THE PRACTICAL GUIDE

ImmoWissen
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FINDING & RENTING AN APARTMENT IN GERMANY

Your practical guide to a successful apartment search

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Before you start: important notices

NO LEGAL ADVICE

This book provides general information on finding an apartment and on tenancy law in Germany. It is no substitute for individual legal advice. Before making decisions with legal consequences, for example before signing a lease, after receiving a notice of termination or in a dispute with your landlord, consult a tenants' association (*Mieterverein*) or a lawyer specialising in tenancy law.

German law only

This book describes German law and the German property market. It says nothing about the law of any other country. German legal terms and quoted German documents are deliberately kept in German. Only the official German legal texts are legally binding.

Legal status and currency

Laws, case law, tax rates, thresholds and funding programmes change constantly. All information reflects the legal status as of **October 2026** and was carefully researched. Later changes are not taken into account. Check figures, deadlines and amounts for their current validity before relying on them. Legal sources by chapter are listed at the end of the book.

Case law and disputed questions

Court decisions cited in this book each concern a specific case. Other courts may decide differently where the facts or the legal view differ. Where the legal position is not finally settled, a view other than the one presented here may also be tenable.

Sample calculations, templates and checklists

Sample calculations are simplified: figures as of the legal status stated, without solidarity surcharge, church tax or personal circumstances – a tax advisor calculates your own case. Sample letters and checklists are drafting aids: adapt them to your situation before using them.

Liability

The content was created and checked to the best of the publisher's knowledge. No guarantee is given for its accuracy, completeness or currency. Liability for intent and gross negligence and for injury to life, body or health remains unaffected.

Links to websites

Where this book refers to third-party websites, their operators alone are responsible for their content. No legal violations were apparent at the time the references were included.

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CHAPTER 1

The Application Folder – Structure, Order, and the 10-Second Impression

1. What Goes Through a Landlord's Mind

When a landlord publishes a listing, hundreds of applications can arrive within a few hours. On average, each one gets only a few seconds of attention – **the landlord isn't deciding who earns the most, but who promises the least stress.**

A landlord's biggest fear isn't a tenant who occasionally plays loud music. It's lost rent, trouble with neighbors, drawn-out legal disputes, and a damaged apartment. That's why every application has to send two signals from the very first second: security and ease.

> **PRACTICAL TIP**
> Disorganized PDFs, blurry phone photos of documents, or three-line messages like "Is the apartment still available?" almost always land straight in the trash. Structure your folder so it takes all the work off the landlord's hands.

2. The Cover Sheet – Your 10-Second Ace

The most important page in your folder is the first one. The landlord shouldn't have to search on page eight to find out what you do for a living or how much you earn – all the key facts belong summarized at a single glance.

- **Photo:** A friendly, professional portrait with good lighting and a smile – not a party photo or a passport photo.
- **Key facts in a box:** First and last name, age, occupation, employer, monthly net income, number of people and pets moving in, earliest possible move-in date.
- **The security sentence:** One concise closing sentence, for example: "Permanent employment contract for four years, spotless *Schufa* (Germany's main credit bureau) record, non-smoker, no pets."

3. The Five Mandatory Attachments, in the Right Order

After the cover sheet come the supporting documents – all combined into a single, cleanly named PDF file, never as loose individual files. A sensible file name: Application_FirstName_LastName_SampleStreet12.pdf.

1. The fully completed *Mieterselbstauskunft* (tenant self-disclosure form).
2. Proof of income: your last three payslips, or for the self-employed, the most recent tax assessment or a BWA (business analysis). Redact confidential data like health-insurance or personnel numbers, but leave the net income readable.
3. A current *Schufa-Auskunft* (credit report), no more than three months old – exclusively the official version intended for disclosure to third parties.
4. A *Mietschuldenfreiheitsbescheinigung* (certificate from your previous landlord confirming you have no rent arrears) – the strongest proof of trustworthiness. The landlord is not obliged to issue one; otherwise bank statements or a receipt for your rent payments will help.
5. Your ID card or passport does not belong in the folder as a copy: showing it at the viewing or contract appointment is enough. According to the German data protection authorities, a landlord may not demand a copy of your ID.

4. When Your Profile Isn't Perfect

Students, people starting their careers, or those still in a probationary period have a secret weapon: a personal cover letter combined with a guarantee. If you don't tick every financial box, you need to offer human likability and extra security instead.

[ ] **Personal note:** 3–4 sentences right after the cover sheet: why this apartment specifically, why you'd be a reliable tenant.

[ ] **Parental guarantee:** For apprentices, students, or those starting their careers, add this as an extra attachment – including proof of your parents' income.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
>
> A single PDF file, no more than five to eight megabytes (to avoid spam-filter issues). Save it on your phone and in the cloud – and send it within the first five minutes after a suitable listing goes live. Anyone this prepared outshines most competitors, even ones who earn more.

E N D O F S A M P L E

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The complete e-book: 85 chapters, 219 pages, 2026/2027 edition.

Available at immowissen-kompakt.de/en/