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Rundfunkbeitrag in Detail — €18.36/Month, Exemptions and Registration

Rundfunkbeitrag: €18.36/month per household, exemption for Bürgergeld/BAföG recipients, registration and FAQs.

Deutsche Begriffe: Rundfunkbeitrag | Beitragsservice | ARD | ZDF | Befreiung | Beitragsnummer | Abmeldung

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 Full, up-to-date guide: Rundfunkbeitrag (GEZ)

What is the Rundfunkbeitrag?

The **Rundfunkbeitrag** (formerly: GEZ fee) finances public broadcasting in Germany — namely **ARD, ZDF, Deutschlandradio** and regional stations. Every household in Germany must pay this contribution, regardless of whether you watch television or listen to the radio.

Costs

- **€18.36 per month** (€55.08 per quarter)
- **Per household** — not per person. In a shared apartment, only one person pays.
- Charged **quarterly** (every 3 months)

Registration — how does it work?

Automatic registration

When you register at the **Bürgeramt** (citizen's office), your data is automatically forwarded to the **Beitragsservice**. You will then receive a letter with your **contribution**

number and payment information.

Self-registration

If you don't receive a letter, register yourself:

- **Online:** rundfunkbeitrag.de
- **Form:** Also available as a PDF for printing
- **Required:** Name, address, date of birth, bank details (for SEPA direct debit)

Payment methods

- **SEPA direct debit** — recommended, automatic withdrawal
- **Bank transfer** — quarterly transfer yourself
- **Cash payment** — only at few locations (not recommended)

Exemptions — who doesn't have to pay?

Certain groups of people can obtain a **full exemption**:

Full exemption

- Recipients of **Bürgergeld** (ALG II)
- Recipients of **social assistance**
- **BAföG** recipients (with proof)
- Recipients of **asylum seeker benefits**
- Recipients of **basic security** in old age

Reduction to €6.12/month

- People with **severe disability** (RF marking in ID card)
- Deafblind persons

Exemption application

1. Online at rundfunkbeitrag.de → "Befreiung/Ermäßigung beantragen"

2. Attach proof — current document on Bürgergeld, BAföG etc. (copy)

3. Processing time: approx. **4–6 weeks**

4. Exemption applies **from the month of application**, not retroactively!

Tip: Apply for exemption immediately when you receive a benefit document. While your application is being processed, you must continue paying initially.

Frequently asked questions

I don't have a television — do I still have to pay?

Yes. The contribution is device-independent and applies per household. Whether you have a television, radio or just a smartphone — the contribution is the same.

What happens if I don't pay?

• **Reminders** — first a reminder, then a notice with late payment surcharge (1% of arrears, min. €8)

• **Assessment notice** — legally binding like a tax decision

• **Enforcement** — the Beitragsservice can **garnish your account** without court proceedings

• **No credit bureau entry** — but enforcement measures are possible

I'm moving — what do I do?

• **Report address change** on rundfunkbeitrag.de

• When moving together: **deregister one contribution number**, the other remains

• When leaving Germany: **Deregistration** with proof (deregistration certificate from Bürgeramt)

I live in a shared apartment — who pays?

Only **one person per household** must pay. Agree among yourselves how to split the costs. Tip: List housemates in the lease as co-inhabitants and divide costs from the shared budget.