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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