

Fact sheet for holders of foreign driving licences from EU and EEA states on driving licence provisions in the Federal Republic of Germany

This fact sheet provides you with information on the most important German provisions for holders of foreign driving licences from **Member States of the European Union and states parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area** (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). If you have any further questions, please contact your local driver licensing authority at your city or district council.

1. Using your foreign driving licence when staying in Germany temporarily

If you hold a valid domestic driving licence issued by another country, you may drive or ride motor vehicles of the category that is indicated on your licence in the Federal Republic of Germany. A translation of the driving licence is not required. If there are any conditions or restrictions on your driving licence, you must also comply with them when driving in the Federal Republic of Germany.

2. Using your foreign driving licence if you have your normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany

2.1 Even if you transfer your normal residence to the Federal Republic of Germany, your foreign driving licence entitles you to drive or ride motor vehicles in Germany until it expires. You must have a domestic driving licence – an International Driving Permit is not sufficient.

Put simply, your normal residence is where you live for at least 185 days each year.¹

Commuters do not take up normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany. “Commuters” are defined as the holders of a domestic driving licence issued by another country who have their residence abroad but drive or ride motor vehicles in the Federal Republic of Germany because they are employed here and who regularly return to their residence abroad.¹

Holders of foreign driving licences who have taken up employment in the Federal Republic of Germany but only return to the family residence they maintain abroad occasionally are not classified as commuters.

2.2 If you hold a category **A1 or C, C1, CE, C1E (HGV) or D, D1, DE, D1E (bus/coach)** driving licence, the following restrictions apply:

- Holders of a category A1 driving licence may, until their 18th birthday, only ride light motorcycles (engine size up to 125 cc and power output up to 11 kW) with a maximum design speed of 80 kilometres per hour.
- In the Federal Republic of Germany, category **C1 and C1E** driving licences are only valid until the holder's 50th birthday; category **C, CE, D, DE, D1 and D1E** driving licences are only valid for a period of five years after the date of issue, even if they were issued for a longer period in the holder's home country. If this would result in your driving licence becoming invalid the moment you transfer your normal residence, you may still drive in the Federal Republic of Germany for another six months. See section 2.3 regarding the renewal of licences.

Please note that any infringement of the age provision that applies to riders of light motorcycles, or driving or riding a motor vehicle with a driving licence that has expired under the law of the issuing state or under the German provisions, will be treated as driving without a driving licence and penalized accordingly.

2.3 If your foreign driving licence is about to expire or if it is no longer valid, you will receive a German licence of the same category upon request. For categories C, C1, CE, C1E (HGV) and D, D1, DE, D1E (bus/coach), you will have to submit a medical certificate attesting to your state of health and a certificate confirming that you have adequate visual acuity. Bus/coach drivers aged 50 or over must also prove, by submitting a medical certificate issued by an occupational health officer or a medico-psychological certificate, that their ability to cope with stress and their faculties of orientation, concentration, attention and reaction are adequate.

2.4 Even without a special reason, you may exchange your valid foreign driving licence for a German driving licence at any time.

The following documents have to be enclosed with the application for a German driving licence:

- an official document identifying the applicant (identity card or passport);
- a certificate of registration from the Residents' Registration Office;
- a recent photograph that meets the requirements of the Regulations Implementing the Passport Act (Passverordnung);
- the original domestic driving licence issued by the other country.

In individual cases, the driver licensing authority may also demand the submission of a certificate of good conduct.

When the German driving licence is issued, the foreign driving licence will be retained and sent back to the authority that issued it.

It is not possible to exchange foreign taxi, hire car, ambulance and similar licences.

3. Cases in which your foreign driving licence does not entitle you to drive

Your driving licence does not entitle you to drive or ride a motor vehicle in the Federal Republic of Germany:

- if it is no longer valid;
- if you no longer have the right to drive;
- if the licence you hold is a learner licence or any other provisional licence;
- if, according to the EU or EEA driving licence or incontestable information supplied by the issuing EU Member State or state party to the European Economic Area, you had your normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany at the time the licence was issued, unless you obtained the driving licence as a student or schoolchild during a stay of at least six months;
- if your driving licence has been withdrawn in the Federal Republic of Germany by a court of law with the withdrawal being provisional or non-appealable or by an administrative authority with the withdrawal being immediately enforceable or non-appealable, or if you have been refused a driving licence with the refusal being non-

- appealable or if the only reason your driving licence has not been withdrawn is that you have relinquished it in the meantime;
- if you are banned from being issued a driving licence due to a non-appealable court decision;
 - if you have been disqualified or your driving licence has been confiscated, seized or impounded in the Federal Republic of Germany, in the state that issued your driving licence or in the state in which you have your normal residence;
 - if your EU or EEA driving licence was issued on the basis of a driving licence issued by a non-EU or non-EEA country not listed in Annex 11 of the Driver Licensing Regulations and without your having to take a driving test or on the basis of a forged non-EU or non-EEA driving licence;
 - if, at the time you were issued a driving licence by a non-EU or non-EEA state that has been exchanged for a foreign EU or EEA driving licence or at the time you were issued an EU or EEA driving licence on the basis of a driving licence issued by a non-EU or non-EEA state, you had your residence in the Federal Republic of Germany, unless you exchanged the foreign driving licence for a foreign EU or EEA driving licence as a student or schoolchild during a stay of at least six months.

Please note that driving or riding a motor vehicle without holding a driving licence is prohibited and constitutes a criminal offence.

4. Special rules for students and schoolchildren

The fact that a person is attending a university or school does not automatically mean that they have transferred their normal residence. Thus, driving licences obtained by students and schoolchildren in their home country while studying in the Federal Republic of Germany are valid here. Students and schoolchildren from other Member States may nevertheless obtain a driving licence in the Federal Republic of Germany if they are resident here for at least six months.

The same applies to persons who have their normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany if they attend a university or school in another Member State for at least six months.