

Fact sheet for holders of foreign driving licences from states outside the European Union and the European Economic Area 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 states that are **not** members of the European Union or parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are EEA states). 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

1.1 If you hold a valid

- domestic driving licence or
- an International Driving Permit in accordance with the International Convention relative to Motor Traffic of 24 April 1926, the Convention on Road Traffic of 8 November 1968 or the Convention on Road Traffic of 1949,

you may drive or ride motor vehicles of the category that is indicated on your licence in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Please note that an International Driving Permit in accordance with the Convention on Road Traffic of 8 November 1968 is only valid in conjunction with the domestic driving licence it is based on. An International Driving Permit by itself is not sufficient.

If you have not been issued an International Driving Permit, a **translation** of your driving licence is required in the following cases:

- domestic driving licences that are not in the German language;
- domestic driving licences that do not conform to the provisions of Annex 6 of the Convention on Road Traffic of 8 November 1968.

German translations may be prepared by:

- German motoring organizations;
- court-appointed and certified interpreters and translators;
- masters of German sea-going ships;

- internationally recognized motoring organizations of the state that issued the driving licence;
- official agencies of the state that issued the driving licence.

The Federal Republic of Germany does not require a translation of licences issued by the following states: Andorra, Hong Kong, Monaco, New Zealand, San Marino, Senegal and Switzerland.

As long as you have not taken up normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany, you may drive or ride motor vehicles with your valid foreign driving licence for an unlimited period. If there are any conditions and restrictions on your driving licence, you must also comply with them when driving in the Federal Republic of Germany. Please note that your passenger car licence is not automatically valid here. This is the case, in particular, if you have not yet reached the minimum age required in the Federal Republic of Germany for the category in question.

After taking up normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany, you are entitled to drive or ride motor vehicles for another six months. After this period, your driving licence will no longer be recognized. If you wish to continue driving or riding a motor vehicle on German roads, you will then require a driving licence issued in the Federal Republic of Germany.

In exceptional cases, the driver licensing authority may, upon request, extend the deadline by up to six months if you can prove to their satisfaction that you will not have your normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany for longer than twelve months.

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

Commuters do not take up normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany. Their foreign driving licence will be recognized in the Federal Republic of Germany for an unlimited period, as long as the licence itself is valid. “Commuters” are defined as the holders of a domestic driving licence issued by another country or an International Driving Permit 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. Students or schoolchildren can also be “commuters”.

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.

1.2 **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 the licence you hold is a learner licence or any other provisional licence;
- if you have not yet reached the minimum age required for the category in question;
- if you had your normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany at the time you obtained the foreign licence;
- 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; or
- 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.

Please note that you are not permitted to drive or ride a motor vehicle if you do not have, or no longer have, an entitlement to drive, and that doing so will be treated as driving without a driving licence and penalized accordingly.

2. **Issuing a German driving licence on the basis of a foreign driving licence**

If you take up normal residence in the Federal Republic of Germany, you will need a German driving licence after no later than six months, unless the driver licensing authority has made an exception and extended this deadline (see 1.1).

The conditions governing the issuing of a German driving licence vary depending on which country you obtained your licence in:

- in a country that is listed in Annex 11 of the Regulations for the Licensing of Drivers (2.1) or
- in a country that is not listed in Annex 11 of the Regulations for the Licensing of Drivers (2.2).

2.1 Issuing a German driving licence to holders of driving licences from a country listed in Annex 11 of the Regulations for the Licensing of Drivers

Holders of driving licences issued by these countries are not required to take a German driving test, or are only required to take part of the test, in order to be issued a German driving licence. (Information correct as at 30 June 2012)

Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
Andorra	All	No	No
Croatia	All	No	No
French Polynesia	All	No	No
Guernsey	All	No	No
Isle of Man	All	No	No
Israel	B	No	No
Japan	All	No	No
Jersey	All	No	No
Monaco	All	No	No
Namibia	A1, A, B, EB, C1 ¹⁷ , EC1, C ¹⁷ EC	No	No
New Caledonia	All	No	No
New Zealand	1, 6 ¹⁰	No	No
Republic of Korea	1, 2 ¹	No	No
San Marino	All	No	No
Singapore	All	No	No
South Africa	All	No	No
Switzerland	All	No	No
Driving licences issued in the territory under the effective jurisdiction of the authorities in Taiwan ²	B/BE ¹	No	Yes

Driving licences from the states and territories of Australia¹¹:

Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
Australian Capital Territory	C ¹² , R ¹²	No ⁷	No
New South Wales	C, R	No ⁷	No
Northern Territory	C ¹² , R ¹²	No ⁷	No
Queensland	C ¹³ , R ¹³	No ⁷	No
South Australia	C ¹³ , R ¹³	No	No
Tasmania	C ¹³ , R ¹³	No	No
Victoria	C ¹⁴ , CAR, R ¹⁴	No	No
Western Australia	C ¹² , R	No ⁷	No

Passenger car driving licences from U.S. states and U.S. outlying territories:

Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
Alabama	D	No	No
Arizona	G, D, 2	No	No
Arkansas	D	No	No
Colorado	C, R	No	No
Connecticut	D, 1, 2	Yes	No
Delaware	D	No	No
District of Columbia	D	Yes	No
Florida	E	Yes	No
Idaho	D	No	No
Illinois	D	No	No
Indiana	Operator License, Chauffeur License ³ , Public Passenger Chauffeur License ³ Commercial Driver's License ¹ Probationary Operator's License	Yes ⁷	No
Iowa	C (Noncommercial Operator's License) ³ , A (Commercial Driver's License) ³ , B (Commercial Driver's License) ³ , C (Commercial Driver's License) ³ , D (Noncommercial Chauffeur Driver's License with Endorsement 1, 2 or 3) ³ , Intermediate Driver's License	No	No
Kansas	C	No	No
Kentucky	D	No	No
Louisiana	E	No	No
Maryland	C (Full License und Provisional License)	No	No
Massachusetts	D	No	No
Michigan	Operator	No	No
Minnesota	D	Yes ⁷	No
Mississippi	Operator, R	Yes	No
Missouri	F	Yes	No
Nebraska	O	Yes	No
New Mexico	D	No	No
North Carolina	C	Yes	No
Ohio	D	No	No
Oklahoma	D	No	No
Oregon	C ⁷	Yes	No
Pennsylvania	C	No	No
Puerto Rico	3	No	No
South Carolina	D	No	No
South Dakota	1 and 2	No	No
Tennessee	D	Yes	No
Texas	C ¹⁵ , A ³ , B ³	No ⁷	No
Utah	D	No	No
Virginia	NONE, M ³ , A ³ , B ³ , C ³	No	No
Washington State	Driver License ⁸ Intermediate Driver License ⁹	No	No

Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
West Virginia	E	No	No
Wisconsin	D	No	No
Wyoming	C	No	No

Driving licences from Canadian provinces¹:

Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
Alberta	5	No	No
British Columbia	5, 6, 7 (Novice Driver's License) ⁷ , 10	No	No
Manitoba	5 ⁶ 4 Stage F ³ 3 Stage F ³ 2 Stage F ³ 1 Stage F ³	No	No
New Brunswick	5, 7 Stage 2	No	No
Newfoundland	5	No	No
Northwest Territories	5	No	No
Nova Scotia	5	No	No
Ontario	G	No	No
Prince Edward Island	5	No	No
Québec	5	No	No
Saskatchewan	1 and 5	No	No
Yukon	5	No	No

- 1 **Note:** If only a specific class or specific classes rather than "All" is/are indicated in the column headed Class(es), only Category B licences will be issued on this basis.
- 2 **Note:** Germany has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan.
- 3 **Note:** Includes passenger car driving licence class
- 4 **Note:** In the case of Class C with Restriction Code 2, a German driving licence cannot be issued without the holder taking a driving test (learner licence).
- 5 **Note:** In the case of Class M with Code 6, a German driving licence cannot be issued without the holder taking a driving test (motorcycle licence only).
- 6 **Note:** In the case of Class 5 Stage L or Stage A, a German driving licence cannot be issued without the holder taking a driving test (learner licence).
- 7 **Note:** Proof of visual acuity in accordance with Section 12 is still required.
- 8 **Note:** If the Driver *License* does not make reference to specific vehicles, it is a passenger car driving licence.
- 9 **Note:** Only for holders who have reached 18 years of age. An *Instruction Permit* cannot be exchanged.
- 10 **Note:** A Class 6 driving licence will be exchanged for a German Category A (restricted) licence if the holder has not yet reached 25 years of age. In all other cases, a Category A (unrestricted) licence will be issued.

- 11 **Note:** The Australian Classes C and CAR (Victoria) are equivalent to the German Category B and the Australian Class R is equivalent to the German Category A.
- 12 **Note:** Including *Provisional Licences*. A *Learner Licence* cannot be exchanged.
- 13 **Note:** Including *P2 Provisional Licences*. A *Learner Permit* or *Learner Licence* cannot be exchanged.
- 14 **Note:** Including *P2 Probationary Licences*. A *Learner Permit* cannot be exchanged.
- 15 **Note:** Including *Provisional Licences*. An *Instruction Permit* cannot be exchanged.
- 16 **Note:** The Namibian driving licence must have been issued at least two years before the date on which the application is submitted.
- 17 **Note:** The Namibian Class C1 and C driving licences also entitle their holders to drive buses/coaches. However, these driving licence classes cannot be exchanged for a German Category D1 or D driving licence. A Namibian Class C1 driving licence entitles the holder to operate vehicles with a maximum authorized mass not exceeding 16,000 kg. However, when it is exchanged in Germany, only a Category C1 driving licence will be issued, even though this licence only entitles the holder to operate vehicles with a maximum authorized mass not exceeding 7,500 kg.

When you take a practical test, you have to be accompanied by a driving instructor.

A medical examination, including a visual acuity test, is required when applying for:

- a Category C1 or C1E (HGV) driving licence if you are aged 50 or over;
- a Category C, CE (HGV), D, DE, D1 or D1E (bus/coach) driving licence if you have held your foreign driving licence for more than five years.

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.

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

- an official identity document of 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);
- when applying for a Category C1, C, C1E, CE (HGV), D1, D, D1E, or DE (bus/coach) licence, the certificates and/or opinions regarding the medical

examinations, regarding the visual acuity test and regarding the special examination for bus/coach drivers;

- the original of the domestic driving licence issued by the other country (an International Driving Permit is not sufficient) together with a translation into the German language, unless the driver licensing authority makes an exception and waives the requirement for a translation;
- a statement declaring that your foreign driving licence is still valid.

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

When your German driving licence is issued, your foreign driving licence will be retained and sent back to the competent authority of the state that issued it or will remain with the driving licensing authority for safekeeping.

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

2.2. Issuing a German driving licence to holders of driving licences from countries not listed in Annex 11 of the Regulations for the Licensing of Drivers

After taking up normal residence, your foreign driving licence entitles you to drive or ride motor vehicles for six months only. However, it can still be exchanged for a German driving licence after that period under simplified conditions.

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

- an official identity document of 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);
- when applying for a Category A, A1, B or BE driving licence, a visual acuity test certificate from an officially recognized body; when applying for a Category C1, C1E, C, CE (HGV), D1, D1E, D, DE (bus/coach) driving licence, a medical certificate proving adequate visual acuity;
- when applying for a Category C1, C1E, C, CE, D1, D1E, D or DE driving licence, additionally a medical certificate attesting to your state of health; applicants for a Category D, D1, DE or D1E driving licence who are aged 50 or over also have to

- submit a medical certificate issued by an occupational health officer or a medico-psychological certificate confirming that their ability to cope with stress and their faculties of orientation, concentration, attention and reaction are adequate;
- proof that you have attended a training session on immediate life-saving measures for Categories A and B (including trailer and sub categories) or proof that you have completed a first aid training course for Categories C and D (including trailer and sub categories);
 - the original of the domestic driving licence issued by the other country (an International Driving Permit is not sufficient) together with a translation into the German language, unless the driver licensing authority makes an exception and waives the requirement for a translation;
 - a statement declaring that the foreign driving licence is still valid.

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

You will be issued the German driving licence for the corresponding category of motor vehicles once you have passed the theory and practical tests for that category. When taking the practical test, you have to be accompanied by a driving instructor. Driving lessons with an instructor, which are required when obtaining a driving licence for the first time, are not necessary.

No advantages for obtaining a driving licence for the carriage of passengers will be granted, even if foreign driving licences are presented that entitle their holders to drive taxis, hire cars, ambulances etc.