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Car Registration — Kfz-Zulassung Step by Step

How to register your car at the vehicle registration office: documents, eVB number, costs, and registration procedure.

Deutsche Begriffe: Zulassungsstelle | Kfz-Zulassung | Kennzeichen | eVB-Nummer | HU | Fahrzeugbrief | Fahrzeugschein

Why does the car need to be registered?

In Germany, every vehicle that participates in **road traffic** must be registered at the **Zulassungsstelle** (vehicle registration office). Without registration, you are not permitted to drive or park on public roads.

What types of registration are there?

Type	When?
Neuzulassung	New car, first registered in Germany
Umschreibung	Used car, change of owner
Wiederzulassung	Car was deregistered, to be registered again
Umzug/Umkennzeichnung	Moving to a different registration district (optional since 2015)

Required documents

For all registrations

- **ID card or passport** (with registration certificate)
- **eVB-Nummer** (electronic insurance confirmation) — from your car insurer
- **SEPA direct debit mandate** for vehicle tax (bank details)
- **Valid HU certificate** (main inspection / TÜV) — for used cars

For used cars (Umschreibung)

- **Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil I** (Fahrzeugschein) — from previous owner
- **Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil II** (Fahrzeugbrief) — from previous owner
- **Old license plates** (if new ones desired)
- **Purchase contract** (recommended, not always mandatory)

For new cars

- **Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil II** (from dealer)
- **COC document** (Certificate of Conformity) — for EU imports

Step-by-step guide

1. Conclude vehicle insurance

Before going to the registration office, you need **motor liability insurance**:

- Compare online (Check24, Verivox, HUK24)
- Conclude contract
- Receive **eVB-Nummer** (7-digit, via email/SMS)

2. Appointment at the registration office

- In most cities you need an **appointment** (book online!)
- In smaller cities sometimes possible without appointment
- **Wait times** in large cities: 1-4 weeks for an appointment

3. At the registration office

1. Submit all documents

2. Vehicle tax: Sign SEPA mandate

3. Receive license plates — either keep existing or choose new ones

4. Custom license plates possible (e.g., HH-AB 1234) — reserve online, surcharge approx. 10-13 €

5. Receive **Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil I** (new Fahrzeugschein)

6. Have **stickers** affixed to license plates

4. License plates engraved

- Sign shops are often located **directly next to the registration office**
- Cost: approx. **20-35 € per pair**
- Online ordering is often cheaper (from approx. 15 €)

5. HU sticker and stamp

- The **HU sticker** (TÜV) is affixed to the rear license plate
- The **registration sticker** is affixed to both license plates

Costs of vehicle registration

Item	Cost
Registration (Umschreibung)	approx. 30 €
New registration	approx. 30 €
Custom license plates	approx. 10-13 €
License plate signs (pair)	approx. 20-35 €
Custom license plate reservation (online)	approx. 2.60 €
Total (typical)	approx. 60-80 €

Additional: Vehicle tax (depends on engine capacity/CO₂) and insurance premium.

Vehicle tax (Kfz-Steuer)

Vehicle tax is collected by the **customs authority** (not by the tax office):

Vehicle type	Calculation
Petrol	Engine displacement + CO ₂ emissions
Diesel	Engine displacement (higher rate) + CO ₂ emissions

Vehicle type	Calculation
Electric car	Tax-free until 2030 (for first registration until 31.12.2025)

Example: Petrol, 1,400 cc, 130 g CO₂/km → approx. **120-180 €/year**

Online registration (i-Kfz)

Since 2023 you can register vehicles **online**:

- **Requirement:** ID card with activated **online authentication function** (eID)
- Possible for: New registration, change of owner, deregistration, re-registration
- Portal: varies by state/city (e.g., berlin.de, hamburg.de)
- **Advantage:** No appointment at registration office needed
- **Disadvantage:** Technically not yet seamless everywhere

Important for foreigners

Driver's license

- **EU driver's license:** Valid indefinitely in Germany
- **Non-EU driver's license:** Valid only **6 months** after entry, then exchange required (often with exam)
- International driver's permit: In combination with original license also 6 months

Bringing a car from abroad

If you bring your car from abroad:

- **EU vehicle:** Relatively straightforward — COC document, possibly conversion (e.g., headlights)
- **Non-EU vehicle:** More complex — individual inspection by TÜV/DEKRA required (cost: 300-1,000 €)
- **Customs:** For imports from non-EU: 10% tariff + 19% import VAT
- **Deadline:** You must register the vehicle within **1 month** after entry

Deregistering a vehicle

If you leave Germany or sell the car:

- Visit the **registration office** (in person or online)
- Bring license plates and Fahrzeugschein
- Insurance and vehicle tax are **refunded proportionally**
- **Important:** Do not deregister the car **before selling** — the buyer needs the registration for the transfer