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Real Estate Agent Fees — Broker Commissions

In Germany, the 'Bestellerprinzip' (ordering principle) applies since 2015: whoever hires the broker pays the commission. Rental fees are capped at 2 months' rent plus VAT, while purchase commissions range from 3-7% depending on region.

Deutsche Begriffe: Maklergebühren | Maklerprovision | Courtage | Bestellerprinzip

Who pays for the broker?

Since 2015, Germany has implemented the **Bestellerprinzip** (ordering principle):

> **Whoever orders the broker, pays.**

Apartment Rental

- **If the landlord hired a broker** → landlord pays
- **If you're searching through a broker** → you pay (rare)

In practice: For private apartment rentals, tenants typically do NOT pay commission.

Buying an apartment/house

Rules are different here:

- Commission split 50/50 between buyer and seller
- Or only seller pays (depends on region)

Region	Typical Commission
Hamburg	6.25% (3.125% each)

Region	Typical Commission
Berlin	7.14%
Bavaria	7.14%
NRW	7.14%

How much is the commission?

Rental:

- Maximum 2 months' cold rent + VAT
- Approximately ~2.38 months' net rent

Purchase:

- 3-7% of purchase price + VAT
- Depends on region

When do you NOT pay commission?

- Rental through SAGA/GWG (Hamburg)
- Directly from owner (private)
- Listings marked "provisionsfrei" (commission-free)
- Housing cooperatives

Protection against fraud

Red flags:

- Commission before apartment viewing
- Commission for just viewing
- No written contract with broker
- Commission for rental from private owner

Your rights

- Broker must have a **written contract** with you
- Commission is due only **after signing rental/purchase agreement**

- You can negotiate commission amount

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