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Kirchensteuer — Church Tax in Germany

Kirchensteuer is a mandatory tax for members of recognized churches in Germany, automatically deducted from salary at 8-9% of income tax depending on the state.

Deutsche Begriffe: Kirchensteuer | Kirchenaustritt | Konfession

What is Kirchensteuer?

Kirchensteuer (church tax) is a mandatory tax for members of churches recognized in Germany. It is automatically deducted from salary.

How much is it?

State	Rate
Bayern, Baden-Württemberg	8% of income tax
Other states	9% of income tax

Example (9%):

• You earn 3,000€ gross

• Your income tax: 400€

• Kirchensteuer: 36€ (9% of 400€)

Who pays?

Members of registered churches:

• Catholic Church

• Protestant Church (Evangelical)

• Some other religious communities

NOT paying:

• Atheists / non-religious

• Muslims

• Orthodox Christians (usually)

• People who have left the church

How does it work?

1. During Anmeldung you state your religion (Konfession)

2. Your employer automatically deducts the tax

3. Money goes to your church

How to stop paying?

Leaving the church (Kirchenaustritt):

1. Go to **Standesamt** or **Amtsgericht**

2. File a declaration of withdrawal

3. Pay a fee (10-60€ depending on the state)

4. Receive a certificate

5. Submit to your employer

In Hamburg:

• Standesamt Hamburg

• Fee: 31€

• Online appointment: hamburg.de/terminvereinbarung

Consequences of leaving

You lose:

• Right to church wedding

• Right to church funeral

• Right to be a godparent

• Access to certain church services

You keep:

• Can still attend church

• Children can be baptized (if other parent is a member)

Is it worth paying?

YES, if:

• You are a practicing believer

• You use church services

• You want a church wedding/funeral

NO, if:

• You don't practice

• You don't identify with the church

• You want to save ~300-1,000€/year

Important

• Leaving is **irreversible** (returning requires a procedure)

• You cannot choose to pay less

• The tax is deductible from your tax base