

More information about Laws and Rules in Germany

[Straßenverkehrs-Ordnung \(StVO\)](#) and [verkehrsportal.de](#) (in German)

[Laws concerning bikeways](#) (in English and German)

[German Bicycle Laws](#) (in English)

[European Commission - Road Safety - Special regulations for pedestrians and cyclists](#) (in English)

Rules of the Road

Germany (as with many continental countries) has slightly different road rules than the United Kingdom. Drivers from even further afield (e.g. Australia) will find many signs confusing and should research thoroughly before getting behind the wheel.

The major things to note are:

- **Pedestrians:** often pedestrians are shown a 'green man' symbol allowing them to cross (it is illegal to do so when the 'red man' is lit) even though traffic may be turning into their road. If you are turning right or left and there are pedestrians on or entering the road, you **must** stop and allow them to cross before proceeding.
- **Vorfahrt Rechts:** unless you see a sign to the contrary (yellow diamond with a white border) you **must** give way to any vehicle entering your road from the right. In practice this only applies to minor side roads, since all major roads are signposted to indicate priority. But this makes it even more difficult to remember since you will come across it less often. What it means is that even if your road feels like it is the bigger one, if it is not marked, you need to give way to anything on your right-hand-side (even cycles). Accordingly, everything to your left will give way to you, even if you are only on a cycle.
- **Lane discipline:** in towns and cities, you can overtake on either the left or the right on multi-lane roads, and expect other drivers to do likewise.
- **Speed limits:** 50km/h within city limits unless otherwise stated.
- **Trams:** these often stop in the centre of the road even though the passengers are waiting at the side of the road. Cars **must** stop and allow them to board and others to alight safely. Once this has happened, you may proceed with caution (although it's best to wait until the tram's doors have closed).
- **Right on red:** (particularly in the former East). If the traffic lights are fitted with a painted green right arrow, you are allowed to turn right on a red light if it is clear, provided you come to a complete stop first.