

# Touring Tips

GERMANY (Central Europe)



**This information should be read in conjunction with our [general advice for motoring in Europe](#).**

**Drinking and driving:** If the level of alcohol in the bloodstream is 0.050 per cent or more, penalties include fines and the licence holder can be banned from driving in Germany. The blood alcohol level is nil percent for drivers aged under 21 or drivers who have held their licence for less than 2 years, should even a small amount of alcohol be detected in the blood the fine is €125.

**Driving licence:** Minimum age at which a UK licence holder may drive a temporarily imported car and/or motorcycle 18.

**Fines:** On-the-spot fine or deposit. Should a foreign motorist refuse to pay their vehicle can be confiscated. Motorists can be fined for such things as exceeding speed limits, using abusive language, making derogatory signs and running out of petrol on a motorway.

Wheel clamps are not used in Germany but vehicles causing obstruction can be towed away.

**Fuel:** Unleaded petrol (95 and 98 octane), diesel and LPG available.

No leaded petrol (lead substitute additive available).

Petrol in can permitted but forbidden aboard ferries and Eurotunnel.

Credit cards accepted at most filling stations; check with your card issuer for usage in Germany before travel.

**Lights:** It is recommended to use dipped headlights at all times. It is compulsory during daylight hours if fog, snow or rain restrict visibility.

Driving with sidelights (parking lights) alone is not allowed. Vehicles must have their lights on in tunnels.

**Motorcycles:** Use of dipped headlights during the day compulsory. The wearing of a crash helmet is compulsory for both driver and passenger of a moped and motorcycle.

Drivers of trikes and quads capable of exceeding 20 km/h must wear a helmet unless the vehicle is constructed with seat belts and they are worn.

**Motor insurance:** Third-party compulsory.

**Passengers/children in cars:** A child less than 1.5m and under 12 years old travelling in any type of vehicle must be seated in an approved child seat or child restraint. Where a child restraint / seat is not available because other children are secured by a child restraint/seat, a child three years and over must travel in the rear seat of the vehicle using a seat belt or other safety device attached to the seat.

A child under three years old may not be transported in a vehicle without a suitable child restraint/seat.

It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that all children are safely restrained.

**Seat belts:** Compulsory for front and rear seat occupants to wear seat belts, if fitted.

**Speed limits:** Standard legal limits, which may be varied by signs, for private vehicles without trailers: In built-up areas 31 mph (50 km/h), outside built-up areas 62 mph (100 km/h) and on dual carriageways and motorways a recommended maximum of 80 mph (130 km/h).

Minimum speed on motorways: 37 mph (60 km/h).

Different speed limits apply in bad weather conditions.

The maximum speed limit for vehicles with snow chains is 31mph (50 km/h).

**Compulsory equipment:**

n/a

**Other rules/requirements:**

It is not compulsory for visiting UK motorists to carry a warning triangle, but they are strongly advised to do so, as all drivers must signal their vehicle in case of breakdown, and it is a compulsory requirement for residents.

It is also recommended that vehicles weighing more than 3.5t carry a yellow portable flashing light.

It is recommended that visitors equip their vehicle with a first-aid kit and set of replacement bulbs.

Slow-moving vehicles must stop at suitable places and let others pass. It is prohibited to overtake or pass a school bus that is approaching a stopping point. In

all other cases of passing buses it has to be with caution. A fine will be imposed for non-compliance.

Spiked tyres are prohibited.

A GPS based navigation system which has maps indicating the location of fixed speed cameras must have the 'fixed speed camera PoI (Points of Interest)' function deactivated.

The use of radar detectors is prohibited.

All motorists have the obligation to adapt their vehicles to winter weather conditions. This includes but is not limited to winter tyres and anti-freeze fluid for the washer system. Extreme weather may additionally require snow chains.

The law does not specify which type of tyre is 'appropriate' the general opinion is that any type of tyre except summer tyres is appropriate, including all-year tyres.

Winter tyres must bear the mark M&S or display the snowflake on the side wall.

Motorists, whose car is equipped with summer tyres while there is snow and ice, may not take the car on the road. Motorists in violation face fines of €20. If they actually obstruct traffic, the fine is €40.

Restrictions on the circulation of vehicles are enforced in several German cities, in order to reduce the levels of emission of fine particulates in some areas. The areas where restrictions apply will be indicated by signs "Umweltzone" showing coloured vignettes ("Plakette") - green, yellow or red. To enter these areas, drivers will have to stick a vignette on their vehicle windscreen, this can be obtained from technical inspection centres or approved garages, fine for non-compliance €40.00.

The owner of the vehicle (German or foreign) is required to present the registration certificate of the vehicle and pay a fee of 5 to 10 Euros. The colour of the vignette issued will depend on the type of engine and the Euro classification of the vehicle.

The fee is a 'one-off' charge and remains valid as long as it remains valid in any German City as long as it remains fixed in the vehicle.

Owners of foreign-registered vehicles can obtain a sticker by sending an email to the Berlin vehicle registration authority at [kfz-zulassung@labo.verwalt-berlin.de](mailto:kfz-zulassung@labo.verwalt-berlin.de) attaching a copy of the vehicle registration certificate specifying the emission code or a manufacturer's certificate (preferably pdf files).

Upon verification of the documents, the registration authority will send a payment request by advance email including the bank details to the applicant. A €6 administration/handling fee will be charged per sticker. The sticker will be sent to the applicant by direct mail. As order processing may take two to three weeks,

stickers should be ordered well in advance.

Alternatively you can now obtain a sticker from the Cologne vehicle registration office by sending an application including a copy of the vehicle documents and €5 (cash or crossed cheque) to Kfz-Zulassungsstelle, Max-Glomsda-Straße 4, D-51105 Köln. For further information, visit

[www.stadt-koeln.de/bol/umwelt/feinstaub/umweltzonen/artikel/11546/index.html#sm16](http://www.stadt-koeln.de/bol/umwelt/feinstaub/umweltzonen/artikel/11546/index.html#sm16)

For maps and detailed information of the environmental zone areas, please see; <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/umweltzonen>

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