Client Services & Policy Division

Legal Assistance Office

GERMAN TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

In Germany, it is very unlikely to receive a fine for a traffic violation on the spot. Most violations (*i.e.* speeding, following too close, running a red light) are recorded by camera. The initial notification for the traffic ticket is served by mail.

First Notification. The first notification that is send out, about two to three weeks after the incident happened, is a questionnaire [*Anhörung*] explaining the alleged violation and asking you to give a statement, which is completely voluntary. This notification is sent to your APO mailbox. The questionnaire normally includes a photo, but it does not contain a fine, unless it is considered a minor violation with an expected fine of not more than 55 EUR.

If the expected fine is not more than 55 EUR, you can settle and close the case without the official fine proceeding. All you must do to settle and close the case is accept and pay the suggested warning fee [*Verwarnung mit Verwarnungsgeld / Anhörung]* **within one week** after you receive the notification.

Administrative Fine Order. If the expected fine is more than 55 EUR or if you did not pay the suggested warning fee, the authorities will start the official fine proceeding and issue an administrative fine order [Bußgeldbescheid]. As this fine order needs to be officially served, you will receive it from the military legal liaison, who can either send it through your chain of command (commander/supervisor) or email it to you. The administrative fine order automatically includes an additional 25 EUR processing fee, which should not be confused with a late fee.

Once you receive the administrative fine order, you must either pay the fine or file an objection. An objection needs to be received by the issuing authority **within two weeks** from the date of receipt. It must be in writing, and it cannot be filed by email. The issuing authority must reassess their decision. They can either drop the charges or adhere to the fine. If they decide to continue, they will ask you to drop the objection, otherwise they will transfer the case to the prosecutor who could forward it to the local court and a judge would have to decide in a court hearing.

As a court hearing would cause additional fees, you should only file an appeal if you have a reasonable defense. Not being the driver is a valid reason, while not being aware of the speed limit or simply missing a traffic sign is usually *not* a strong defense. The statute of limitations can sometimes be a legitimate reason for an objection. However, as of 1 July 2026, the statute of limitations is now six months (previously it was only three months). And you should be aware that the six months' period restarts on the day on which they send out the first notification, no matter whether you received the questionnaire or not.

Paying Your Fine. To pay a fine, you must transfer the requested amount to their bank account. The IBAN is mentioned on the ticket. Do not forget to put the case number on the reference line.

Mr. Holger Blug, Host Nation Attorney Advisor, Luzie Wohlfart, Host Nation Paralegal, KLSC, August 2026

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1. Why is my ticket routed through the legal office?

U.S. military affiliates are bound to adhere to German traffic laws. Offenses against German traffic laws committed by U.S. military affiliates will, as a result, get legitimately fined by German administrative offices. While German nationals receive their fines at their registered home address, U.S. military members do not. For security reasons, records of U.S. military affiliates' home addresses are not accessible to non-military instances, including German offices of public administration.

Due to a standing legal agreement between German authorities and the U.S. military, your fine notice must be served through the military legal liaison office. The fine notice must be officially served because the German authorities need to know the exact date on which you receive it. This is important to determine the deadline for the two-week appeal period and it is also important to determine whether the ticket was already expired due to the statute of limitation at the time you received it.

2. What does the Legal office do with my ticket?

The liaison office receives the ticket and determines which unit / office the offender works for. Then, the liaison office routes the ticket through the internal military command structures so that it ultimately reaches the offender. Commanders and supervisors of the offender are obliged to officially timely serve the fine notices to the offender on behalf of the Host Nation's public authorities. The service to you is confirmed with a signature by the commander or supervisor on a service certificate. This certification will stand as proof in front of the Host Nation judicial system that you have been served and are, as a result, mandated to pay the fine.

3. I received a German ticket letter in my APO or from my commander. What now?

First, you should try to determine what type of letter you received, as it could either be a first notification/questionnaire [*Anhörung*] just asking you to give a statement, or the actual administrative fine notice [*Bußgeldbescheid*] (a.k.a. "the ticket") asking you to pay a fine.

The questionnaire [*Anhörung*] is the first notification, which the German ticket authorities [*Bußgeldbehörde*] always send out to the offender or the registered owner of the vehicle around 3-4 weeks after the incident happened, and before they issue the actual ticket. It usually, but not always, has a photo of the driver on it. The purpose of the questionnaire is to notify you of the traffic offense and to offer you the opportunity to state that someone else was driving the vehicle or provide any other reasonable justification or defense.

A. If you received a first notification, it could be a "questionnaire for the offender" [*Beschuldigtenanhörung*] asking you to admit or deny the offense. If the picture shows you, your spouse, or your child, you have the right to refuse to testify in either case, as you do not have to blame close family members.

B. Otherwise, you may have received a questionnaire "for a witness" [*Zeugenanhörung*], if the authorities already know that the person who they are sending the letter to is not the driver and they are asking you as the registered owner to identify (name and address) who was driving your vehicle when the offense was committed.

To respond to the German ticket authorities, you can use the QR code (which might not always work), you can fill out and return the form they provided by mail, or you can just send them an email.

A few weeks later, if the authorities did not receive a response, they will proceed and issue the administrative fine notice/ticket [*Bußgeldbescheid*]. Please note that the fine notice will not have a photo, as this was already put on the questionnaire (see above).

4. Warning fees on questionnaires: What are they and who receives them?

When the authorities send you the questionnaire and they consider it a "minor" offense (expected fine not more than 55 EUR), they are offering to settle the case by paying a so-called warning fee [*Verwarnung*]. The warning fee is the same amount as the fine. The purpose of the warning fee is to avoid the official fine proceeding, which means they will not issue a fine notice or additional processing fees, if you pay the warning fee in time.

5. How is my fine amount calculated?

German fine amounts are based on an official Catalog of Fines [*Bußgeldkatalog*]. Here are the current fines for speeding. Others can be found at www.bussgeldkatalog.org.

	(In town)			(Outside town)		
Exceeded Speed Limit	Standard rate	Points in the German system	License Suspension	Standard rate	Points in the German system	License Suspension
up to 10 km/h	30 €*	-	-	20 €*	-	-
11-15 km/h	50 €*	-	-	40 €*	-	-
16-20 km/h	70 €	-	-	60 €	-	-
21-25 km/h	115 €	1 point		100 €	1 point	-
26-30 km/h	180 €	1 point	1 month**	150 €	1 point	1 month**
31-40 km/h	260 €	2 points	1 month	200 €	1 point	1 month**
41-50 km/h	400 €	2 points	1 month	320 €	2 points	1 month
51-60 km/h	560 €	2 points	2 months	480 €	2 points	1 month
61-70 km/h	700 €	2 points	3 months	600 €	2 points	2 months
above 70 km/h	800 €	2 points	3 months	700 €	2 points	3 months

(*) up to 55 EUR can be charged as a warning fee (without the additional 25 EUR admin fee), but must usually be accepted and paid within one week
(**) there will only be a suspension, if this is the 2nd offense driving more than 25 km/h over the limit within the past 12 months

There will also be an additional processing fee [*Bearbeitungsgebühr*] of 25 EUR which is automatically added to the fine amount. This is not considered a late fee and cannot be waived. Sometimes there is an additional 3.50 EUR for postage.

6. The fine I received is higher than what it should be according to the chart. Why?

The fine catalog provides the amount for a negligent violation of the traffic rules. However, if the German fine authorities believe that the violation was done intentionally, or on purpose, they can increase the fine accordingly. This will be noted on the ticket. Very often they just double the fine amount. Intentionality is usually considered if you are more than 40% over the posted speed limit, as the argument is that you must have realized the excessive speed due to the loud noise from the engine and the landscape to your left and to your right rolling by very fast.

7. Why do I receive questionnaires in my APO mailbox but not the tickets?

The questionnaire, which might include a warning fee, is always sent to your APO, rather than your residence, as this is the only information the German ticket authorities receive from US Military Forces Registry of Motor Vehicle (RMV), when they request information based on your license plate. The fine notice will not be sent to your APO as it must be officially served upon you and thus, it cannot just be mailed. *See, FAQ 1 & 2 above*.

8. Is the ticket I received expired?

The statute of limitation is six months, which means the authorities must serve the ticket on the offender within a six months period after the incident occurred. However, this six months period restarts on the day on which the first notification/questionnaire to the offender is sent out. If they are not able to serve the ticket or send out the questionnaire to the offender within the six months period, the ticket is expired. If this is your situation, you may want to file an appeal and get a confirmation letter stating the case is closed. *See FAQ 9 below*.

However, if the authorities sent out the questionnaire within the six months period, a new six months period starts. It does not matter if you received the notification or not. As a result, the time between the offense date and receiving a non-expired ticket can be as long as 12 months.

There is one exception, if the ticket was received within two weeks after it was issued. That means it can technically be 6 months and two weeks before a ticket expires.

9. How do I file an appeal against my ticket?

An appeal must be filed in writing. Please understand that the appeal letter needs to be received by the German ticket authorities within two weeks after the administrative fine notice was served upon you. Just sending them an email is not sufficient.

10. Why did I not get my ticket faster?

The German ticket authority cannot send you the ticket directly. They must send it to the military legal liaison, who will have to contact your command to get the ticket served on you. Due to slow mail service, absence for sick leave, regular leave, TDY or other missions, as well as other administrative challenges, it can take a little longer to receive the ticket, especially when there are several different agencies involved.

11. Do I have to come in and pick up a paper copy?

As you consented to electronic service of process of traffic tickets in according with AER 190-1, (para 2-11 f), there is no need to go and pick up a paper copy.

12. How do I pay my ticket?

Tickets are paid via International Bank Account Number (IBAN) transfer. Make sure to include the case number as reference. If you are unsure how to pay this ticket, you can take it to your bank. They are familiar with German traffic tickets and can assist you with making the payment.

Mr. Holger Blug, Host Nation Attorney Advisor, Luzie Wohlfart, Host Nation Paralegal, KLSC, August 2026

13. I paid my ticket. Do I need the receipt?

You are always well advised to keep a transaction receipt. If there is a discrepancy with the payment, the burden of proof of payment is on you.

14. I paid the warning fee from the questionnaire, but I still received a ticket.

The warning fee needs to be paid within one week after you received the questionnaire and the corresponding offer. However, since this can take some time, as it is sent to your APO, or sometimes you do not even receive the questionnaire, the German ticket authorities might already have proceeded and issued the fine notice by the time you paid the warning fee. If so, your payment will, of course, be considered, which means you would only have to pay the additional processing fee [*Bearbeitungsgebühr*], which is normally 25 EUR. Under certain circumstances you might even be able to make them waive the processing fee, if you can explain and prove it was not your fault that the warning fee has not been paid in time.

15. Why am I getting a ticket from the Kaiserslautern office when I am not stationed in the area?

Every geographical location falls under one specific German administrative office that will issue tickets for offenses committed within this set district. The German administrative office in charge of the offense location will send the ticket batches to the U.S. liaison office that is the closest to them. This liaison office will initiate ticket service to you, no matter where in Germany you are regularly stationed.

16. Can I avoid the suspension and just pay a higher fine?

The suspension is a standard sanction that shall penalize in cases of gross and severe violations and that shall serve as a punishment with an educational effect. Therefore, a suspension should always be implemented and enforced, unless there is an absolute hardship. The requirements are very strict. You will have to convince them that your economic existence is put at risk or that your personal situation absolutely requires you to drive. To serve the suspension, they suggest adequate work organization and vacation planning, public transportation and help from friends or relatives. It just being an inconvenience is not sufficient. However, even if you are able to convince them that serving the suspension would cause you an absolute hardship, you will definitely have to pay a higher fine, which can be double or triple the original amount.