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## Understanding Nebenkostenabrechnung — What You Need to Pay

Warmmiete and Kaltmiete, Betriebskosten and annual settlement: what tenants in Germany need to know. Status: March 2026.

**Deutsche Begriffe:** Nebenkostenabrechnung | Betriebskosten | Warmmiete | Kaltmiete | Heizkosten

## Understanding Nebenkostenabrechnung — What You Need to Pay

> Status: March 2026. All information without guarantee.

### Kaltmiete vs. Warmmiete

Term	Meaning
<b>Kaltmiete</b> (net cold rent)	Base rent without additional costs
<b>Nebenkosten</b> (Betriebskosten)	Additional costs for heating, water, garbage, etc.
<b>Warmmiete</b> (gross warm rent)	Kaltmiete + Nebenkosten

The Warmmiete is what you actually pay each month.

### What are Nebenkosten?

According to the Operating Cost Ordinance (BetrKV), the following costs can be allocated:

- **Heating and hot water** (largest item, approx. 40-50 %)
- **Water and wastewater**

- **Waste collection**
- **Property tax**
- **Building insurance**
- **Caretaker / Stairwell cleaning**
- **Elevator** (if available)
- **Garden maintenance**
- **Street cleaning / Winter maintenance**
- **Cable connection** (partially, changes since 2024)

## Annual Settlement

Once a year you receive a **Nebenkostenabrechnung** from your landlord:

- Deadline: no later than **12 months after the end of the settlement period**
- Result: **additional payment** (you paid too little) or **credit** (you get money back)

## ⚠ Check Your Settlement!

About every second Nebenkostenabrechnung in Germany contains errors. Check:

- Are the **settlement periods** correct?
- Is the **distribution key** (living area, number of occupants) accurate?
- Are there **impermissible costs** included (e.g., repairs, administrative fees)?
- You have **12 months** to lodge an objection

## Average Betriebskosten

In Germany, you should expect approximately **€2.50-3.50/m<sup>2</sup> per month** for Nebenkosten. For a 60 m<sup>2</sup> apartment, that's €150-210 monthly.

## Money-Saving Tips

- **Heating:** Lowering room temperature by 1°C saves approx. 6 % on Heizkosten
- **Water:** Shower instead of bath, use water-saving showerhead
- **Ventilation:** Short bursts of ventilation instead of keeping windows ajar (prevents mold and heat loss)

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