

## **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 in the Federal Republic of Germany 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 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 made an exception and extended this deadline (see 1.1).

The German driving licence is valid for 15 years. After the expiry of this period of validity, the issue of a new driving licence is required. Upon expiry, the driving licence document is simply exchanged by the administration. The exchange neither requires additional regular medical examinations nor any other kinds of examinations. Such examinations are only required for certain professions that have a special responsibility (among others, professional drivers, bus/coach drivers).

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**

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
Andorra
French Polynesia
Guernsey
Isle of Man
Israel
Japan
Jersey
Croatia
Monaco
Namibia <sup>16)</sup>
New Caledonia
New Zealand
Republic of Korea
San Marino

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Issuing state

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Switzerland  
Singapore  
South Africa  
Driving licences issued in the  
territory under the effective  
jurisdiction of the authorities  
in Taiwan<sup>2</sup>

**Driving licences from the states and territories of Australia:**

- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

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

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Puerto Rico
- South Carolina

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Issuing state

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- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Virginia
- Washington State
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

**Driving licences from Canadian provinces:**

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Québec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

You should clarify with your local driver licensing authority which driving licences can be issued and under which conditions they will be issued.

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.

If you carry goods or passengers for commercial purposes on public roads with motor vehicles that require a driving licence of Category C1, C1E, C, CE, D1E, D or DE, the provisions of the Professional Driver Qualification Act (Berufskraftfahrer-Qualifikations-Gesetz, BKrFQG) and the Professional Driver Qualification Ordinance (Berufskraftfahrer-Qualifikations-Verordnung, BKrFQV) have to be complied with. For more detailed information, please contact your local driver licensing authority.

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 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 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, A2, 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 or 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 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.

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. You do not have to take driving lessons in a driving school. However, because of the differences between national road traffic systems, it is recommended that you first consult a driving instructor, for instance, to find out whether you already possess the knowledge and skills required to pass the driving test in Germany. If necessary, you can prepare for the test by taking a few driving lessons.

If you carry goods or passengers for commercial purposes on public roads with motor vehicles that require a driving licence of Category C1, C1E, C, CE, D1E, D or DE, the provisions of the Professional Driver Qualification Act (Berufskraftfahrer-Qualifikations-Gesetz, BKrFQG) and the Professional Driver Qualification Ordinance (Berufskraftfahrer-Qualifikations-Verordnung, BKrFQV) have to be complied with. For more detailed information, please contact your local driver licensing authority.

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.