

# Welcome package

## First Steps in Hamburg

### Welcome to Hamburg!

It's great that you have decided to move to Hamburg!

On the following pages you will find helpful tips for your first steps in Hamburg. From necessary visits to the authorities to information on how to approach your search for an apartment and on learning German.

If you have further questions or need additional information, you can contact the **Hamburg Welcome Center**. You will find us at **Süderstraße 32b, 20097 Hamburg**.

At the HWC, immigrants and people interested in immigration can find advice and support. You can find all our services listed on our [Hamburg Welcome Portal](#).

You can reach the telephone hotline at **(040) 42839-5555** during the telephone office hours:

Monday to Wednesday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Friday 9 a.m. to noon

Please send e-mail inquiries to [info@welcome.hamburg.de](mailto:info@welcome.hamburg.de).

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## How to find an apartment

### YOUR FIRST STEPS IN HAMBURG

You will find some basic information in our welcome package. If you want to go directly to the topic in the document, click on the link (with page reference). For many topics there is also a link to further information on our website.



Search for suitable accommodation  
How do I approach the [apartment search](#) (page 3)?  
What do the [abbreviations](#) (page 12) in the housing ads mean?  
[More information on the topic](#)



After moving: [Register your residence](#) (page 15) within two weeks.  
How do I book an [appointment](#)?  
The [tax identification number](#) will be sent by mail after registration.



Immigrants from third countries require a [residence permit](#).  
How can I find the [relevant immigration office](#) (page 16) for my application?



Language skills make it easier to settle. In Hamburg, you have a variety of opportunities to [learn German](#) (page 17).  
[More information on the topic](#)



Here you will find an overview of how to [find a doctor](#) (page 19) and telephone numbers for medical emergencies.

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You can find more information on these and other topics on our [Hamburg Welcome Portal](#):

- Go [job hunting](#) to be able to finance your living expenses.
- Some foreign professional qualifications must first be [recognized](#) in Germany.
- If you want to live and work in Germany for a longer period of time, you need a [bank account](#).
- If you live in Germany, you are required to have [health insurance](#).
- You will receive your [social security number](#) as soon as you have health insurance.
- Choose a [childcare facility](#) or [school](#) for your children and apply for [child benefits](#).

If you need advice on any of the above, feel free to contact the [Hamburg Welcome Center](#)

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### Step 1: Preparation

Before you start looking for an apartment, think about what kind of apartment you want. The following questions can help:

- How many people (and pets) will move with you into the new apartment?
- Where (in Hamburg and the surrounding area) do you want to live? Or better: Where do you definitely not want to live?

How close to your workplace should the apartment be?

Don't forget: Hamburg has a very good and very reliable [public transport system](#). This means that it is very fast and easy to get to distant places in Hamburg using the bus or train. A long way to work should therefore not be the deciding factor. Usually, you can find cheaper apartments on the outskirts of Hamburg.

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- What should be the minimum size of your apartment? (How many rooms / square meters)
- What is the maximum rent that the apartment can cost?
- If you **receive benefits from the Jobcenter or social welfare office (Sozialamt)**: Before you start looking for a place to live, you should find out what the respective office currently considers to be reasonable costs. The current rent limits for gross cold rent by number of persons in the household can be found [here](#) (in German).
- Perhaps you can apply for a Permit for Subsidised Housing? This allows people with a low income to move into social housing that is cheaper in comparison. The calculation is always individual. You can find more information [here](#).
- Can you imagine to share the apartment with a stranger? To live in a shared apartment (WG = Wohngemeinschaft) is mostly cheaper, because you share the rent. There is also the possibility to live as a subtenant.

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What is a **shared apartment (WG)**? A WG is an apartment shared by several people who are not family and not married or partnered. Each person in the apartment has his/her own room. Common rooms such as the bathroom, kitchen and living room are shared. A WG can help you to make new friends. All people in the shared apartment are responsible for keeping the common areas clean.

In a **sublease**, generally a maximum of 2 people share an apartment. Sometimes an apartment may be rented to you alone for example when the tenant is abroad.

- What other criteria does the apartment have to meet?
  - Do pets have to be allowed? Especially dogs can complicate the search for an apartment.
  - Do you need a parking space for a car?
  - Do you need a bathtub or a balcony?

Write down a few notes on each point.

**But keep in mind:** The more conditions you put for the new apartment, the more complicated it will be to find one. Therefore, stay open-minded and try make compromises.

Take a look at your notes and underline the criteria that are especially important.

- Is the location/size more important than the price of the apartment?
- Are there things on your list that you could do without if necessary

### Step 2: Where do I look?

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Once you know what kind of apartment you want to live in and what things are important for you, you can start your search. There are several ways to find an apartment:

#### Option 1: The Internet

The [website of the city of Hamburg](#) is a good place to start. Various other websites can offer a first insight into how much a suitable apartment will cost you. Many private landlords also offer their apartments online on websites where you can directly submit your application.

It is also worth looking at Facebook. There are many groups where people are looking for and offering apartments or shared apartments.

#### Option 2: Cooperatives

There are several housing cooperatives (Wohnungs - Genossenschaften) that own and rent out apartments. These housing cooperatives often work with a waiting list. You can contact them and ask for a spot on the waiting list. In many cases, this can be done through their website. Here you can find an overview on all housing cooperatives in Hamburg: <http://wohnungsbaugenossenschaft-hh.de/ueber-uns/stadtteile>. Finding an apartment through a cooperative usually takes longer, but cooperative apartments are often cheaper.

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### How do housing cooperatives work?

- If you want to rent an apartment from a housing cooperative, you need to become a member.
- For becoming a member of a housing cooperative, you have to buy some cooperative shares.
- The amount of cooperative shares ranges from flat to flat and depends on the apartment's size. The shares are usually the same amount as the rental deposit (Mietkaution) would be.
- The cooperative shares will be paid interest on. If you leave the cooperative flat you'll get the money back.

You have to register yourself (mostly online) at every housing cooperative that you're interested in. This registration is without obligation and free of charge. You just have to specify in which parts of the city and at what conditions you are looking for and the cooperative will send you non-binding offers, if they have apartments available.

### Option 3: Real estate agents

You can hire a person to search for an apartment for you. Such a person is called a Real estate agent. Real estate agents often possess special contacts that can help in the search for an apartment. However, a real estate agent wants to be paid for a successful search. You therefore have to pay extra money. Usually, however, people in Germany look for housing themselves because of the high cost of a real estate agent. If the person who intends to rent or sell an apartment or house to someone decides to hire a real estate agent, the fee must be paid by this person.

**In general:** the person who gives the order to the real estate agent also pays the fee in the end. On the website [Immobilienmakler Hamburg](http://www.immobiliensuche.de) you will find all real estate agents in Hamburg.

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### Option 4: Newspapers

Sounds dusty - but can be a real stroke of luck. Older people in particular still use newspaper ads to look for apartments. So it's worth taking a look at the ads, especially in the major Hamburg newspapers or even posting an ad yourself.

## Step 3: The Rent

When looking for apartments, pay attention to the price.

The price that is written on an apartment ad is not always the price that has to be paid. Pay attention to the words "**Kaltmiete**" (cold rent) and "**Warmmiete**" (warm rent).

**Cold rent** only includes the price you have to pay per square meter. Service charges are not included. You will have to pay additional cost to the cold rent on monthly basis.

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**Warm rent** includes the cold rent and a (large) part of the additional costs. For example costs for:

- Water & sewage
- Street cleaning & garbage collection
- Elevator
- House cleaning & pest control
- Garden maintenance
- Lighting

The price of the warm rent can therefore tell you more accurately how much you will actually have to spend on an apartment. Therefore, always ask for the warm rent and also ask which additional costs are not included in the warm rent.

**Tip:** Ask how much the previous tenant had to pay for utilities and how many people lived in the apartment. If only one person lived in the apartment before and you move in with 2 or more people, you should expect the water costs, for example, to increase.

There are **other costs** that are not included in the warm rent, but still have to be paid for each month. Plan for these as well. These can be:

### **Broadcasting fees.**

Every household has to pay broadcasting fees. If you live alone in an apartment, you have to pay the same amount as a family with 2 children. If you move into a shared flat, the costs are shared by all people living in the flat. Broadcasting fees are about 18 Euros per month and have to be paid even if you don't watch public broadcasting stations or don't own a TV or radio.

### **Internet and telephone**

If you want to have a landline connection or W-LAN in your home most of the time you will have to pay extra money. Sometimes, however, an Internet connection is already included in the rent. Consult the landlord.

### **Security deposit**

The rent security deposit is paid by the tenant to the landlord at the beginning of the tenancy and is intended to protect the landlord against damage caused by the tenant. The deposit is paid only once and it may not be higher than three net cold rents. When moving out, the tenant gets the deposit back in full, unless there are still outstanding debts to the landlord or damage to the apartment.

On the next page you can see a graphic illustration of the rental costs.

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### MIETKOSTENSCHEMA (WOHNUNGEN) / <sup>1)</sup> RENTAL COSTS SCHEME (APARTMENTS)

BRUTTOKALTMIETE / GROSS RENT (EXCLUSIVE OF HEATING COSTS ETC.)	NETTOKALTMIETE / NET RENT <sup>2)</sup>	<p>üblicherweise monatliche Zahlung an den Vermieter / usual monthly payment to the landlord</p> <p>Mietpreis je m<sup>2</sup> abhängig von / rent per m<sup>2</sup> depending on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wohnungsart (z. B. Doppelhaushälfte, Mehrfamilienhaus) / type of housing (e. g. semi-detached house, apartment building)</li> <li>Wohnungsgröße (z. B. Wohnfläche, Zahl der Zimmer) size of apartment (e. g. living space, number of rooms)</li> <li>Wohnungsausstattung (z. B. Trennung von Bad/WC, Heizungsart) equipment of apartment (e. g. separated bath/WC, type of heating)</li> <li>Wohnungsbeschaffenheit (z. B. Baujahr, Zuschnitt) condition of apartment (e. g. year of construction, layout)</li> <li>Lage der Wohnung (z. B. Umgebung, Infrastruktur) location of apartment (e. g. environment, infrastructure)</li> </ul>	<p>x 3 = MAX. MIET SICHERHEIT, KAUTION / MAX. SECURITY DEPOSIT (x 2 + 38 % USt / VAT = MAX. MAKLERCOURTAGE / MAX. REAL ESTATE AGENT'S FEE)</p>
	BETRIEBSKOSTEN / UTILITY COSTS <sup>2)</sup> ("NEBENKOSTEN")	<p>üblicherweise monatliche Vorauszahlungen an den Vermieter und jährliche Abrechnung (anteilige Kosten abhängig von Wohnfläche und Gesamtkosten) / usual monthly amount paid to the landlord in advance with annual billing (proportionate charges depending on living space and total costs) z. B. für / e. g. for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grundsteuer / real estate tax, Müllabfuhr / garbage collection</li> <li>Aufzug / elevator/lift, Treppenhausreinigung / cleaning of staircase,</li> <li>Straßen- und Gehwegreinigung / cleaning of street and pavement ,</li> <li>Gartenpflege / garden maintenance, Hauswart / caretaker</li> <li>Gebäudebeleuchtung / lighting of building</li> <li>Gebäude-/Haftpflichtversicherung / building/liability insurance</li> </ul>	
	BETRIEBSKOSTEN / UTILITY COSTS <sup>2)</sup> ("NEBENKOSTEN")	<p>üblicherweise monatliche Vorauszahlung an den Vermieter oder an den Versorger und jährliche Abrechnung (Kosten abhängig vom Verbrauch) / usual monthly amount paid to the landlord or provider in advance with annual billing (amount depending on consumption) z. B. für / e. g. for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heizung / heating</li> <li>Warmwasserbereitung / heating of warm water</li> <li>Gas / gas</li> </ul>	
	SONSTIGE NEBENKOSTEN / <sup>3)</sup> ADDITIONAL UTILITY COSTS	<p>üblicherweise Zahlung direkt an den Versorger, eventuell monatliche Vorauszahlungen und jährliche Abrechnung / usual monthly amount paid directly to the provider, possibly with monthly advance payment and annual billing z. B. für / e. g. for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kalt-Wasser / cold water</li> <li>Abwasser / sewage</li> <li>Strom / electricity</li> <li>Telefon / telephone</li> <li>Internet / internet</li> </ul>	

<sup>1)</sup> Die tatsächlichen Verhältnisse ergeben sich aus dem jeweiligen Mietvertrag! /  
The actual measures result from the particular rental agreement!  
<sup>2)</sup> Keine prozentuale Darstellung! /  
No scaled percentage!



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### Step 4: The Application

Once a suitable apartment has been found, it's time to apply. There are several documents that the future landlord would like to see. It is best to add them to your application. This way, your chances to get a viewing appointment is higher. In addition, you should bring printed copies of the documents with you directly to the viewing appointment.

These documents should include:

#### ☐ Schufa information

- Information about your financial reliability - for example, whether you pay your debts.
- How to get it: You can apply for the "Schufa-Auskunft" (Schufa report) directly on the [Schufa website](#). There you can download the required document directly. Then you only have to print it out or insert it into the mail to the landlord.

#### ☐ Proof of salary or monthly income

- Every landlord wants to make sure that you can afford the apartment and will be able to pay the rent every month. Therefore, you should prove how much money you get every month. You can verify this by sending a copy of your pay slip, your notice of government benefits or your current bank statement (Kontoauszug).

#### ☐ Information on how to contact your previous landlord

- Did you have an apartment in Germany/Hamburg before? Then you can provide the contact details of your previous landlord. This information is optional.

#### ☐ (Short) resume

- Some landlords like to see a short resume. Write down a few important points. For example: When did you come to Germany or how long have you been working in your profession? This information is optional.

#### ☐ Proof of a guarantee (Bürgschaft)

- Since every landlord wants to get his rent regularly, the proof of a guarantor is helpful. A guarantor (Bürge) is a person who guarantees that you will pay your rent. In the event that you are unable to pay your rent, your guarantor has to pay it for you.

#### ☐ Proof of your residence permit.

- Feel free to tell the landlord that you have a residence permit. This information is optional.

Once you have sent your application for the apartment, you will have to wait. The landlord will look into your application and hopefully contact you.

But keep in mind: Many people are looking for an apartment in Hamburg. Very often there are a lot of applications for an apartment. You might have to wait a few days or weeks for a reply and sometimes there are so many applicants that the landlord cannot reply to every person.

**Therefore, ALWAYS apply for several apartments at the same time.**



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### Step 5: The viewing appointment (Wohnungsbesichtigung)

Once the landlord has contacted you and suggested a viewing appointment, you are a step closer to finding your apartment. Now you have the chance to introduce yourself to your potential landlord.

#### Important tips:

- Arrive on time for the apartment viewing. That means: Be there at least 10 minutes in advance.
- Wear the right outfit. Avoid loose clothing, such as sweatpants or a tank top. First impressions count here. So wear something dressier. It doesn't have to be a suit, but a nice shirt or blouse would be a good start. The dress code at the apartment tour is similar to a job interview.
- Be friendly and polite.
  - Greet the landlord. Reach out to him and introduce yourself.
  - Let him finish.
- Ask questions, like:
  - When will you get back to me?
  - When may I get back to you if you haven't given feedback yet?
  - What will happen next?
  - How much are the additional costs? Are heating costs part of the warm rent or are they charged extra?
- Answer questions from the landlord truthfully. However, there are questions that are not allowed and therefore do not need to be answered (truthfully). These include questions regarding:
  - Nationality
  - Religion
  - Criminal record
  - How often you throw parties
  - How loud you listen to music
  - Whether you smoke
- However, there are also questions that must be answered with the truth. If you don't answer these questions truthfully, you could face summary dismissal. These include questions about:
  - Marital status
  - children
  - pets
- Pay attention to the following during your inspection:
  - Is the hallway clean?
  - Does the elevator work?
  - How does the apartment smell (damp, like mold)?
  - Are for example, some corners on the outside repainted (this can also be an indication of mold)?
  - Are there any kitchen furniture? Are those part of the rental contract or is a replacement fee required?
  - In the case of a shared apartment or sublet ask yourself if you like the other tenants.

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At the end of the viewing appointment there is a new application form that you must fill out if you still want the apartment. Only if you actually fill it out and return it to the landlord you will have a chance of getting the apartment. Here you often again have to state your profession, your salary and also your contact details. Then add the printed documents that you have already sent with the application. This way the landlord has everything at hand.

Many landlords invite several people to a viewing appointment. **So take part in as many viewings as possible and do not just focus on just one apartment, but several.**

### Whereby you will recognize a frivolous offer for accommodation:

#### I. The housing provider doesn't disclose his/her identity

You don't know the identity of the housing provider or he/she uses a false identity. He/she lives allegedly abroad and you only have email contact with him/her. They use bad grammar in their emails.

#### II. No viewing appointment for the accommodation

The housing provider told you that he/she is overseas. A viewing appointment with him/her or with an estate agent is not possible. You have to transfer him/her money so he/she will send you the key for the accommodation in return.

Please note: Reliable housing providers don't demand a deposit for a key or money for other benefits (like a rent) in advance.

#### III. Extremely favorable rent price

The housing provider offers a luxurious accommodation for an extremely favorable rent. In this case you should compare the sqm-price of this accommodation with the average sqm-price in this area.

#### IV. The accommodation is not available anymore

The accommodation is not available anymore, but in the office of the housing provider you are offered a list with insider tips and lots of available accommodations. A prerequisite is to pay 150 – 200 € for this list. Don't pay for it, the list is worthless.

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## WHAT DO THE ABBREVIATIONS IN ADS FOR ACCOMODATION MEAN?

### And finally: Wait

Once you have submitted contact information on the application form, it is again time to wait. The landlord will contact you with an acceptance or rejection. Don't worry if you don't get an apartment right away. Many people are looking for an apartment in Hamburg. It is not easy for anyone and it can often take some time to find an apartment. So do not lose heart and patience. You will surely manage to find a suitable apartment.

When you have your rental contract in your hands: Congratulations! But you should read it carefully. You can find out more about this topic and what else you need to know on our [Hamburg Welcome Portal](#).

If you are accepted for an apartment and **receive benefits from the Jobcenter or the social welfare office (Sozialamt)**, it is important for you to make an appointment with the responsible office **before signing the contract**. There has to be a check whether your rental apartment meets the [adequacy limits](#) (in German) and the office needs to give its approval beforehand.

If you do not receive any benefits, you can check whether you are entitled to [housing benefit](#). This assumes that you can cover your other living expenses and part of the rent or charges from your own income.

Good luck in finding a new home!

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## WHAT DO THE ABBREVIATIONS IN ADS FOR ACCOMODATION MEAN?

Abk./abbr.	Bedeutung (DE)	meaning (EN)
1 Zi-Whg.	1 Zimmer-Wohnung	one-room home / apartment
2 ZKB	2 Zimmer, Küche, Bad	two-room home with kitchen and bath
2 ZKBB	2 Zimmer, Küche, Bad, Balkon	two-room home / apartment with kitchen, bath and balcony
2. OG	zweiter Stock	second floor (US) / first floor (GB)
Abst.	Abstandszahlung (z. B. für Vor-Mietereinbauten)	compensation (i.e. for furniture)
App.	Appartement	Studio Apartment
AR	Abstellraum	storage room
Bd	Bad (vgl. WC)	bath, bathroom
Bj.	Baujahr	year the building was built
BK	Betriebskosten	utility costs
BLK, Blk	Balkon	balcony
ca.	circa	approximately, approx., ca.
Court.	(Makler-)Courtage / -Provision	commission (for real estate agent)
DB	Duschbad	shower
DG	(ausgebautes) Dachgeschoss	(built out) attic
DHH	Doppelhaushälfte	semi-detached house
Doga	Doppelgarage	double garage
DT	Dachterrasse	roof-deck / roof terrace
Du	Dusche	shower
EB	Erstbezug	first time use
EBK	Einbauküche	built-in kitchen, fitted-in kitchen
EG	Erdgeschoss	first floor (US) ground floor (GB)
E-Hzg	Elektroheizung	electric heating
erl.	erlaubt	allowed
ETW	Etagenwohnung (auch: Eigentumsw.)	apartment is on one floor
EZW	Einzimmerwohnung	one-room home / apartment
F-Raum	Fahrradraum	bicycle room
Fb-hzg	Fußbodenheizung	underfloor heating
Feha / FeWo	Ferienhaus / -wohnung	holiday house / apartment
FP	Festpreis	fixed price
freist.	freistehend	free-standing
FW	Fernwärme	district heating
Gart, Gart-ant	Garten, Gartenanteil	garden / part of the garden
Gart.-Ben./Mit-ben.	Gartenbenutzung/mitbenutzung	use of a garden / shared garden
GD	Glasdach	skylight
Gem-Ant	Gemeinschaftsantenne	community antenna / block aerial
G-WC	Gäste-WC	guest WC / separate toilet

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## WHAT DO THE ABBREVIATIONS IN ADS FOR ACCOMODATION MEAN?

GZ-Hzg.	Gas-Zentralheizung	<i>gas central heating</i>
Hat	Haustiere	<i>pets [allowed]</i>
HP	Hochparterre	<i>mezzanine, raised ground floor</i>
inkl.	inklusive	<i>including</i>
jährl.	jährlich (per annum)	<i>yearly (p. a.)</i>
JM	Jahresmiete	<i>yearly rent</i>
Kaut	Kaution	<i>security deposit</i>
KDB	Küche, Dusche und Bad	<i>kitchen, shower and bath</i>
Kfz-Einstpl.	Kraftfahrzeug-Einstellplatz	<i>parking spot</i>
kfr.	kurzfristig	<i>soon, short-term</i>
KM/kalt	Kaltmiete	<i>cold rent - not including utilities or heating</i>
KoNi	Kochnische	<i>kitchenet(te)</i>
KP	Kaufpreis	<i>selling price</i>
kpl.	komplett	<i>complete</i>
KT, Kt.	Kaution	<i>landlord's / security deposit</i>
Lux.	Luxus- / luxuriös	<i>luxury / luxurious</i>
m <sup>2</sup>	Quadratmeter (Wohnungsgröße)	<i>square meter</i>
MC	Maklercourtage	<i>commission (for real estate agent)</i>
MM	Monatsmiete	<i>monthly rent</i>
möbl	möbliert	<i>furnished</i>
mod.	modern / modernisiert	<i>modern / modernized</i>
MP	Mietpreis	<i>rental price</i>
MS	Mietsicherheit	<i>deposit</i>
mtl.	monatlich	<i>monthly</i>
n.A., nA	nach Absprache	<i>special agreement / negotiable</i>
NB	Neubau (vgl. oben "Altbau")	<i>new building</i>
netto kalt	Nettokaltmiete	<i>net rent - not including utilities or heating</i>
neuw.	neuwertig	<i>like new</i>
NK	Nebenkosten	<i>utility costs</i>
NR	Nichtraucher	<i>non-smoker(s)</i>
Nsp.	Nachtspeicherheizung	<i>night storage heater</i>
off. Kamin	offener Kamin	<i>open fireplace</i>
OG	Obergeschoss	<i>upper floor</i>
ÖZ.-Hzg.	Öl-Zentralheizung	<i>oil central heating</i>
Pantry	Kleine Einbauküche	<i>small built-in kitchen / pantry</i>
Pk	Parkettboden	<i>parquet floor</i>
Prov., PV	(Makler-)Provision	<i>commission (for real estate agent)</i>
prov.fr.	provisionsfrei, ohne Maklergebühren	<i>no commission</i>
qm	Quadratmeter (Wohnungsgröße)	<i>square meter</i>

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## WHAT DO THE ABBREVIATIONS IN ADS FOR ACCOMODATION MEAN?

ren.-bed.	renovierungsbedürftig	<i>renovations needed</i>
RH	Reihenhaus	<i>town houses</i>
SZ	Schlafzimmer	<i>bedroom</i>
teilmbf	teilmöbliert	<i>partly furnished</i>
Terr	Terrasse	<i>terrace</i>
TG	Tiefgarage	<i>underground garage</i>
Tgw	Teilgewerblich nutzbar	<i>partially for commercial use</i>
Tiere	Tierhaltung	<i>pets allowed</i>
UG	Untergeschoss	<i>basement level</i>
Uml	Umlagen	<i>cost allocation / shares in the cost</i>
v. Priv.	Privatvermieter, ohne Maklercourtage	<i>to hire directly form the landlord / no commission (for real estate agent)</i>
VB, VHB	Verhandlungsbasis	<i>negotiable</i>
VH	Vorderhaus	<i>front building</i>
VK	Vollkeller	<i>cellar underneath the whole house</i>
VS	Verhandlungssache	<i>negotiable</i>
warm	Warmmiete (inkl. Heiz- und Betriebskosten)	<i>warm rent (utilities and heating included)</i>
WB	Wannenbad	<i>bathroom with bathtub</i>
WBS	Wohnberechtigungsschein, auch § 5-Schein	<i>public housing permit</i>
WC	separate Toilette (vgl. Bad)	<i>separate toilet</i>
Wfl	Wohnfläche	<i>living space / area</i>
WG	Wohngemeinschaft	<i>shared apartment</i>
Whg.	Wohnung	<i>apartment</i>
WM	Warmmiete (inkl. Heiz- und Betriebskosten)	<i>warm rent - including utilities and heating</i>
WoKü	Wohnküche	<i>combination kitchen and living room</i>
z. verm.	zu vermieten	<i>for rent / to let</i>
.. ZB	... Zimmer mit Bad	<i>...-room flat / apartment with bath</i>
ZH, Zhzg	Zentralheizung	<i>central heating</i>
Zi.	Zimmer	<i>room</i>
... ZB	... Zimmer mit Bad	<i>ensuite</i>
... ZKB	... Zimmer, Küche, Bad	<i>... room flat / apartment with kitchen and bath</i>
... ZKBB	... Zimmer, Küche, Bad und Balkon	<i>...-room flat /apartment with kitchen, bath and balcony</i>
... ZKBD	... Zimmer, Küche, Bad und Diele	<i>...-room flat /apartment with kitchen, bath and hallway</i>
ZÖV	Zentrale Ölversorgung /-heizung	<i>central oil heating</i>

# Welcome package

## Registration

If you move within Hamburg or move from abroad to an apartment in Hamburg, you must register at one of the locations of Hamburg Service vor Ort – Einwohnerangelegenheiten ('Residents' Affairs') within two weeks. It is your decision which location you choose.

To determine the nearest office, proceed as follows:

1. Open the Authority Finder: <https://www.hamburg.com/publicservice/info/11952840/n0/>
2. Enter registration address in Hamburg (street and house number)
3. Press the red "Weiter" (next) button.

The authority finder will now show you the address, telephone number, e-mail address and opening hours of the relevant office. Please make an appointment [online](#). You can find a guide that shows how to that [here](#).

You can also get an appointment by phone by phone. Please call: +49 40 **115**.

The following **documents** are required for registration:

- completed and signed [registration form](#)<sup>1</sup>
- completed and signed [housing provider confirmation](#)<sup>2</sup>
- Federal identity card or passport of all persons subject to registration; in the case of children, if no identity card or passport is available, the birth certificate.
- **When moving from abroad:** In the case of children, the birth certificate must be presented in the appropriate form (international certificate or apostille/legalisation carried out by a sworn translator in Germany) and **all persons** subject to registration must be present in person.

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In addition, further documents must be submitted in the case of:

- **Spouse:**
  - o Marriage certificate (original) with apostille / legalization.
- **Divorced persons:**
  - o legally binding divorce decree (original)
- **Widowed persons:**
  - o death certificate (original)
- **Holders of an electronic residence title (eAT):**
  - o the residence permit

**An administrative fee of 13 euros will be charged.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://welcome.hamburg.de/contentblob/2217296/42d1e8e18938d0d8b85e1d0c600755e2/data/anmeldung-des-wohnsitzes.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://welcome.hamburg.de/contentblob/4621786/2a4a05ac42d7380f4cbf1557cff44a50/data/wohnungsggeber-bestaetigung.pdf>



# Welcome package

## How to identify the relevant immigration office

### Which location of Hamburg Service vor Ort- Ausländerangelegenheiten ('Foreigners' Affairs') is responsible for me?

You can easily identify the responsible office for your application for a residence permit (or its extension) online using the **Hamburg Administration Guide („Behördenfinder der Stadt Hamburg“)**.

- (1) Open the Hamburg Administration Guide:  
<https://www.hamburg.com/publicservice/info/11934372/n0/>
- (2) Enter your registered address (street name and house number) in Hamburg.
- (3) Press the red button („Weiter“).

Now the Hamburg Administration Guide will show you the relevant department's contact details and opening hours.

Qualified professionals and managers, students and their families can also contact the [Hamburg Welcome Center for Professionals](#).

We recommend that you use the [Residence Permit Online Service](#) to submit your application. Upload all the important documents. Information on residence permits, checklists and the necessary application forms can be found on the [Hamburg Welcome Portal](#).

Please note that you need to [register your residence](#) in Hamburg in order to apply for a residence permit here.

# Welcome package

## Learning German

If you live and work in Hamburg, you will probably also want to learn German. Depending on your needs and demands there are different possibilities to learn the language.

### Hamburger Volkshochschule (Adult Education Center)

VHS-Zentrum Deutsch als Fremdsprache (German as a Foreign Language)

Schanzenstraße 77

20357 Hamburg

Phone: +49 40 428 41-4284

E-Mail: [DaF@vhs-hamburg.de](mailto:DaF@vhs-hamburg.de)

Internet: <http://www.vhs-hamburg.de> (available in German only)

### Other language schools

Courses are offered in a variety of different locations and levels throughout Hamburg. You can use the [Hamburger Kursportal WISY](#) to find the right course.

### Learn German online

- "I want to learn German" (*registration required*):  
<http://www.iwdl.de/>
- Courses where you can practice reading, writing, listening to German:  
[Various Online Courses](#)

### Conversation courses

To practice speaking German you can also go to discussion groups. In Hamburg, there are various offers.

- [„Dialog in Deutsch“](#) by Bücherhallen
- [„Sprache im Alltag“](#) by Sprachbrücke
- [Sprachlotsenprojekt](#) by Hamburger mit Herz
- [Sprachcafé Eimsbüttel](#) by Hamburger mit Herz

# Welcome package

## Learning German

### Integration courses

Each integration course consists of a **language course** and an **orientation course**. The general integration course has **700 lessons**, and depending on the focus of the course that applies to you, the total length of the course could comprise up to 1,000 lessons.

- The language course
  - comprises a total of 600 lessons (up to 900 lessons on special courses).
  - covers important aspects of everyday life (shopping, housing, work and career).
  - informs how to write letters and E-Mails in German, make telephone calls and apply for jobs.
- The orientation course
  - comprises a total of 100 lessons.
  - gives an overview of the German legal system, history, culture and important values in the German society.
- There are full-time and part-time courses available. For working people, afternoon and evening courses are offered as well.
- Costs: 2.29 € per lesson (1,603.00 € for 700 lessons)
- Exemption from the costs is possible for certain groups of people.
- The aim of the integration course is to enable you to pass the final examination. This consists of a language test at level B1 and the "Living in Germany" test.
- **Application form** for admission to an integration course:  
<http://www.bamf.de/EN/> → Integration → Immigrants and course attendees → Integration courses → Attendance and costs

You should send the application to the regional office of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees responsible for you:

**Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge)**

Regional Office Hamburg  
Sachsenstraße 12+14  
20097 Hamburg  
Phone: +49 (0) 40 23501-0  
E-Mail: [M14Posteingang@BAMF.BUND.DE](mailto:M14Posteingang@BAMF.BUND.DE)

**TIP:** If you pass the final test at the end of the integration course within two years of the confirmation of eligibility to attend the course being issued, you can, under certain circumstances, claim back half of your payments towards the cost. You must submit and send a signed application to the regional office responsible for you.

### Useful Website:

<http://www.bamf.de/EN/> → Integration

Date: February 2023

# Welcome package

## Doctors, Dentists and Emergency Numbers

### Some useful translations:

Allgemeinmediziner	- general practitioner	Allgemeinmedizin	- general medicine
Augenarzt	- oculist	Augenheilkunde	- ophthalmology
Frauenarzt	- gynaecologist	Frauenheilkunde	- gynaecology
Hautarzt	- dermatologist	Dermatologie	- dermatology
Kinderarzt	- paediatrician	Kinderheilkunde	- paediatrics
Orthopäde	- orthopaedist	Orthopädie	- orthopaedics
Zahnarzt	- dentist	Zahnheilkunde	- dentistry
Kieferorthopäde	- orthodontist	Kieferorthopäde	- orthodontics

### Emergency Numbers

- Emergency Medical Service/Emergency Doctor 112
- Poisoning Emergency Number 0551 19240
- Medical Advice (non life-threatening cases) 116 117
- Help and advice:
  - Police 110
  - Fire Department 112
  - Assistance for children and young adults 0800 1110333
  - Assistance for parents 0800 1110550
  - Blocking credit cards or EC cards 116 116

### Are there obligations for choosing a doctor in Germany?

In Germany, one is generally free to choose the doctor. But normally consulting a general practitioner should be the first choice and he/she refers the patient to a specialist if necessary.

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### How to find a doctor/dentist/hospital in Hamburg:

- **Online search tools (available in German only)**  
The usual search criteria are area of expertise (= "Fachgebiet"), location/city district (= "Stadtteil") and sometimes foreign language (= "Fremdsprache").
  - Online-search-function of the Hamburg Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (= "Kassenärztliche Vereinigung Hamburg"): <http://www.kvhh.net/> → Bürger → Arztsuche (includes the search criteria "foreign language")
  - Online search-function of the Medical Association Hamburg (= "Ärzttekammer Hamburg"): <http://www.aerzttekammer-hamburg.de/> → Patienten → Arztsuche
  - Online search function of the Dentists Association Hamburg (= "Zahnärztekammer Hamburg"): <http://www.zahnaerzte-hh.de/> → Patienten → Zahnarzt-Suche
  - Hospital Guide Hamburg: <http://www.hamburg.de/krankenhausportal/>
- **Yellow Pages (available in German only)**  
<http://www.gelbeseiten.de>

### Patients Advice

The free patients' hotline **+49 (0) 40 / 20 22 99 222** offers advice concerning medical questions and which doctor to choose.

Date: July 2022