

Make it in
Rheinland-Pfalz

**Welcome
Center**
Rheinland-Pfalz



Rheinland-Pfalz
DIE LANDESREGIERUNG

WELCOME to RHINELAND-PALATINATE

Your guide for a successful start



WELCOME TO RHINELAND-PALATINATE

Welcome to your new home. You have arrived in Rhineland-Palatinate – in the dynamic south-west of the Federal Republic of Germany. We are delighted to welcome you to our company.

This folder will make it easier for you to **get started** locally. It contains everything you need to know about **arriving** and **living in Rhineland-Palatinate**. You will also find specific **contact persons** who will help you with any questions you may have. We will accompany you on your first steps towards your personal and professional future in Rhineland-Palatinate.

The following sections give you an insight into **important topics that will help you make a successful start in Germany**:

The first steps

- Looking for housing
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- Social security & health insurance
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Further information on **living and working** in Rhineland-Palatinate can also be found at www.make-it-in.rlp.de/en

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THE FIRST STEPS

Tips on looking for housing

Welcome to Rhineland-Palatinate! To feel at home in your new place of residence, you will certainly need a new flat. The supply and rental costs of flats and houses vary greatly by region. Depending on whether you want to live in the countryside or rather in the city, this will be reflected in the price and the offer.

In **looking for housing**, you have the following options:

- Well-known internet platforms such as:
 - www.immobilienscout24.de/
 - www.immowelt.de
 - www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de/
 - www.immonet.de/
 - www.wg-gesucht.de

- Daily newspapers usually contain housing advertisements once or twice a week
- Housing offers in private social media groups in your city or region
- Ask your new colleagues if anyone knows of a vacant flat.

In Germany, young people in particular often live in so-called **shared flats (WGs)**. Here, several people share a flat and use rooms such as the kitchen, bathroom and living room together. In cities, there are also often **shared flats for working professionals**. A shared flat is a good way to get to know people and make friends in a new place.

If you have found an interesting flat ad, contact the landlord or landlady directly and ask for an **appointment to view the flat**. At the viewing, it is important that you make a good impression and also bring some documents with you, e.g. your passport, your employment contract or salary certificate – because there are often several people interested in a flat.

When you rent a flat in Germany, a **lease** is always signed by both parties. The lease agreement must correctly list the start of the rental period, the rental costs and other details about the flat.

Please note that in Germany a distinction is made between **warm** and **cold** rent. The **cold rent** is calculated purely for the use of the premises, whereas the **warm rent** also includes ancillary costs such as water, heating, waste disposal and caretaker services.

Electricity and **gas** usually have to be registered separately and are not included in the warm rent. You have to look for a provider yourself and sign a contract. Since there are different providers with different prices, it is worth comparing them. It is best to use comparison portals on the Internet.

Residents' registration office (Einwohnermeldeamt)

After you have found a flat and moved, you must register your new place of residence. This also applies to your family members. To do this, make an appointment at the **Einwohnermeldeamt** or **Bürgeramt** (Citizens' registration Office) in your city. You can find the address at: www.bus.rlp.de

As a rule, you can make an appointment online. Please note that registration should take place within two weeks of moving in.

For the appointment, you will need a valid identity card and a **landlord certificate** filled out by your landlord. You can usually download the landlord certificate from the website of the city you are moving to.

When you register at the Residents' registration Office, you will receive a **certificate of registration**. You should keep this in a safe place.

Bank account

You will need a German bank account (Girokonto = current account) if you want to live in Germany for a longer period of time, for example, to rent a flat and have your salary deposited.

To open a bank account, you usually need the following **documents**: valid passport, residence permit, certificate of registration, wage statement (depending on the type of account).

Note that banks may charge different fees, for example for account management or for non-European transfers. It is therefore worth comparing different banks when choosing a bank.

Foreigners Authority

If you come from a country outside the European Union, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway or Switzerland, you need a residence permit to live and work in Germany.

If you have come to Germany with an entry visa, you must apply for the residence permit relevant to your purpose of stay at your competent **foreigners authority within three months** of entry. This may also apply to accompanying family members.

If you have entered Germany without an entry visa (this may apply to nationals of Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the USA), you must apply for the residence permit relevant to your purpose of stay at your competent **foreigners authority before your first day of work**.

The following **documents** are usually required to apply for a residence permit: valid passport, registration certificate from the Residents' Registration Office, lease agreement, certificate from the health insurance provider, employment contract or training contract and biometric passport photos. The residence permit is issued according to the purpose of your stay and is issued in the form of an **electronic card**.

You can find the exact address of the foreigners authority responsible for you on the page: www.bus.rlp.de.

Information on social security and health insurance

If you work in Germany, you are well insured. As an employee, you are usually a member of one of the five statutory insurance schemes:

- health insurance
- long-term care insurance
- pension insurance
- accident insurance
- unemployment insurance.

This covers the financial consequences of illness, need for care, old age, accident and unemployment.

For membership in social security system, you pay a fixed percentage of your earned income. This is automatically deducted from your **gross salary** each month and paid to the insurance companies. You therefore do not have to transfer any amounts yourself.

Unlike pension, long-term care, accident and unemployment insurance, where you are automatically a member, you have to choose a provider for health insurance. You can choose the **health insurance provider** that appeals to you most from a variety of health insurance providers. The good thing about this insurance is that your spouse and children are automatically covered by your contribution.

You can find a list of all **statutory health insurance providers** here:

www.gkv-spitzenverband.de/service/krankenkassenliste/krankenkassen.jsp

Above a certain salary, you can opt for **private health insurance**.

Voluntary insurances

In Germany, there are a number of **insurances** that you can take out voluntarily.

One of the most common voluntary insurances is **liability insurance**. This insurance covers you if you cause damage to others. The premium for liability insurance is relatively low and is usually paid annually. In most cases, your spouse and children are also insured.

With **household insurance**, you protect your **personal property**, for example against theft, fire or water damage. The premium costs vary according to the size of your home.

Information on mobile phone, telephone, Internet and broadcasting fees (GEZ)

To continue making calls and using the mobile Internet with your **mobile phone** after your arrival in Germany, you have the following options: You can buy a **SIM card** with **prepaid credit** in many supermarkets and petrol stations. Or you can take out a **mobile phone contract** for a certain period and pay the bill monthly. There are different providers with different tariffs. Find out on the Internet and use comparison portals.

There are various telecommunications services in Germany. Some offer discounted packages of telephone (landline) and Internet. It is best to use the comparison portals on the Internet. Since it can take several weeks to set up the **telephone and Internet connection** in your flat, contact the provider as early as possible.

In Germany, **broadcasting fees** are charged for radio, television or Internet PCs and are due for every flat or house. You are therefore obliged to register with the competent institution after moving in. You have one month to register after moving into your new home.

You can find more information here: www.rundfunkbeitrag.de

LIVING IN THE REGION

Learning German

There are many ways to learn German locally. Outside the company, you can attend part-time German courses at **language schools**. Intensive courses are often offered here. Alternatively, the so-called **Volkshochschulen (adult education centres)** in the federal state offer inexpensive German courses. You can find out more about what the adult education centres have to offer at www.vhs-rlp.de

In addition to language courses, you can also take **integration courses**. Here you will also be introduced to the German culture and way of life. Information on integration courses can be found on the website of the Citizens and Business Service at www.bus.rlp.de.

Outside of language courses, you can make an effort to learn German in everyday life. Talk to your colleagues, exchange ideas with your neighbours or watch films in German with subtitles.

Mobility in the region

In Rhineland-Palatinate, you benefit from a **dense network** of transport routes. No matter whether you are travelling by **train**, **car** or **bicycle**.

The state's **rail network** connects the large cities with the rural regions. Rail travel is also good for getting to the **neighbouring countries** of France, Belgium and Luxembourg in comfort. Tickets for rail travel can be purchased online at www.bahn.de or at the respective railway stations.

For **local transport**, it is a good idea to take the bus or tram. If you use local transport regularly, it is worth buying a monthly ticket.

For cycling fans, the riverbanks of the Rhine and Moselle with their cycle paths also offer an **environmentally friendly alternative** to the autobahn and motorway. You can plan your routes through Rhineland-Palatinate in advance at www.radwanderland.de

Driving licence in Germany

To **drive a car** in Germany, you must have a driving licence.

If you come from a country **within** the EU, as well as from Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland and Great Britain, you do not need to have your driving licence changed. If you come from **another country**, your driving licence is valid for six months in Germany. After this period, you will need a German driving licence. Depending on your country of origin, you may have to take an examination to obtain it. In case of traffic controls, it is also important that you have the vehicle registration document for your car with you.

Visiting a doctor in Rhineland-Palatinate

Germany has a **well-developed health system** – also in Rhineland-Palatinate. If you are acutely ill, you will usually first go to a **general practitioner (GP)**. Depending on the diagnosis, you will be referred to another specialist. In addition, you can arrange **preventive medical examinations** – for example with eye, dental or ear, nose and throat specialists. You can find a nearby doctor's practice with the practice finder: www.praxisfinder-rlp.de/in-der-naehe

If you fall ill outside of office hours and need urgent medical treatment, contact the local medical **emergency service** or **on-call service**.

Call the free medical emergency service number 116 117 to find out which doctor and which pharmacy are on call in your area.

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, alert the **rescue service** immediately – for example, in the event of a heart attack, stroke or serious accident. The rescue service can be reached nationwide by calling 112

German tax system

There are many **taxes** in Germany: value-added tax, car tax, energy tax, etc. They are levied by the state to ensure the **general welfare of society**. Areas such as social education, public infrastructure and the health care system, for example, benefit from them.

As an employee, **income tax** is important. You pay this on all income you earn in a calendar year. Since you work for a company, you do not have to take care of this yourself. Income tax is deducted monthly from your gross salary in the form of **wage tax** and transferred to the tax office. At the end of the calendar year, you can submit a tax return to the tax office. By stating your income and charges, the state can check whether you are entitled to a tax refund.

Leisure and recreation in Rhineland-Palatinate

Rhineland-Palatinate offers a **wide range of leisure activities**.

Lively cities such as **Koblenz**, **Mainz** and **Trier** invite you to go out, shop and celebrate. In the wine regions of the Palatinate, Moselle and Ahr, you can enjoy a relaxed meal and taste the latest vintages from the winegrowers. Rhineland-Palatinate also has seven **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**, a visit to which is always an extraordinary experience. There are hiking routes throughout the state that will take you through the forests, low mountain ranges and river valleys of Rhineland-Palatinate. You can also indulge in many **outdoor activities**, such as canoeing, climbing and mountain biking.

You can also find more information on these topics online at www.rlp-tourismus.com/ or at www.welterbe-mittelrheintal.de.

Waste separation and deposit

Environmental protection is important in Germany: in order to conserve resources, much of the waste is recycled and composted. This means that you yourself must take care to sort your waste properly.

As a rule, paper and cardboard are disposed of in **paper bins**. Packaging made of plastic, metal and composites belong in the **yellow bin** or the **yellow waste bag**, depending on the region. Food which has gone off is disposed of in the **residual waste**. You can dispose of glass bottles in **containers** provided for this purpose.

Depending on where you live, the guidelines for **waste disposal** in Rhineland-Palatinate may vary. You can find out more about this at your local administration or on the Internet.

There is a **deposit system** in Germany: A deposit is charged on certain glass and plastic bottles, which you pay at the checkout in the supermarket (between 8 and 25 cents per bottle). When you return the empty bottles, you get the deposit back.

FAMILIES IN RHINELAND-PALATINATE

Kindergarten and School – Childcare in Rhineland-Palatinate

There are many **childcare** options in Germany: from crèches to kindergartens, to childminders. As a parent, you can choose between different models. Attendance at the municipal kindergarten is free of charge for all children from the age of 2 until they start school. Make sure that you register your child early in your preferred kindergarten. It happens that the number of places is not always sufficient for all children. You will have to pay a care fee for private day-care centres.

You can find more information about day care centres in Rhineland-Palatinate online at www.kita.rlp.de.

The **German school system** provides for **compulsory schooling** for children. School starts for children who have reached their 6th birthday by 31 August each year. After that, children attend primary school from grade 1 to grade 4. Here your children are taught the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. After that, the school system in Germany provides for **different educational paths** – depending on your child's abilities. These are pursued at Realschulen (practical secondary schools), integrated comprehensive schools or Gymnasien (academic secondary schools). Which school you can register your children at depends on where you live.

Child benefit – Financial support for parents

In order to provide financial support for families with children, there is the so-called **child benefit** in Germany. This serves to provide for the basic needs of your children. Child benefit is at least 219 euros per child and is paid monthly. From the 3rd child onwards, the child benefit is even higher. Find out which requirements you have to meet to receive child benefit at www.familienportal.de.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Welcome Center in Rheinland-Pfalz

Do you need further support in arriving and settling in Rhineland-Palatinate?

The **Welcome Centres** at the IHK locations in **Koblenz**, **Ludwigshafen**, **Mainz** and **Trier** can advise you in German and English on the following topics:

- Recognition of professional qualifications
- Questions about entry and residence
- Options for language courses and finding accommodation
- Overview of the school system in Rhineland-Palatinate
- Information on cultural and leisure activities
- Typical German characteristics and cultural peculiarities

At www.make-it-in.rlp.de/en/work/local-contacts you will find the contact details of the Welcome Centres in Rhineland-Palatinate.

Important telephone numbers:

Police: 110

Rescue service and fire brigade: 112

Medical on-call service: 116117

Further information for apprentices:

Congratulations on your start in dual training in Rhineland-Palatinate! In your training, the **training regulations** for your profession determine which contents are learned at what point in time. Additionally, you have certain **rights and duties** as an apprentice, which include e.g.

- **Evidence of formal qualifications/Report portfolio:** During the entire course of your apprenticeship, you have to maintain evidence of formal qualifications. This is where you track what you have done and learned during a day or a week of your training. You will need evidence of formal qualifications at the end of your apprenticeship to be granted permission to your final examination.
- **Compulsory attendance:** The time spent in the company as well as in vocational training school is part of your working time stipulated by contract. This means that you must be present and call in sick in case of illness.
- **Means provided for training:** The means (e.g. clothing, tools) you need for working in the company and your intermediate and final examinations are provided free of charge by the company. Any material needed for vocational training school must be bought by yourself.
- **Leave entitlement:** You have a right to paid leave. On days where you are in vocational training school, you cannot take time off, therefore it is best to take your holiday during the school holidays.

You can find more information on the rights and duties during the apprenticeship period at “Planet Beruf”: www.planet-beruf.de

Your contact persons during the apprenticeship

- Your contact person within the **company** answers any questions regarding day-to-day work routines, organisation and training contents.

- The regional training advisers at the **Industrie- und Handelskammern (IHK)** (Chambers of Industry and Commerce) or the **Handwerkskammern (HWK)** (Chambers of Trade) are more than welcome to support you, for example in terms of examinations, the training regulations, or legal inquiries and problems.
- Please consult your teachers at your **vocational training school** if you have questions regarding school matters.

You can find more information on dual training on the “**Make it in Rhineland-Palatinate**” website: www.make-it-in.rlp.de/en/education



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