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Cancel Contracts Before Leaving Germany

Mobile phone, internet, fitness, insurance, electricity and broadcast fee — cancel all contracts in time using Sonderkündigungsrecht.

Deutsche Begriffe: Kündigung | Sonderkündigungsrecht | Kündigungsfrist | Mobilfunkvertrag | Rundfunkbeitrag | Abmeldung | Vertragsende

Overview — which contracts to cancel?

Anyone leaving Germany should **cancel all active contracts** in time. Otherwise they continue and you pay from abroad. Here are the most important contracts and how to get rid of them.

1. Mobile phone contract

- **Notice period:** 1 month to end of month (since December 2021 for contracts after automatic renewal)
- **Initial term:** Often 24 months — during this time regular cancellation only at end of minimum term
- **Sonderkündigungsrecht (Special termination right):** Moving abroad, you have a **special termination right** if the provider cannot deliver service at your new location. Proof: deregistration certificate + new residence proof
- **Number porting:** If you want to keep your number, switch to prepaid

2. Internet / DSL / Cable

- **Notice period:** 1 month (after initial term) or at end of minimum term
- **Sonderkündigungsrecht:** Applies to relocations where provider doesn't service new location — moving abroad is clearly covered
- **Return router** — otherwise fees apply (50-100 €)

3. Fitness studio

- **Notice period:** Usually 1-3 months to contract end
- **Sonderkündigungsrecht:** For moves over 30 km from studio — moving abroad counts
- **Proof:** Deregistration certificate from registration office
- **Caution:** Some studios don't recognize the special right — then demand it in writing with deadline

4. Insurance

Insurance	Action
Liability	Cancel, 1-3 months notice
Household contents	Cancel, ends automatically when apartment is deregistered
Car insurance	Cancel when car is deregistered
Health insurance (GKV)	Ends automatically on departure — submit deregistration certificate
Private health insurance	Cancel in writing with proof of new foreign insurance

5. Electricity and gas

- **Notice period:** 2 weeks (basic supplier) to 1 month (other providers)
- **Final reading:** Take photo of meter reading on moving day and notify provider
- **Final bill:** Provide account details so provider can refund any overpayment

6. Broadcast fee (GEZ)

- **18.36 €/month** — does **not** end automatically on deregistration!
- **Deregistration required:** Online at rundfunkbeitrag.de or by mail
- **Proof:** Deregistration certificate from registration office
- **Refund:** Overpaid fees will be refunded

7. Other contracts

- **Magazines / Streaming:** Netflix, Spotify, DAZN — monthly cancellation
- **Amazon Prime:** Monthly cancellation, annual subscription refunded proportionally
- **Bank accounts:** Close account **after** receiving all final bills (recommended to wait 3-6 months)

Sonderkündigungsrecht — the key to success

When relocating abroad, you have the right to **special termination under § 314 BGB** (extraordinary termination for good cause). Moving abroad is such a cause if the contract cannot be fulfilled at your new location.

Procedure:

- 1. Cancel in writing** (registered mail with return receipt)
- 2. Attach deregistration certificate** from registration office
- 3. Set deadline:** 14 days for confirmation
- 4. If refused:** contact consumer center or lawyer

Tip: Start **3 months before departure** with cancellations — you'll have enough buffer for deadlines and inquiries.

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