

A Quick Introduction to German Traffic Tickets

Germany is one of a few remaining countries without a general speed limit on some of its Autobahns. It is, however, also a country with many specific and frequently changing speed limits and many other strictly supervised traffic rules; tailgating, driving under the influence, and even simple parking violations can cause significant frustration. As always, the best option is: Know and obey the rules! In case you get caught and receive a ticket, here's some basic information regarding the ticket process.

**There are two main types of documents punishing traffic violations –
Penalty Orders (Traffic Tickets) and Warnings.**

Warning **Verwarnung**

Not a warning in the traditional sense, this is a fine tied to a minor infraction.

- ▶ Fine less than **55€**. May be collected on the spot (get a receipt!)
- ▶ Citation may be put on your windshield or send by mail
- ▶ If sent by mail, the warning will usually come through your unit (commander or supervisor) or to your private APO Address
- ▶ Must be paid or "appealed" **within 1 week!**
- ▶ No formal service of process necessary. Issuing authority does **not** have to show that the warning reached you
- ▶ Unpaid warnings convert to penalty orders
- ▶ When making payment, be sure to include the Case File #(*Aktenzeichen*)

Questionnaire **Anhorung**

Before a traffic ticket you may receive a questionnaire.

- ▶ Intended to provide the addressee a chance to respond to the allegation
- ▶ Looks very similar to Traffic Ticket but contains no fine - only a description of the incident
- ▶ Addressed to registered owner of the vehicle unless German authority already determine that owner was not the driver
- ▶ Similar to a Warning, these are sent via mail either through the unit or to a private address
- ▶ You are not required to make a statement, it is purely voluntary
- ▶ If you make a statement, include date/place of birth and date and sign the form
- ▶ You may respond in English
- ▶ If no response is received, a traffic ticket will be issued

Penalty Order /Traffic Tickets **Bußgeldbescheid**

- ▶ Initial fine of **55€** or more or for an unpaid warning ticket and will include **25€** administrative fee on top of fine+ costs of proceedings as applicable.
- ▶ Subject has opportunity to respond to alleged traffic violation either at scene or via questionnaire
- ▶ Must be formally served (normally through chain of command or JAG)
- ▶ Payment within **2 weeks** of service unless protested, include Case File# (*Aktenzeichen*)
- ▶ You have the right to "Appeal" these tickets. Protest must be in writing and received by the issuing authority **within 2 weeks** of service.
- ▶ If protest denied, the traffic ticket goes to Court. If convicted in Court higher fine possible as well as Court Costs
- ▶ Unpaid traffic tickets are enforced through German bailiff with additional costs. Court may order jail time in certain circumstances.

Always keep in mind when driving in Germany; you are subject to all German driving laws and rules. You should never disregard a notice or ticket simply because you do not understand what it is. Failure to speak the language or not know what to do is never a valid reason. If you are unsure how to proceed, please ask for assistance

An unpaid ticket will become more expensive consuming if you do nothing!