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Finding a Handwerker — Tips for Repairs and Renovations

How to find a reliable Handwerker in Germany: portals, cost estimates, rights, and typical prices.

Deutsche Begriffe: Handwerker | Meisterbetrieb | Kostenvoranschlag | Handwerkskammer | Gewährleistung

Why hire a Handwerker?

In Germany, many types of work are subject to **Meisterpflicht** — certain trades can only be performed by qualified Meisterbetrieb. This includes, for example, electrical installations, gas and water work, and chimney sweep services.

As a tenant, you should always inform your **landlord** of major repairs and obtain written consent. Many repairs are the landlord's responsibility (§ 535 BGB).

Where to find a Handwerker?

Online Portals

- **MyHammer** (myhammer.de) — Germany's largest Handwerker portal. You describe the job, Handwerker submit offers.
- **Check24 Handwerker** — price comparison and reviews
- **Gelbe Seiten** (gelbeseiten.de) — classic trade directory, also online
- **Google Maps** — read reviews, search "Handwerker nearby"

Recommendations

- **Ask neighbors and friends** — personal recommendations are often most reliable
- **Building management** — usually has a list of proven companies

- **Handwerkskammer** (hwk.de) — official Handwerker search by trade and postal code

What types of Handwerker are there?

| Trade | Typical Work |
|----------------------------|--|
| Electrician | Outlets, circuit breaker, lamps |
| Plumber / Installer | Pipes, faucet, toilet, heating |
| Painter | Painting walls, wallpapering |
| Carpenter / Joiner | Doors, built-in cabinets, furniture repair |
| Tile Layer | Bathroom and kitchen tiles |
| Locksmith | Door opening, lock replacement |
| Roofer | Roof work, rain gutter |
| Plumbing | Bathroom installation, drainage |

The Kostenvoranschlag (Cost Estimate)

Before placing an order, you should always request a **Kostenvoranschlag** (KVA) — preferably from 2-3 companies.

What must the KVA contain?

- Detailed **description of work**
- **Material costs** (itemized)
- **Labor hours** and hourly rate
- **Travel expenses**
- **VAT** (19%)
- **Validity period** of the offer

Is the KVA free?

- Generally **yes**, if you ask
- Some companies charge a fee (must be agreed beforehand)
- If the order is placed, the KVA fee is often credited

How binding is the KVA?

- The final price may not exceed the KVA by **more than 15-20%**
- For larger deviations, the Handwerker must **inform you beforehand**
- Alternatively: agree on a **fixed-price offer** — then the price is binding

Typical Prices (as of 2026)

| Service | Price Range |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Handwerker hourly rate | €45-85 net |
| Travel fee | €20-50 |
| Replace faucet | €80-200 |
| Install outlet | €50-120 |
| Paint room (1 room) | €200-500 |
| Locksmith (door opening) | €80-250 |
| Drain cleaning | €60-150 |

Locksmith warning: Disreputable providers charge **€500 and more**. Compare prices beforehand, ask about the hourly rate, and insist on an invoice.

Your Rights as a Client

Warranty

- Handwerker are liable for defects for **2 years** (§ 634a BGB)
- For construction work even **5 years**
- Complain about defects in writing and set a deadline for correction

Check the invoice

- Always demand a **detailed invoice**
- Compare with the Kostenvoranschlag
- **Handwerker costs tax deductible** — 20% of labor costs (max. €1,200/year) are tax-deductible (§ 35a EStG). Only applies to bank transfers, not cash payments!

If problems arise

- Contact the **Handwerkskammer** — mediation service for disputes
- **Verbraucherzentrale** — free or low-cost advice
- If necessary: attorney specializing in contract law

Black Market Work — Avoid It!

Black market work (work without invoice) is **illegal in Germany** — for both parties:

- No warranty for defects
- No insurance coverage for accidents
- Fines up to **€50,000** for the client

Tips for Foreigners

- Hire companies registered in the **Handwerksrolle** (sign of trustworthiness)
- Ask to see their **master craftsman certificate number**
- Agree on everything **in writing** — even via email
- If there's a language barrier: bring someone to translate or use translation apps

--- As of March 2026. All information without guarantee.