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Betriebsrat — Works Council in the Company

A Betriebsrat is an employee-elected works council that represents workers' interests and has co-determination rights on workplace matters. It can be established in companies with at least 5 employees through democratic elections.

Deutsche Begriffe: Betriebsrat | Betriebsversammlung | Betriebsvereinbarung | Mitbestimmung | Betriebsratswahl

What is a Betriebsrat?

Betriebsrat (works council) is a body of representatives elected by employees to represent their interests to the employer.

When can it be established?

- Company has **minimum 5 permanent employees**
- At least 3 employees must be eligible (>6 months in company)

How many people in the council?

Employees	Council Members
5-20	1 person
21-50	3 people
51-100	5 people
101-200	7 people
201-400	9 people

What does Betriebsrat do?

Has co-determination on:

- Working hours (schedule, breaks, overtime)
- Leave (vacation planning)
- Work regulations
- Dismissals (must be informed)
- Hiring new employees
- Training

Protects workers:

- During dismissals
- When work conditions change
- Against discrimination

How to establish Betriebsrat?

- 1. Gather 3+ interested employees**
- 2. Call a meeting** — announce it in the company
- 3. Select an electoral committee** (Wahlvorstand)
- 4. Conduct elections** — secret ballot
- 5. Announce results**

Protection of council members

- **Cannot be dismissed** (special legal protection)
- Time spent on council activities is paid
- Employer must provide workspace

When should you contact Betriebsrat?

- Problems with supervisor
- Unfair treatment
- Questions about worker rights
- Planned layoffs in company

- Changes in work organization

Your rights

As an employee you can:

- Vote in elections (after 3 months in company)
- Candidate (after 6 months)
- Consult with council during work hours

Editorial hamboorg.city · As of: April 2026 · Carefully prepared, regularly updated.
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