Speeding in Germany can incur a heavy, on-the-spot fine and any driver caught exceeding the speed limit by more than 25mph can lose their license there and then. Current speed limits are as follows:

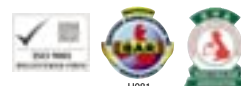
- 50km/h in built up areas (31mph)
- 100 km/h (62mph) on roads outside of built up areas
- 130 km/h (80 mph) on motorways
- The MINIMUM speed on motorways is 60km/h (37mph)
- Some roads give a recommended speed rather than a speed limit



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