

Germany - OVERVIEW

Updated: May 5, 2014



Country Name Long Form: Federal Republic of Germany

Government Type: Federal Republic

Languages Spoken: German and regional languages under the European Charter

National Flag



Germany is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Germany					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at MEDUIM in Germany

Germany is politically stable; all governments since the Second World War have come to power peacefully and since 1990 democratically.

Many well-planned and publicized demonstrations protesting government policies draw thousands of participants, and in spontaneous demonstrations concerns education and other economic and social issues occur almost daily.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as MEDIUM

Several international terrorist groups that target United States government personnel and interests have a presence and operate in Germany, including al-Qa'ida, Islamic Jihad Union, and Kongra Gel (former Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK). While not only a Germany-specific concern, the large

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number of official United States government personnel creates a significant potential target for terrorist groups. Additionally, continued government reporting reiterates the growing concern for the expanding international and indigenous radical Islamist presence within Germany's borders. Interior Ministry officials estimate that there are over 1000 residents who can be described as Islamist extremists, some of whom attended terror training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Terrorists may elect to use a variety of means and weapons to target both official and private interests. U.S. citizens are reminded of the potential for terrorist attacks against public transportation systems and other tourist infrastructures and should take every precaution to be aware of their surroundings and to adopt appropriate safety measures to protect themselves when traveling.

The U.S. continues to work closely with European allies on the threat from international terrorism, including al-Qa'ida. Information is routinely shared between the U.S. and its key partners in order to disrupt terrorist plotting, identify and take action against potential operatives, and strengthen defense against potential threats. German authorities continue to investigate extremist groups, deport or arrest individuals considered dangerous, and conduct raids on suspected groups throughout the country.

RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Germany a score of 78, indicating that the country has low levels of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in the public sector, with the least corrupt countries receiving a maximum score of 100.

CRIME

Crime is assessed as MEDIUM

Most criminal offences recorded are of petty nature, such as pickpocketing, mugging and bag-snatching. Crime levels are highest in the cities; ones that report relatively high levels of recorded crime include the capital, Berlin, as well as Bremen, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Magdeburg. Violent crime is fairly rare across Germany.

U.S. tourists and expatriates are infrequent victims of crime. Occasionally, Americans have purses snatched and pockets picked in high traffic areas (e.g., in train stations, Internet cafes, crowded restaurants and outdoor market places), but violent crimes against Americans are rare. And while personal assaults do occur, there is no reason to believe such crimes are driven by anti-American sentiment. Rather, these and other crimes are normally the result of opportunity and convenience.

KIDNAPPING

The risk of kidnapping in Germany is relatively low. However, several cases of kidnapping for ransom of wealthy German businessmen or their family members have been reported. High profile expatriate executives should be aware of this threat.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

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There have been reported incidents of harassment and sexual assault to expatriate women. Rape is perceived to be fully enforced.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Avalanches and accidents involving mountaineers and winter sports' enthusiasts occur occasionally in the mountainous Alpine areas in the far south of the country. Sporadic flooding, including flash floods in summer months, has caused casualties and damage in recent years in several parts of Germany.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Police assistance throughout Germany is excellent.
- Be alert at open markets or crowded areas.
- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking or driving in Germany
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and to not make any sudden movements.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

Important Contact Details:

International Dialing Code: 49

International Dialing Prefix: 00

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Victims of crime in Germany should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:

POLICE: The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in Germany is 110

FIRE DEPARTMENT: 112

AMBULANCE: 112

Note: Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- The infrastructure of Germany is modern and reliable.
- Public transportation is easily accessible and reliable in all metropolitan areas.
- The supply of basic amenities, such as power and water are reliable across all regions.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No walking around after dark.

HEALTH

The standard of medical facilities and care is generally excellent countrywide. Most medical personnel have a good knowledge of the English language. Emergency treatment is free for travelers but doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for any other medical service from those that have no permanent address in Germany.

- Unpasteurized dairy products should be avoided if possible; unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to Germany:

- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Tick-borne encephalitis (recommended for travelers visiting forested areas)

It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

Significant Diseases –

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Tick-borne Encephalitis – A viral infection spread to humans by the bite of a tick. This is a risk between March and November each year, especially in the states of Bavaria and Baden-Wurttemberg in the south, as well as in Thuringen and Hessen.

HOSPITALS –Germany

AUGENKLINIK BERLIN-MARZAHN
Brebacher Weg 15
Berlin Germany 12683
Phone: +49 30 56 8400

BUNDESWEHRKRANKENHAUS BERLIN
Scharnhorststrasse 13
Berlin Germany 10115
Phone: +49 30 28410

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

The US Embassy Berlin

Clayallee 170
14191 Berlin
Tel: +49 (0) 30 83050
Fax: +49 (0) 8305 1215
Email: acsberlin@state.gov

USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.