

GERMANY (Central Europe)



Touring Tips

This information about driving in Germany 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 €250.

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 and making derogatory signs.

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

Fuel: Unleaded petrol (95 and 98 octane) and diesel available. LPG is also available from more than 5000 stations.

No leaded petrol (lead substitute additive available).

Petrol in can permitted but forbidden aboard ferries.

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

High Ethanol petrol: E10 (petrol containing 10% Ethanol) is now widely available in Germany but is not suitable for use in all vehicles. Pumps are clearly marked 'E10' but this should only be used if you are sure it is suitable – check with the car manufacturer or refer to this [list published by the European Car Manufacturers' Association](#).

Alternatives to E10 – 'Super' (95 octane) and 'Super Plus' (Super unleaded) continue to be widely available.

Lights: It is recommended to use dipped headlights or day time running lights 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 at all times is 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: A child under 12 years of age and measuring less than 1.5m travelling in any type of vehicle, must be seated in a child seat or use a child restraint. It is prohibited to use a child seat in the front seat of a vehicle if the airbag has not been deactivated. All child restraints/seats used, must conform to ECE 44/03 or ECE 44/04.

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).

The use of German motorways is only permitted with vehicles with a designed speed of more than 37mph (60 km/h).

In bad weather conditions, when visibility is below 50mm, the maximum speed limit is 50km/h.

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

Compulsory equipment in Germany:

- **Winter tyres/equipment ***

Other rules/requirements in Germany:

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 recommended that visitors equip their vehicle with a first-aid kit (its carriage is compulsory for vehicles registered in Germany) 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, indicated by flashing hazard lights. 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. Should you be unable to deactivate this function the GPS system must not be carried.

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. Extreme weather may additionally require snow chains.

Tyres *

On the 4th December 2010, new regulations regarding winter tyre requirements were introduced in Germany.

This new regulation applies to all motorised vehicles using roads in Germany, including those registered abroad, so vehicles registered in the United Kingdom are affected. It is now **prohibited to use summer tyres in Germany during winter weather conditions** - summer tyres are predominantly fitted to vehicles in the United Kingdom.

Winter weather conditions include **black ice, snow, ice, slush and hoarfrost**. Please bear in mind that these conditions may also be present even if the temperature is above 0 degrees.

German law specifies that the tyres must be **winter tyres** or all **season tyres** designed for use in wintry conditions. Suitable tyres will normally be marked '**M+S**', however these can also be marked with a **snow flake** or **snowy mountains** symbol.

Motorists, whose car is equipped with summer tyres may not take the car on the road in winter weather conditions. Motorists in violation face fines of €40. If they actually obstruct traffic, the fine is €80. You may also be **prevented from continuing your journey** unless the tyres are changed or the weather conditions change.

Emission Zones

Restrictions on the circulation of vehicles are enforced in several German cities, in order to reduce the levels of emission of fine particles in some areas. The areas where restrictions apply will be indicated by signs "Umweltzone" showing coloured vignettes ("Plakette") - green, yellow and 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 in any German City as long as it remains fixed in the vehicle i.e. not transferred to another 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 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, the sticker 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.

[See maps and detailed information of the environmental zone areas.](#)

If there is not enough time to obtain the Plakette prior to departure, there are numerous testing stations throughout Germany where they are available. DEKRA are one of the testing stations. You can [search the DEKRA website](#) by postcode/street for the nearest location (this section of the DEKRA website is only available in German).

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