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Information on Registration Law in Germany

1. General compulsory registration of residency in Germany

Every person with residence in Germany has to be registered there (general compulsory registration). This includes the obligation to register change of residence within a week after the move to the registration office in Germany. Not doing so constitutes a misdemeanour and carries an automatic financial penalty.

2. Deregistration upon moving abroad

If you leave your place of residence in Germany and move abroad, you need to deregister with the relevant registration office in Germany.

Why do I need a deregistration certificate?

If you move abroad, you need a deregistration certificate for example to present it to the German mission abroad when dealing with passport issues such as changing the place of residence in your passport or at the issuing of new passports.

How do I receive a deregistration certificate?

Many cities, municipalities and county governments in Germany only issue deregistration certification on applications. In most cases this can simply be done through a written inquiry through the website of the municipality or per fax. Addresses, telephone and fax numbers for the municipality responsible for your former place of residence can be found online.

Consequences of your registration status in Germany

In some cases it might happen, that a German registration office does not insist on the required deregistration and that you continue to be registered in Germany. Since there are many legal consequences of the registration/deregistration status for a person, you will find some examples of those consequences here:

Consequences of deregistration

- All matters relating to passports, including the issuing of a new travel passport, fall under the responsibility of the German mission abroad at your foreign place of residency. Presenting the proof of deregistration at the consular section of the Embassy is sufficient.
- The German mission abroad can enter the foreign place of residency into the passport. As soon as this is done, VAT can be claimed on purchases done in Germany and demonstrably exported.
- You cannot register a vehicle with a German licence plate under your name in Germany. The official registration of a vehicle under your name is dependent on having residency in Germany.
- Upon deregistration in Germany you lose your automatic entry into the voters register for communal, regional, federal and European parliament elections. In order to participate in the

elections, you need to apply for reregistration into the voters register. The application can be done through your local German mission abroad. This does not apply to voting rights for communal elections.

What happens if I don't deregister in Germany?

- If you are still registered in Germany, you need to apply with the relevant authority in Germany if you want to be issued with a new travel passport. The German mission abroad is in this case not responsible and can only help you in exceptional circumstances. In addition, there will be additional fees for the passport as well as a delay in the processing, since the German mission in such cases first has to receive authorization from the local German authority responsible for issuing the passport.
- With residency in Germany you might be obligated to pay church tax.
- Official letters by courts and authorities might be issued to your place of residence. This might be an issue if you are abroad for a long time and only receive those documents late or not at all and might miss important information or deadlines.
- The local authorities at your place of residence are responsible for all matters relating to local community issues. In order to access services on the communal level you need to be registered in Germany.
- Your family book will remain with the civil registry office of your place of residence if you are married. Upon deregistration, the family book will be kept with the Civil Registry Office I in Berlin. Please note that processing times for name declarations as well as other applications usually take between 6-24 months.

All information presented is based on the knowledge and experiences of the German Embassy at the date of the creation of this information sheet. All liability is excluded; all information is given without guarantee of being complete, correct and up-to-date.