



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

- national 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 the International Driving Permit in accordance with the Convention on Road Traffic of 8 November 1968 is only valid in conjunction with the national driving licence it is based on. The International Driving Permit by itself is not sufficient.

A **translation** of the driving licence is required for

- national driving licences that are not in the German language and
- for national driving licences that do not comply with the provisions of Annex 6 of the Convention on Road Traffic of 8 November 1968.

The German translations may be prepared by

- German motoring organizations;
- court-appointed and certified interpreters and translators;
- German diplomatic missions;



- 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, Switzerland and Senegal.

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 valid here if you have not yet reached the minimum age of 18 years required in the Federal Republic of Germany.

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, you have your **normal residence** 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. A “Commuter” is understood to be a holder of a foreign national driving licence or an International Driving Permit who has his residence abroad but drives or rides motor vehicles in the Federal Republic of Germany because he is employed here and who regularly returns to his residence abroad. Students 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 considered 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 of 18 years required for categories B/BE;
- 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 or no longer have the entitlement to drive and that doing so will be treated as driving without a driving licence and penalized accordingly.

2. Issuing of 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 no later than after six months, unless the driver licensing authority has extended the deadline on an exceptional basis (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 of a German driving licence to holders of driving licences from a country listed in Annex 11 of the Regulations for the Licensing of Drivers

For these states, no or only a partial driving licence test is required for the issuing of the German driving licence. The states are (as at: 1 July 2011):

Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
Andorra	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
Croatia	all	no	no
Monaco	all	no	no
Namibia ¹⁶⁾	A1, A, B, EB, C1 ¹⁷⁾ , EC1, C ¹⁷⁾ , EC	no	no
New Caledonia	all	no	no
New Zealand	1, 6 ¹⁰⁾	yes	no
Republic of Korea	1, 2 ¹⁾	no	no
San Marino	all	no	no
Switzerland	all	no	no
Singapore	all	no	no
South Africa	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 territories of Australia¹¹⁾:			
- 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

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Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
- 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:			
- 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 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 mit Endorsement 1, 2 oder 3) ³ , Intermediate Driver's License	no	no
- Kansas	C	no	no
- Kentucky	D	no	no
- Louisiana	E	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



Issuing state	Class(es)	Theory test	Practical test
- Oklahoma	D	no	no
- Oregon	C	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
- West Virginia	E	no	no
- Wisconsin	D	no	no
- Wyoming	C	no	no

Passenger car driving licences from Canadian provinces¹:

- Alberta	5	no	no
- British Columbia	5, 7 (Novice Driver's License)	no	no
- Manitoba	5 ³ 4 Stage F ³ 3 Stage F ³ 2 Stage F ³ 1 Stage F ³	no	no
- New Brunswick	5, 7 Level 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 **Official note:** If only a specific class or specific classes rather than "all" is/are indicated in the column Class(es), only category B will be issued based on this/these class(es).

2 **Official note:** Germany has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

3 **Official note:** Includes passenger car driving licence class.

4 **Official note:** In the case of class C with Restriction Code 2, the German driving licence cannot be issued without tests (learner licence).

5 **Official note:** In the case of class M with Code 6, a German driving licence cannot be issued without tests (motorcycle licence only).

6 **Official note:** In the case of class 5 Stage L or Stage A, a German driving licence cannot be issued without tests (learner licence).

7 **Official note:** Proof of visual acuity in accordance with section 12 is still required.

8 **Official note:** If the *Driver License* does not make reference to specific vehicles, it is a passenger car driving licence.

9 **Official note:** Only for holders who have reached 18 years of age. An *Instruction Permit* cannot be exchanged.

10 **Official 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 **Official 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 **Official note:** Also *Provisional Licence*. A *Learner Licence* cannot be exchanged.

13 **Official note:** Also *Provisional Licence P2*. A *Learner Permit* or *Learner Licence* cannot be exchanged.

14 **Official note:** Also *Probationary Licence P2*. A *Learner Permit* cannot be exchanged.



15 **Official note:** Also *Provisional License*. An *Instruction Permit* cannot be exchanged.

16 **Official note:** The prerequisite for this is that the Namibian driving licence was issued at least two years before the date of the filing of the application.

17 **Official note:** The Namibian driving licence classes C1 and C also entitle their holders to drive buses/coaches. However, these driving licence classes cannot be converted to the German driving licence categories D1 or D. The Namibian driving licence class C1 permits the operation of vehicles with a maximum authorized mass not exceeding 16,000 kg. However, upon conversion in Germany, only a category C1 driving licence will be issued, even if this licence merely entitles its holders to operate vehicles with a maximum authorized mass not exceeding 7,500 kg.

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

A medical examination, including a visual acuity test, is required when applying to be issued

- categories C1 and C1E (HGV) if you are aged 50 or over;
- categories C, CE (HGV), D, DE, D1 and D1E (bus/coach) 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 opinion by an occupational health officer or a medico-psychological expertise, 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 to be issued the driving licence:

- an official identity document of the applicant (identity card or passport);
- the 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 to be issued categories C1, C, C1E, CE (HGV), D1, D, D1E, DE (bus/coach), 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 foreign national driving licence (the International Driving Permit is not sufficient) together with a translation into the German language, unless the driver licensing authority waives the requirement of a translation on an exceptional basis;
- 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.



Upon the issuing of the German driving licence, the foreign driving licence will be retained and sent back to the competent authority of the state that issued it or it will be impounded by the driving licensing authority.

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

2.2. Issuing of a German driving licence to holders of driving licences from countries that are 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 to be issued the driving licence:

- an official identity document of the applicant (identity card or passport);
- the 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 to be issued a category A, A1, B or BE driving licence, a visual acuity test certificate from an officially recognized body; when applying to be issued a category C1, C1E, C, CE (HGV), D1, D1E, D, DE (bus/coach) driving licence, a medical certificate proving adequate visual acuity;
- when applying to be issued a category C1, C1E, C, CE, D1, D1E, D or DE driving licence, additionally a medical certificate attesting to one's 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 opinion by an occupational health officer or a medico-psychological expertise confirming that their ability to cope with stress and their faculties of orientation, concentration, attention and reaction are adequate;
- proof of attendance of a training session on life-saving first aid for categories A and B (including trailer and sub categories) or proof of completion of a first aid training course for categories C and D (including trailer and sub categories);



- the original of the foreign national driving licence (the International Driving Permit is not sufficient) together with a translation into the German language, unless the driver licensing authority waives the requirement of a translation on an exceptional basis;
- 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. Training in a driving school, which is required when obtaining a driving licence for the first time, is not necessary.

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