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Notary Costs in Germany — Fees, Services and Money-Saving Tips

What a notary costs, when you need one, and how fees are calculated: property purchase, inheritance law, business formation, and more.

Deutsche Begriffe: Notarkosten | Notar | Beurkundung | Grundbuch | Grundschuldbestellung | Kaufvertrag | GNotKG

What does a notary do?

A **notary** is a state-appointed, independent **legal expert** who **authenticates** legal transactions and makes them legally valid. In Germany, visiting a notary is **legally required** for many important legal transactions — unlike many other countries where a simple contract is sufficient.

When do I need a notary?

Legal Transaction	Notary Required?
Property purchase (house/apartment)	□ Mandatory
Land registry entry	□ Mandatory
Prenuptial agreement	□ Mandatory
Testament (notarial)	□ Mandatory
Inheritance contract	□ Mandatory
GmbH formation	□ Mandatory
UG formation (limited liability)	□ Mandatory
Gift deed (real estate)	□ Mandatory

Legal Transaction	Notary Required?
Power of attorney (officially certified)	Recommended
Lease agreement	□ Not required
Employment contract	□ Not required

How are notary costs calculated?

Notary costs in Germany are **legally regulated** by the **Courts and Notaries Costs Act (GNotKG)**. This means: All notaries in Germany charge **the same fees** for **the same service**. There is no price competition — you cannot "negotiate" or find a "cheaper" notary.

Transaction value as the basis

The fee is based on the **transaction value** (also: subject matter value) of the legal transaction. For a property purchase, this is the **purchase price**; for a GmbH formation, it's the **share capital**.

Fee schedule (excerpt, GNotKG Appendix 2)

Transaction Value	Basic Fee (1.0)
25,000 €	115 €
50,000 €	165 €
100,000 €	273 €
150,000 €	381 €
200,000 €	435 €
250,000 €	535 €
300,000 €	635 €
500,000 €	935 €
1,000,000 €	1,735 €

Depending on the type of legal transaction, the **basic fee** is multiplied by a factor (e.g., 2.0 for a Beurkundung).

Notary costs for property purchase

Property purchase is the most common reason for a notary visit. Notary costs typically amount to **1.5–2% of the purchase price** (including land registry costs).

Cost breakdown (example: purchase price 300,000 €)

Service	Fee Rate	Costs (approx.)
Authenticate purchase contract	2.0x basic fee	1,270 €
Land registry change (ownership transfer)	1.0x basic fee	635 €
Mortgage registration (if financing)	1.0x basic fee	635 €
Execution activities	0.5x basic fee	318 €
Management activities	0.5x basic fee	318 €
Expenses (postage, phone, copies)	Flat rate	approx. 50–100 €
VAT (19% on notary costs)		approx. 490 €
Total notary + land registry costs		**approx. 3,700–4,300 €**

Who pays the notary?

For property purchases, the **buyer** typically bears the notary costs. This is stipulated in the purchase contract. Theoretically, **buyer and seller** are jointly liable to the notary — but in practice, the buyer pays.

Notary costs for business formation

GmbH Formation (share capital 25,000 €)

Service	Costs (approx.)
Authenticate company agreement	250–500 €
Commercial register filing	125–250 €
Managing director appointment	125 €
Expenses + VAT	approx. 100–200 €
Total	**approx. 600–1,100 €**

UG (limited liability) — Formation with standard articles

• Using **standard articles** (max. 3 members, 1 manager): approx. **300–400 €** notary costs

• With individual articles of association: similar to GmbH

Notary costs for inheritance and provisions

Notarial will

Transaction Value (= net estate)	Costs (approx.)
50,000 €	approx. 330 €
100,000 €	approx. 546 €
250,000 €	approx. 1,070 €
500,000 €	approx. 1,870 €

Advantage: A notarial will replaces the **certificate of inheritance** — saving heirs approx. 300–2,000 € and considerable time later.

Inheritance contract

• Fee: **2.0x basic fee** based on transaction value

• More expensive than a will, but binding on all parties

Power of attorney (officially certified)

• **Certification:** approx. 20–70 € (transaction value = net estate, max. 1 million €)

• **Authentication** (more comprehensive, recommended): approx. 100–400 €

• **Living will** (certification): approx. 20–50 €

Notary costs for prenuptial agreement and divorce

Prenuptial agreement

Net assets of both spouses	Costs (approx.)
50,000 €	approx. 330 €
100,000 €	approx. 546 €
250,000 €	approx. 1,070 €
500,000 €	approx. 1,870 €

Tip: A prenuptial agreement can be particularly useful when:

• Both partners have **different nationalities**

• One partner **owns property abroad**

• One partner has a **business**

• You want to modify the **marital property regime** (e.g., separate property instead of community property)

Divorce settlement agreement

• Covers alimony, asset division, child custody

• Fee: similar to prenuptial agreement, depends on transaction value

• **Often saves** significant court costs during divorce proceedings

Tips for foreign clients

Language barrier

• The notary must ensure you **understand** the content of the document

• If you don't speak German, a **sworn interpreter** must be present

• You pay **interpreter costs** separately (approx. 100–300 € per hour)

• Some notaries speak **English** or other foreign languages — ask in advance

Prepare documents

Always bring to the notary appointment:

• **Valid ID** (passport + residence permit)

• All **relevant documents** (birth certificate, marriage certificate, etc.) with certified translation

• For property purchase: **Financing confirmation** from your bank

Finding a notary

- **Notary finder** of the Bundesnotarkammer: notar.de
- In most federal states, notaries work as **sole notaries** (especially in large cities)
- In some federal states (e.g., Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria), notaries are also **lawyers** (Anwaltsnotare)

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I deduct notary costs from taxes?

- **Property purchase (personal use):** No, costs are not deductible
- **Rental property:** Yes, deductible as business expenses
- **Business formation:** Yes, deductible as business expenses
- **Prenuptial agreement/Will:** Generally not deductible

What happens if I cancel my appointment?

If the notary has already prepared the draft document, **draft fees** may apply (usually half the regular fee). Cancel your appointment in good time.

How long does a notary appointment take?

- **Property purchase:** 30–60 minutes (document reading + signature)
- **Will:** 20–40 minutes
- **GmbH formation:** 30–45 minutes
- The notary **reads the entire document** — this is legally required