



Rental Lease

Before moving into an apartment you usually set up a rental lease with your future landlord. By signing it you enter into a legally binding agreement and should therefore read it carefully before signing, including the fine print. Purely verbal rental agreements are rather uncommon in Germany.

The lease should include the following information: basic monthly rental charge not including monthly additional costs such as garbage removal, water, taxes and, in some cases, heat and hot water (*Kaltniete*), monthly additional costs (*Nebenkosten*), starting date and duration of the rental period (in the case of fixed-term leases), term of notice for open-ended contracts (usually 3 months), the tenant's rights of use (basement, common areas, garden etc.), possible obligatory renovations before moving out (professional carpet cleaning, painting etc). Any existing deficiencies in the flat should also be noted so that you will not be held responsible when moving out. According to German legislation, it is permissible to keep small pets (guinea pigs, caged birds, rabbits and hamsters), cats or dogs, you should discuss it with your landlord in advance.

Some landlords will agree to terminate the tenancy before the term of notice runs out if you are able to provide a new tenant in time. If anything in your lease strikes you as strange or unusual, do not hesitate to consult the Heidelberg Tenants Association (*Mieterverein Heidelberg*) or the Welcome Centre at Heidelberg University.

Deposit

It is common in Germany for the landlord to ask for 1 or 2 months' rent as a security deposit. The money is put in a savings account for you and is paid back in full when you move out unless you have caused any damage in the apartment or have not fully paid your rent. The maximum permissible deposit is three months' rent. Before moving in you usually fix an appointment with your landlord to receive the keys.

The Heidelberg Tenants Association (*Mieterverein Heidelberg*) is an organization that safeguards the interests of tenants and also offers support in tenancy matters:

- Mieterverein Heidelberg
Poststraße 46
D-69115 Heidelberg
Tel: (06221) 20 473
<http://www.mieterverein-heidelberg.de>

You can find the **rent index** of Heidelberg on the German website of the city of Heidelberg: http://www.heidelberg.de/hd_Lde/HD/Leben/Mietspiegel.html or you can get it at the Heidelberg Administration Offices (*Bürgerämter*) and the Tenants Association Heidelberg.

Please note:

Don't transfer any money before you have seen the accommodation or been in contact with the landlord. Be careful with landlords who apparently live abroad and therefore ask you to transfer money for example via Western Union or MoneyGram. It is always best to visit accommodation and meet the landlord in person. In case of serious doubt, it is better to refrain from the offer. If you are insecure about an offer, please contact us.