



# Guide

for tenants with migrant backgrounds

Not sehen und handeln.  
C a r i t a s



WOHNUNGSBAU  
GESELLSCHAFT  
MAGDEBURG mbH



ottostadt  
magdeburg

Dear tenants,  
renting your first apartment in Germany is exciting. However, knowing and understanding the rules and expectations you should follow is not always easy. This guide will give you a quick overview, to make your experience as a tenant as smooth as possible. Please note that some of the information in this guide may not apply to your specific situation. If you have further questions about your particular situation, you can contact the institutions listed on the last page of this guide.



## 1. Your hand-over certificate and your lease

The hand-over certificate (Übergabeprotokoll) and the lease (Mietvertrag) are important documents. Among other things they record the state of the apartment and the readings of the heating and electricity meters. These are important to calculate correct bills of operating costs. You should receive the hand-over certificate from the landlord when you move in. Please save the hand-over certificate and the lease in a safe place, so you can always read up on your rights and duties.



## 2. Registration and Changes of Address

*To continue receiving important official documents in your new apartment, the following steps are very important. Unfortunately, failure to inform the appropriate offices of your change of address could lead to severe consequences and fines.*

### Public Authorities and Changes of Address

Please inform in writing all public authorities that are responsible for you of your changed address. Authorities include the Bürgerbüros (to change the address on your ID card and your car registration), the social service department (Sozialamt) and housing office (Wohnungsamt) / the youth welfare office (Jugendamt), the Jobcenter and inland revenue (Finanzamt).

Many believe that changing your address with social-services and the housing office is sufficient, and that other offices are automatically informed of the changed address. This is not the case. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to inform all relevant offices of any change in address.

### Change of address with other institutions (banks etc.)

You also have to inform your bank of your new address. If your bank has a location close to your new apartment, you have the option of moving your account to the new location.



Some further examples of places that may require you to notify them of a change in address: Kindergartens and schools, your employer, lawyers, voluntary associations etc.

### Insurance companies

Please inform all your insurers of your change in address. Possible insurance you may have include your health insurance (Krankenkasse), liability insurance (Haftpflichtversicherung) and car insurance (Kfz-Versicherung).

### Other contracts

If you have internet or phone contracts, you may also have to change these to your new location.



### Forwarding requests with the postal service

You can request a forwarding request at any office of the Deutsche Post or online. This has the advantage that any mail that is sent to your old address is automatically forwarded to your new address. Unfortunately, this service is **not** free. For 6 month, this service costs 15,20 Euro, for 12 month, it costs 25,20 Euro.

## 3. Registrations



### Electricity

Please register with an electricity provider. For this registration you will require the electricity meter readings that your landlord has noted down in the handover-certificate.



### Gebühreneinzugszentrale (GEZ)-TV license fee collectors

You must register with and pay license fees to the GEZ if you have any of the following items: A radio, a television, a PC or a cellphone capable of accessing the

internet. If you are collecting social services from a Jobcenter or the social securities office, you may be eligible for an exemption. However, you must still register with the GEZ. You can register with the GEZ at the registration office (Bürgerbüros). You will receive your exemption together with your notification of approval from the social securities office or the jobcenter.



### Household and Liability insurance

We recommend that you get household insurance for your new apartment. This insurance protects you in case of fires, water damage or burglary and replaces items in your apartment (for example electronics, furniture and clothes). Liability insurance covers damages and fines for third parties, for example, if you were to damage the property of your neighbors.



### 4. Problems with the Flat

If there are any problems, for example damages in the flat or the public areas, please contact the landlord with a friendly request for assistance. Your lease should contain the address of your landlord.



### 5. Moving again

Please remember to observe the cancellation periods for the lease, as well as for telephone, television and internet connections. Generally, cancellation periods require 3 months advance notice. You can find these in the contracts with the respective providers.

If you are receiving support from the job center, the social securities office or the housing office, please contact them for possible support with rent and moving costs.

However, if you have exceptional leave to remain in Germany (**DULDUNG**), you must first receive permission from the Ausländerbehörde.

## 6. House Rules – Rules you should be aware of

*In many countries, there are no house rules. However, in Germany, following these rules is very important for a harmonious relationship with your neighbours. You should receive the house rules together with your lease. Here are some common house rules.*



### Noise:

- Do not listen to music or the television too loudly. (In general, radio and television should only be listened to at low volume)
- During daily rest times (between 13:00 and 15:00 and between 22:00 and 7:00), please refrain from loud activities in your apartment (for example, vacuuming, hammering nails or practicing music)
- Similarly, on Sundays and public holidays, please refrain from loud activities.
- If you want to have a party or a gathering of several visitors that continue past 22:00, you should ask your neighbors for permission and inform them.



### Please keep public areas clean:

- Every tenant should make sure that hallways, cellars and, if present, attics, yards etc. are kept clean. In some apartment buildings, cleaning is conducted by a cleaning firm. The resulting costs are split between all tenants. If tenants are responsible for cleaning public areas, the landlord should provide a cleaning plan. Please ask your landlord or the neighbors which rules apply in your particular building.

In Germany, recycling is very important. It protects the environment and reduces the cost of garbage disposal.

- Garbage should be sorted into the appropriate trash bin.  
There are four possible bins.
  - black bin for general trash
  - yellow bin for plastic
  - brown bin for compost (food etc.)
  - blue bin for paper and cardboard
- Please make sure to always close the lids, to reduce smells.



### Please maintain safety:

- Please do not store anything in the public hallways, to reduce the risk of accidents. Otherwise, you may be liable for damages in case of injuries.
- Please lock the doors to the apartment buildings at night, so that non-tenants cannot gain access to the building.
- To reduce the risk of fires, barbecues on balconies and in the yard are forbidden. Similarly, smoking in public areas such as hallways, cellars or attics is not allowed.



### Antennas:

If you want to receive televisions via satellite, you will need written permission from the landlord to install the satellite dish. This is necessary, since the installation will damage the property of the landlord.

### Keeping pets:

You may only keep pets (such as dogs, cats or exotic animals) if you have the permission of your landlord.



## 7. Conserving Energy



### Windows and heating

- Please air out the apartment several times a day. When you open the window, please turn down your heating to the „Frostschutz“ setting (indicated by the star symbol). Please open your windows completely, since partially opened window may lead to mold.
- Every room in the apartment should be heated equally. Even rooms that are not used frequently should not be colder than 15 degrees Celsius. Only a uniform distribution of heat saves energy.



### Water

- Showering conserves more water than taking a bath.
- Do not let the faucet run continuously while you brush your teeth or shave.
- Washing the dishes under running water wastes a lot of water. Fill up the sink and wash the dishes in the sink instead.
- Don't thaw frozen foods under running water.



### Electricity

- Please only switch on the lights in rooms that you are currently occupying. If possible, use energy saving light bulbs.
- Switch off electronics completely (e.g. televisions, radios, computers or stereos). Do not put them into standby mode. Switchable power boards or switchable sockets are very useful for this purpose.
- Energy in Germany is very expensive and should be conserved. There are different methods to measure your energy consumption. If you consume more energy than expected, you may have to pay extra charges. Even if you are receiving support from the social securities office, you will have to pay these fees yourself.

## Where can I get help?

### Support for Migrants

Caritasverband für das Bistum Magdeburg e.V.  
Karl-Schmidt-Str. 5c  
39104 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/408 05 14 oder 408 05 15

### Arbeiterwohlfahrt e.V.

Thiemstr. 12  
39104 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/406 80 33

### Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband

Johannes-R.-Becher-Str. 57  
39128 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/562 97 15

### Internationaler Bund für Sozialarbeit e.V.

Walther-Rathenau-Str. 30  
39106 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/739 10 89

### Household Effects

AQB gGmbH  
Morgenstr. 10  
39124 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/72 72 60

### GISE

Karl-Schmidt-Str. 45  
39104 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/409 51 07

### Caritasverband für das Dekanat Magdeburg e.V.

Bruno-Beye-Ring 8/10  
39130 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/584 44 33

### Apartments

WOBAU-Wohnungsbörse  
Krügerbrücke 2  
39104 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/610 42 00

### Rent or Utilities debt relief

Sozial- und Wohnungsamt Magdeburg  
Wilhelm-Höpfner-Ring 4  
39116 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/540 34 08

### Support for moving fees

Jobcenter Landeshauptstadt Magdeburg  
Otto-von-Guericke-Str. 12a  
39104 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/562 17 77

### Sozial- und Wohnungsamt Magdeburg

Wilhelm-Höpfner-Ring 4  
39116 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/540 36 72

### General Information

Verbraucherzentrale Magdeburg  
Breiter Weg 32  
39104 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/543 99 79

### Mieterschutzbund Magdeburg

Otto-v.-Guericke-Straße 6  
39104 Magdeburg  
Tel. 0391/561 91 55 oder 541 01 09  
E-Mail: [info@mvmd.de](mailto:info@mvmd.de)