



Brian's Guide to Getting Around Germany

German Traffic Signs & Signals

<http://www.gettingaroundgermany.info/zeichen.htm>

Below is a comprehensive guide of German traffic signs, signals, and markings. This guide is designed for both the short-term tourist wanting to learn German traffic signs in preparation for a trip as well as for someone who is studying to get a German or US military driver's license. This page may also be of interest to road and sign aficionados.

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SIGNS

Germany has a comprehensive and uniform traffic sign system. All signs have standard shapes and colors and use easy-to-understand international pictograms and symbols. The sign system was overhauled in the early '90s to more closely conform with European standards.


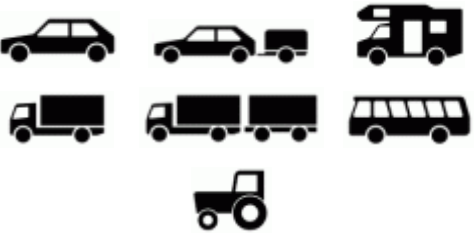






Below, you will find a complete guide of German traffic signs with their official meaning and additional notes. These signs are from the official German traffic code and include all updates through 2007.

Officially, German traffic signs are divided into three major categories: warning signs, regulation signs, and guide signs. However, I have divided the sign collection into several additional categories and I've placed each sign where it most logically belongs regardless of its official designation.

In the German traffic code, each sign is assigned an official number. This number is used on traffic tickets and accident reports when a sign is involved in the incident.

Vehicle class symbols

Traffic signs in Germany employ a set of standard symbols to indicate the type or class of vehicle being referred to on the sign. Some of the symbols are inclusive in that they encompass several lesser classes as well. The following table outlines these symbols and their meanings:

Symbol	Description	Other lesser included classes
	Motor vehicles Includes <i>all</i> multi-track motorized vehicles	
	Passenger vehicles Includes all cars and light trucks	
	Vehicles over 3.5t Includes all vehicles with a permitted gross weight over 3.5 tonnes, their trailers, and any other vehicle that does not qualify as a passenger vehicle; it specifically does not include buses	
	Motorcycles Includes motorcycles, motorcycles with sidecars, and mopeds	

The following are the remaining vehicle class symbols:

**Mopeds****Bicycles****Buses****Passenger vehicles
with trailers****Vehicles over 3.5t with
trailers****Slow moving vehicles**
Includes tractors and
other vehicles that cannot
exceed
25 km/h**Motor homes****Cattle/animals****Riders****Pedestrians****Tracked military
vehicles****Streetcars****Rail vehicles****Vehicles with marked
hazardous cargo****Vehicles carrying more
than 3000 liters of
water-pollutants**

Supplemental signs

The German sign system uses a fair amount of "supplemental signs" (*Zusatzschild*). These are black and white rectangular or square signs mounted below a parent sign and are used to modify or give additional information, such as exemptions, restrictions, or more specific details, regarding the condition shown on the parent sign. Supplemental signs use symbols wherever possible, but most supplemental signs use words. To help you decipher these signs, a complete vocabulary list is provided at the end of the signs section.

Because of the large number of supplemental signs, not all of them are shown on this page. Instead, I've included the most frequent ones in their most common usage, especially the ones that use symbols.

The most common use for supplemental signs is for distances. There are two such signs-- the distance *to* the parent sign's condition, and the *duration* of the condition:

Distance to the condition shown
on the parent signDuration (length) of the condition
shown on the parent sign

Here are some examples to better illustrate the difference between the two types of distance signs:



Traffic signals
200 meters ahead



Rough road next
800 meters



Autobahn ends
2 kilometers ahead



No passing next
1 kilometer

Warning signs

This section contains signs that give advance warning of hazards on or near the road. The standard shape for warning signs in Germany is a red triangle.



General danger

This sign marks an area where extra caution should be used. It is rarely used by itself; instead, a supplemental sign is usually mounted beneath this sign with information on a specific hazard for which no individual sign exists. Some examples of the more common combinations are below.



Accident hazard

Marks an area where a high number of accidents have occurred



Frog crossing

The road ahead is used by migrating frogs



Tree overhang

Drivers of trucks and other high-profile vehicles should beware of low trees



Winter sports along road

Watch out for people and be aware that the road may not be salted or sanded



Soft shoulder
Avoid driving on the shoulder



Soft shoulder for heavy vehicles



Rough road edge
There is a rough drop-off along the edge of the road



Sliding danger
Used to warn of a downhill section with strong side winds that may cause a vehicle pulling a trailer to lose control



Curve (left)



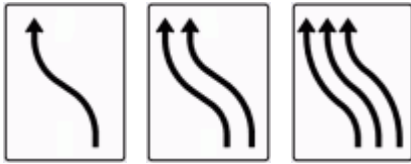
Curve (right)



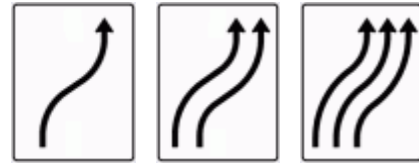
Double curve
First curve is to the left



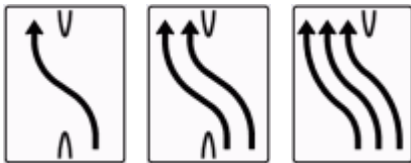
Double curve
First curve is to the right



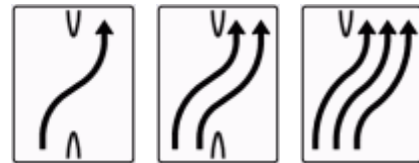
Lane shift (left)
All lanes shift to the left



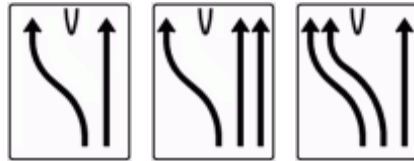
Lane shift (right)
All lanes shift to the right



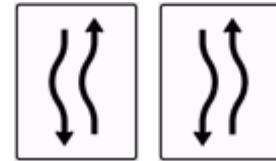
Lane crossover (left)
All lanes cross over the median to the left



Lane crossover (right)
All lanes cross over the median to the right

**Lane split**

Left lane(s) crosses over to left side of median;
right lane(s) remains on right side of median

**Road shift**

Traffic is shifted briefly to the
left/right, then back again.

**Steep upgrade**

The degree of the ascent
is shown

**Steep downgrade**

The degree of the decent
is shown; prepare to
downshift

**Falling rocks**

Watch out for rocks on
the road and do not stop
or park

**Strong cross wind**

Prepare to adjust steering
as necessary and avoid
passing

**Rough road****Beware of ice/snow**

The road or bridge ahead
freezes easily
(applicable during Winter months)

**Slippery when
wet or dirty**

Avoid sudden braking,
accelerating, or steering

**Loose gravel**

Avoid sudden braking,
accelerating, or steering

**Road work**

Watch for workers,
machinery, dirt, or mud
on the roadway

**Traffic signals ahead**

Be prepared to stop

**Quay/riverbank**

There is an unguarded
quay, riverbank, or
landing ahead or
alongside the road

**Drawbridge**

Be prepared to stop



Pedestrians

Marks a general area where pedestrians may be on or near the road



Pedestrian crossing ahead



Pedestrian crossing

Marks a crosswalk and indicates that pedestrians have the right-of-way



Watch for children

Posted near schools and playgrounds; reduce speed and be prepared to stop quickly



Crossing guards

Marks a crosswalk where school crossing guards may direct traffic



Wild animal crossing

Be prepared to stop or swerve suddenly; use low-beam headlights



Domestic animal crossing

Watch for animals and mud on the road



Low-flying aircraft

Be prepared for sudden noise and, at night, for the glare of landing lights



Congestion hazard

Marks an area where congestion frequently occurs; be prepared to slow down or stop



Bicycle crossing



Buses

Watch for buses entering, leaving, or crossing the road



Two-way traffic

Generally posted where oncoming traffic is unexpected, such as when coming from a one-way street to a two-way street



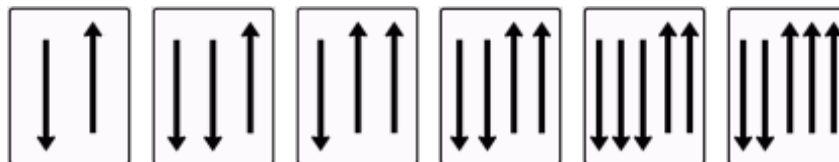
Road narrows



Road narrows (left side)

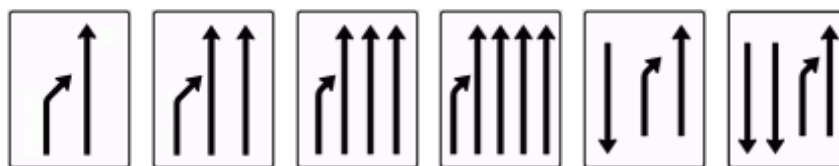


Road narrows (right side)

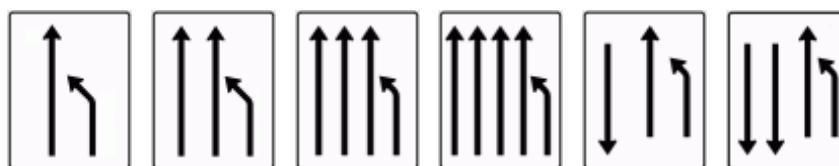


Two-way traffic

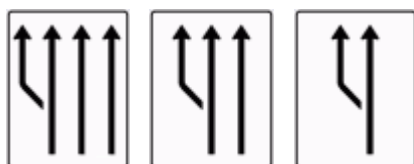
The number of lanes in each direction is shown



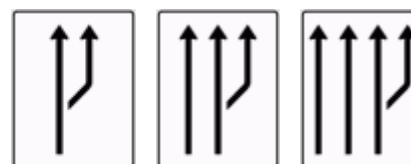
Left lane ends



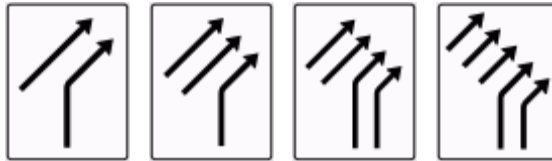
Right lane ends



Lane added (left)



Lane added (right)



Lanes added to another roadway

The lanes from your roadway are added to another roadway; you will not have to merge

Railway crossing signs

This section shows all signs related to railway level crossings.



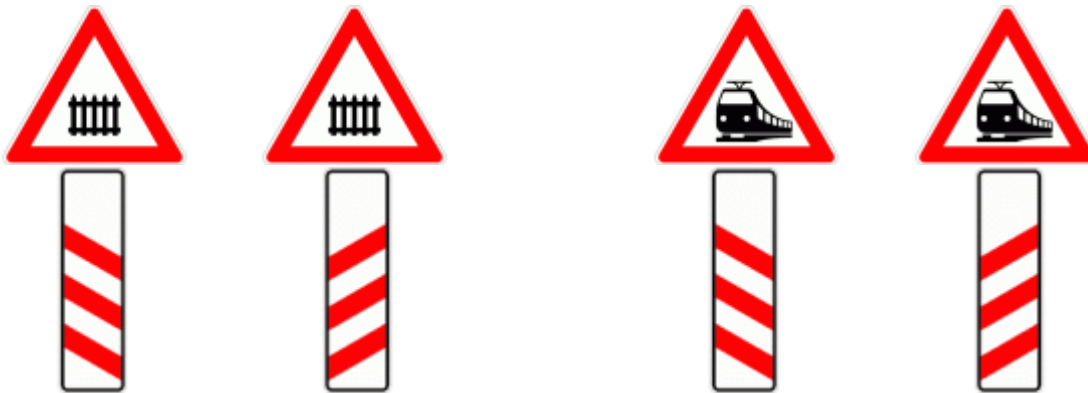
Guarded railway crossing ahead

There are barricades or half barricades at the crossing



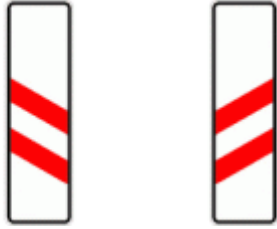
Unguarded railway crossing ahead

There are no barricades at the crossing; however, there may be crossing signals

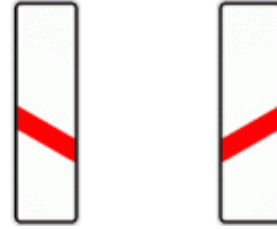


Railway crossing approx. 240 meters ahead

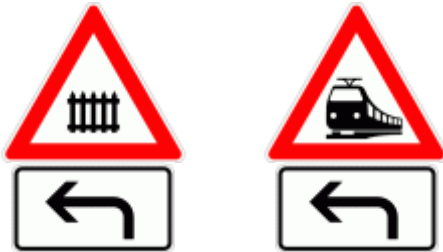
These countdown markers are located on the left and right sides of the road respectively and indicate that the crossing is about 240 meters ahead; a different distance may be shown on the marker if applicable



Approx. 160 meters to railway crossing
A different distance may be shown on the sign if applicable



Approx. 80 meters to railway crossing
A different distance may be shown on the sign if applicable



Railway crossing on crossroad (left)



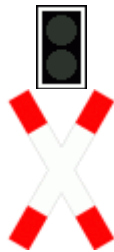
Railway crossing on crossroad (right)



Railway crossing (St. Andrew's cross)
Posted at the crossing; you must stop here if a train is approaching



Electrified railway crossing
This railroad crossing has electrical wires overhead; high profile vehicles should exercise caution



Railway crossing signal
This is now the standard railroad crossing signal in Germany; yellow indicates a train is approaching--stop if possible; red means you must stop and remain stopped until the signal turns off



Railway crossing flasher
This is the old standard railroad crossing signal in western Germany; you must stop when the red signal flashes



Railway crossing flasher
This is the old standard railroad crossing signal in East Germany; you must stop when the red signal flashes

Right-of-way signs

This section shows signs related to right-of-way assignment.



Priority road

You have the right-of-way at all intersections on this road until cancelled by a "Yield", "Stop", or "End of Priority Road" sign; outside of urban areas, parking is prohibited on this road



End of priority road

You must yield at all subsequent intersections



Priority

You have the right-of-way at the next intersection only



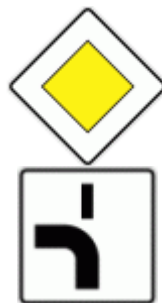
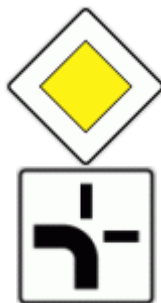
Yield

You must give way to traffic on the intersecting road



Stop

You must come to a complete stop and give way to traffic on the intersecting road



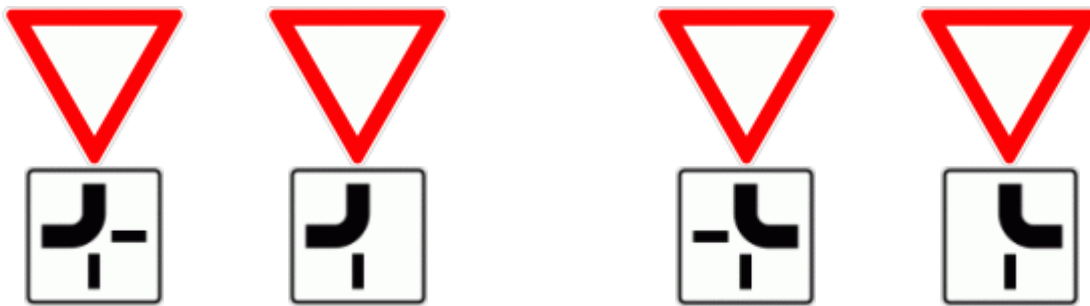
Priority road turns (left)

The priority road (wide black line) turns left in the intersection; the other lines represent other streets at this intersection



Priority road turns (right)

The priority road (wide black line) turns right in the intersection; the other lines represent other streets at this intersection

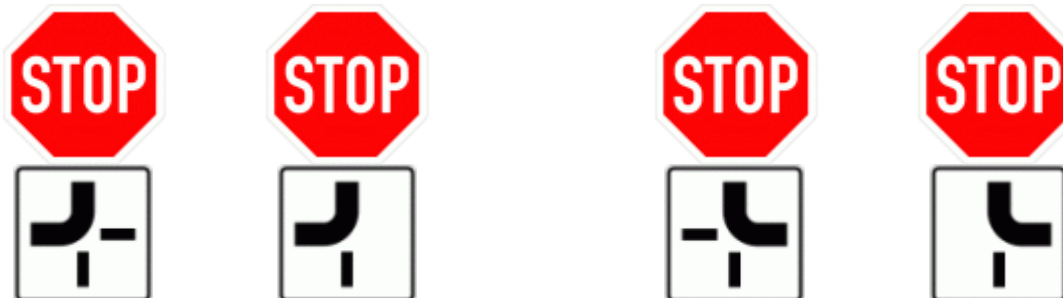


Yield to Priority road

The priority road (wide black line) turns in the intersection; you must yield to traffic following or leaving the priority road coming from the left or approaching from straight ahead

Yield to Priority road

The priority road (wide black line) turns in the intersection; you must yield to traffic following or leaving the priority road coming from the right or approaching from straight ahead



Stop and yield to Priority road

The same rules as "yield to priority road" above apply, but you must come to a complete stop first

Stop and yield to Priority road

The same rules as "yield to priority road" above apply, but you must come to a complete stop first



Yield to roundabout
Traffic in the roundabout has right-of-way



Yield and watch for bicycles
You must yield to all intersecting traffic, including traffic on the bicycle path



Stop ahead
There is a stop sign 100 meters ahead



Unmarked intersection ahead
The next intersection is uncontrolled; yield the right-of-way to traffic approaching the intersection from the right



Priority over oncoming traffic
You have the right-of-way over oncoming traffic along the narrow one lane road ahead



Yield to oncoming traffic
You must give way to oncoming traffic along the narrow one lane road ahead

Speed limit signs

Below are the various signs related to speed limits.



Maximum speed limit
Shown in kilometers per hour (km/h)



Speed limit zone
This sign is posted at the entrances to a neighborhood where the speed limit shown applies to all streets in the neighborhood until the "End of speed limit zone" sign is reached



Conditional speed limit
The speed limit shown is only in effect when the road is wet



Minimum speed limit

Shown in km/h; you must travel at this speed or faster unless road, weather, or traffic conditions make it necessary to drive slower



Advisory speed limit

Shown in km/h; indicates the recommended speed limit for good road, weather, and traffic conditions



End of speed limit
The general speed limit now applies



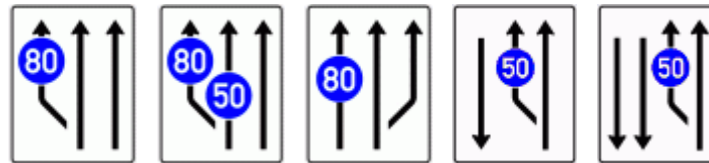
End of speed limit zone



End of minimum speed limit

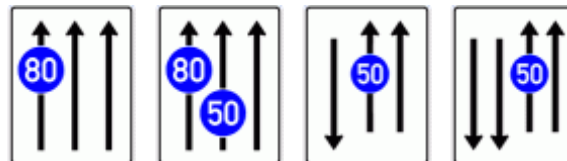


End of recommended speed limit



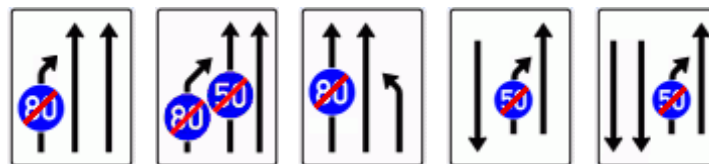
Minimum speed limit by lane

A new lane is added ahead and the minimum speed limit(s) shown applies to the indicated lane(s)



Minimum speed limit by lane

The minimum speed limit(s) shown apply to the indicated lane(s)



End of minimum speed limit by lane

These signs also typically indicate a lane ending

Regulatory signs

This section contains various signs that provide regulation. In Germany, the standard shape for most regulatory signs is a circle. A red circle indicates something is prohibited, while a blue disc indicates something is required.



No passing

You may not overtake other vehicles except bicycles, mopeds, and motorcycles



No passing for vehicles over 3.5t

Vehicles with a permitted gross weight over 3.5 tonnes are not allowed to overtake any other vehicle except bicycles, mopeds, and motorcycles



No passing

Passing of tractors and other designated slow-moving vehicles is permitted



No passing

The no passing restriction applies only to vehicles with a permitted gross weight over 3.5 tonnes, buses, and any vehicle pulling a trailer



No passing

The no passing restriction is in effect only between 8:30am and 6:00pm and applies only to vehicles with a permitted gross weight over 3.5 tonnes, buses, and any vehicle pulling a trailer



End of no passing zone



End of no passing zone for vehicles over 3.5t



End of all restrictions

This sign cancels all previous speed limit and passing restrictions; however, the general speed limit applies



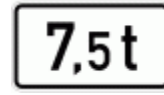
Road closed
All vehicles are prohibited; a supplemental sign indicating exceptions to this prohibition often accompanies this sign



Motor vehicles prohibited
Applies to all motor vehicles except motorcycles and mopeds



Vehicles over 3.5t prohibited



Vehicles over 7.5t prohibited



Bicycles prohibited



Mopeds prohibited



Motorcycles and mopeds prohibited



Multiple prohibition
All motor vehicles, including motorcycles and mopeds, are prohibited



Horses prohibited



Pedestrians prohibited



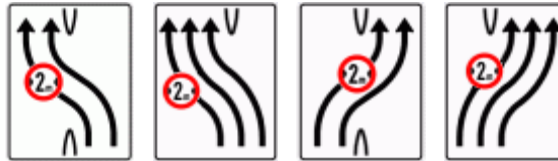
Vertical clearance
Vehicles, including loads, higher than the indicated height are prohibited



Horizontal clearance
Vehicles, including loads, wider than the indicated width are prohibited

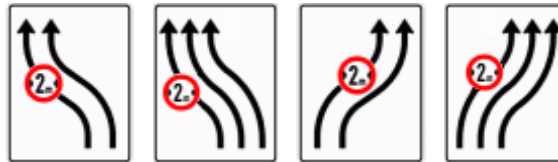


Length restriction
Vehicles, including loads, longer than the indicated length are prohibited



Lane crossover with width restriction

All lanes cross over the median and the width restriction shown is in effect for the indicated lane(s)



Lane shift with width restriction

All lanes shift and the width restriction shown is in effect for the indicated lane(s)



Weight limit

Vehicles with an actual composite weight exceeding the indicated limit are prohibited



Axle weight limit

Vehicles exceeding the indicated weight on any axle are prohibited



Minimum following distance

Vehicles with a permitted gross weight exceeding 3.5 tonnes are required to maintain the indicated minimum following distance



Hazardous cargo prohibited

Vehicles transporting marked hazardous materials are prohibited



Water polluting cargo prohibited

Vehicles transporting more than 3000 liters of water-pollutants are prohibited



Emergency traffic restriction due to air pollution

Only vehicles displaying a valid emissions inspection sticker are permitted
(shown only when applicable)



Traffic restriction zone for reduction of air pollution

Only vehicles displaying one of the indicated colored emissions inspection stickers are permitted



End of traffic restriction zone for reduction of air pollution



Snow chains or tires required

A speed limit of 50 km/h applies
(shown only when applicable)



Do not enter



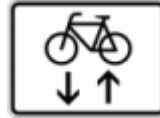
One way street

Traffic on this street must travel in the direction of the arrow



One way street

Bicycles are exempted and may travel in either direction



One way street

The street you are on is one way



Mandatory direction of travel
All traffic must turn left



Mandatory direction of travel
All traffic must turn right



Mandatory direction of travel
All traffic must turn either left or right



Mandatory direction of travel
All traffic must continue straight ahead (i.e. no turns)



Mandatory direction of travel
All traffic must continue straight ahead or turn left (i.e. no right turn)



Mandatory direction of travel
All traffic must continue straight ahead or turn right (i.e. no left turn)



No U-turn



Mandatory direction of travel

All traffic must turn left here



Mandatory direction of travel

All traffic must turn right here



Pass by on left

All traffic must pass the obstacle on the left side (i.e. keep left)



Pass by on right

All traffic must pass the obstacle on the right side (i.e. keep right)



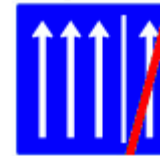
Shoulder open to traffic

The right-hand shoulder of this roadway can be used as a traffic lane; this is generally done only during periods of congestion to provide additional capacity



Shoulder lane ends

If you are in the shoulder traffic lane, you must merge to the left immediately



End of shoulder lane

Do not drive on the shoulder past this point



Pedestrian path

Pedestrians only



Pedestrian zone

Marks the entrance to an area reserved for pedestrians; all adjacent streets are included until the "End of pedestrian zone" sign is reached



End of pedestrian zone



Bicycle path

Bicycles only



Bicycle path

Mopeds also allowed



End of bicycle path



Pedestrian & bicycle path

Pedestrians and bicycles only; both can use the entire pathway



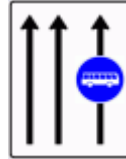
Split pedestrian & bicycle path

Pedestrians and bicycles only; pedestrians and cyclists must keep to the side of the path indicated by the sign



Bus lane

All other vehicles prohibited



Bus lane

This sign shows which lane reserved for buses



Bridle path

Horses only



Traffic calming zone

Marks the beginning of an area where traffic calming rules apply



End of traffic calming zone



Tunnel

Posted at the entrance to a tunnel and indicates that low-beam headlights must be turned-on, that U-turns are prohibited, and that accidents or breakdowns must be moved to a designated emergency wayside



Emergency wayside

Marks a roadside bay inside a tunnel for stopping in case of an emergency or breakdown; all other use is prohibited



Autobahn entrance
Posted on Autobahn entrance ramps and indicates that Autobahn traffic regulations begin



Expressway entrance
Motor vehicles only



End of Autobahn
Located on Autobahn exit ramps and indicates that Autobahn traffic regulations end; may also be used to warn that the Autobahn ends ahead



End of expressway

Parking signs

In this section are all signs related to parking, both prohibition signs against parking as well as signs indicating where parking is allowed.



No stopping
Stopping or standing on the roadway is prohibited



No parking
Prohibits stopping on the roadway for more than 3 minutes except for passenger boarding/discharging and loading/unloading



Parking control zone
Posted at entrances to a neighborhood where a general parking restriction applies to all streets in the area until the "End of Parking Control Zone" sign is reached; a supplemental sign will indicate the exact restriction such as requiring the use of a parking disc, voucher, or permit



End of parking control zone



No stopping (end)
This sign marks the end of a no stopping area



No stopping
Stopping or standing on the roadway is prohibited in either direction from this sign



No stopping (start)
This sign marks the beginning of a no stopping area

**No parking (end)**

This sign marks the end of a no parking area

**No parking**

Parking on the roadway is prohibited in either direction from this sign

**No parking (start)**

This sign marks the beginning of a no parking area

**No stopping on shoulder****No parking on shoulder****Taxi stand**

This area is reserved for taxis only-- other vehicles may not stop here; the supplemental sign indicates the number of taxis allowed to wait here

**Parking area**

Marks an area where parking is permitted; also used to give directions to parking areas

**Parking garage****Indexed parking facility**

Marks or gives directions to a numbered parking facility (e.g. parking lot #8)

**Restricted parking**

You must use a parking disc to park here and you may only park for the length of time indicated

**Restricted parking**

You may park here only if you have an official handicapped permit

**Special parking**

Parking for vehicles with trailers allowed; vehicles may remain parked for longer than 14 days

**Special parking**

Parking for travel trailers allowed; vehicles may remain parked for longer than 14 days

**Parking area (end)**

This sign marks the end of a parking area

**Parking area (start)**

This sign marks the start of a parking area

**Directions to parking****Hiker's parking**

Indicates an area where you may park and hike a circuit trail

**Park & ride**

Indicates a facility where you may park your vehicle and transfer to public transportation

**Parking on sidewalk allowed**

This sign indicates that parallel parking half on the sidewalk and half in the street is permitted on the right or left side of the street respectively

**Parking on sidewalk allowed**

This sign indicates that parallel parking completely on the sidewalk is permitted on the right or left side of the street respectively

**Parking on sidewalk allowed**

This sign indicates that perpendicular parking half on the sidewalk and half in the street is permitted on the right or left side of the street respectively

**Parking on sidewalk allowed**

This sign indicates that perpendicular parking completely on the sidewalk is permitted on the right or left side of the street respectively

Service signs

Below are signs that are used to give directions to motorist services on or near the road. These signs are especially used along the Autobahn. Service signs are a symbol in a white field on a blue square or rectangle.



Filling station



**Filling station w/
unleaded gasoline**

This sign is now obsolete as all stations have unleaded fuel, but it may still appear on older signs



**Filling station w/
liquefied petroleum gas**



**Filling station w/
compressed natural
gas**



Restaurant



Snack bar



Hotel



Auto repair shop



Telephone



Emergency telephone



Rest rooms/toilette



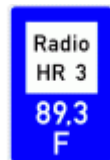
First aid station



Police station



Tourist information



Traffic information radio

This sign shows the name and frequency of a radio station giving local traffic information; the letter at the bottom indicates the traffic reporting region that the station covers



Campground

Information and guide signs

Below are signs that give directions or other information.



Entering urban area
Posted at the entrance to a built-up area and indicates that the 50 km/h speed limit and other urban traffic regulations begins



Leaving urban area
This is usually the backside of the "Entering urban area sign" and indicates the end of urban traffic regulations and the return to the 100 km/h rural speed limit; the top section shows the distance to the next town



Leaving urban area
Same as the sign to the left except that the white top section indicates that the next town is in the same municipality as the one you are leaving



Place name
Marks small towns that do not require the "Entering urban area" sign; this sign is also used occasionally to mark other places of interest



Tourist destination
Used to give directions to tourist attractions



Tourist route
Marks one of the several designated tourist roads



Scenic area
Denotes a scenic or tourist area along or near the Autobahn



River name
Shows the name of the river the road is crossing



Federal Highway route number



Autobahn route number



European route number



Federal Highway direction marker
Shows the direction and distance to major destinations; posted at the crossroads



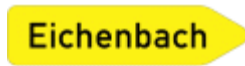
Federal Highway direction marker
Alternate form of the sign to the left



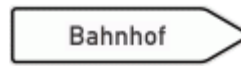
Secondary road direction marker
Shows the direction and distance to major destinations; posted at the crossroads



Secondary road direction marker
Alternate form of the sign to the left



Secondary road direction marker
Shows the direction to minor destinations



Local direction marker
Shows the direction to an important local destination



Direction to Autobahn
Shows the direction to a nearby Autobahn



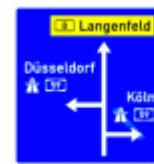
Advance direction sign
Gives advance notice of directions at the upcoming intersection



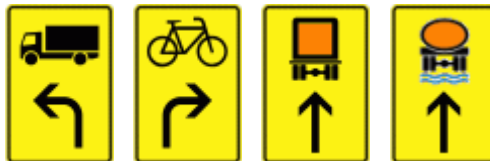
Advance direction sign
Gives advance notice of directions and the lane configuration at the upcoming intersection



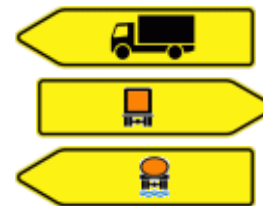
Consolidated direction sign
Shows route information for all directions from the intersection



Autobahn entrance direction sign
Shows route information for Autobahn entrance ramps ahead



Routing for designated vehicles
Vehicle types shown on the sign must follow the route as indicated



Routing for designated vehicles
Vehicle types shown on the sign turn here



Autobahn interchange initial approach sign

Placed 1000 meters before Autobahn exits and 2000 meters before Autobahn crossings and shows the type, number, and name of the interchange; the symbol denotes the type of interchange:



Exit



Crossing

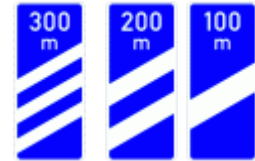


Autobahn interchange advance directional sign

Located 500 meters before Autobahn exits and at both 1000 meters and 500 meters before Autobahn crossings; shows a schematic of the interchange and lists additional destinations



Autobahn interchange number



Autobahn interchange countdown markers

Located at 300 meters (three stripes), 200 meters (two stripes), and 100 meters (one stripe) before the interchange; the interchange number sign is typically mounted above the 300 meter marker



Autobahn exit

This sign is placed just prior to the exit; it is sometimes placed in the center median



Expressway exit



Expressway exit

Shows an exit for local destinations



Exit

Marks an exit ramp from the Autobahn or expressway



Truck stop

This sign indicates that there is an off-Autobahn truck stop at the indicated exit with fuel, food, and other services; pictograms indicating the available services often accompany this sign



Autobahn distance board

Placed after most entrances and lists the distance to major cities along the route; distances to major destinations via intersecting Autobahns are listed at the bottom with the corresponding route number



Detour approach
Indicates that a detour/diversion is about to start; often accompanied by a supplemental sign indicating the distance to the start of the detour



Detour direction sign



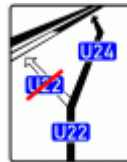
Numbered detour route
Used where there are multiple detour routes in effect; follow the same-numbered route



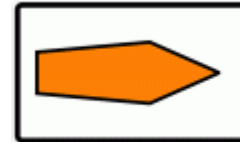
End of detour



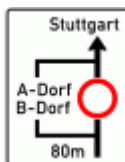
Provisional detour
These signs mark pre-posted detour routes for use in the event that an Autobahn must be closed or as an optional route to bypass congestion; follow the same-numbered route to return to the next Autobahn entrance



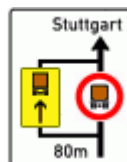
Provisional detour schematic
Used to direct Autobahn traffic to the next sequential provisional detour route when traffic cannot return to the Autobahn at the next entrance



Alternate route
Indicates a recommended alternate route on the Autobahn system for specific vehicles or destinations in order to avoid congestion



Detour route schematic
Indicates that the road ahead is closed and graphically shows the detour route (e.g. turn left in 80 meters and follow the road to B-Dorf and A-Dorf)



Routing schematic for designated vehicles
Indicates that the specified vehicle type is prohibited ahead and indicates that there's a posted detour route (e.g. no hazardous vehicles ahead, so follow the posted route 80 meters ahead on the left)



Complicated traffic route
Shows special routing required to go in the direction indicated (e.g. there's no left turn ahead, so follow the route shown instead)



Dead end street



Dead end street

Children are allowed to play in the street



Water protection area

Posted in environmentally sensitive areas; reminds drivers of vehicles carrying water-hazardous cargo to be extra careful



Bus or streetcar stop

Parking or stopping within 15 meters of this sign is prohibited; do not pass streetcars stopped on the street to board or discharge passengers; yield to vehicles leaving the stop



School bus stop

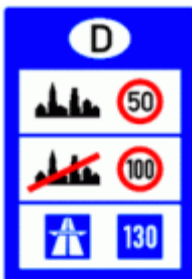
Watch for children during the times indicated



Pedestrian underpass



Pedestrian bridge



National speed limits information

Posted at international borders and informs drivers of the general speed limits



Customs post



Toll road

Motorists using this road must pay a toll

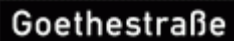


Toll road

Vehicles over 3.5 tonnes must pay a toll to use this road



Goethestraße



Goethestraße

Street name signs

These signs may be mounted on a pole or on the sides of a building



Streetlight does not stay on all night

Posted or painted on lamp posts that turn off during the night; if you park near this street lamp at night, you must leave your parking lights on; the time that the light turns off may be marked in the red area

Miscellaneous signs



Reflector guide posts

Posted every 50 meters along the roadside, left and right sides respectively



Reflector guide posts

Posted on the roadside at an intersection



Obstruction marker

This sign is posted on the edge of an object in or adjacent to the roadway, left and right sides respectively



Obstruction marker

This sign is posted on the edge of an object in or adjacent to the roadway which you may pass on either side



Curve markers

The chevrons point in the direction to travel



Parking hazard

Mounted on the back of vehicles and trailers that may slow or stop on roadways (i.e. maintenance vehicles)



Mobile lane closure board

Used in construction areas to temporarily close lanes; pass by on the side indicated

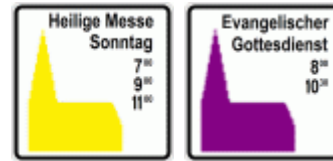


Barricade



NATO military bridge classification signs

Posted near bridges and viaducts and indicates the safe load-carrying capacity of the bridge for military vehicles



Church services

Posted near the entrances to towns and lists scheduled Sunday church services; the gold church denotes Catholic Masses; the purple church denotes Protestant services



Construction project information

These signs are posted at the beginning of major construction zones and give information about the project

Additional sign symbols

Here are some common additional symbols you may see on signs in Germany.



Airport



Train station



Car train



Truck train



Ferry or harbor



Hospital



Roadside chapel



Industrial district

**Sports park****Stadium****Handicapped-accessible
rest room/toilette**

Additional sign information

In the past decade or so, electronic sign systems have been installed on Autobahns and expressways. These signs are capable of displaying facsimiles of official traffic signs and carry the same authority as their static counterparts. Common signs include speed limits and congestion warnings. When mounted overhead, these signs have added flexibility as they can be used to assign speed limits to specific lanes or to display lane control information. See the "Electronic signs" section on the [Autobahn page](#) for more details and examples.

In cities and towns, you will frequently come across convex mirrors mounted on high posts or on the sides of buildings next to the road. These mirrors are provided to help drivers see around tight corners where the visibility is blocked by a building or other obstacle.

Sign vocabulary

Words are sometimes used on traffic signs, especially on supplemental signs. Here is a rather complete list of vocabulary used on German traffic signs.

Abblendlicht - dipped (low-beam) headlights
Abstand halten - maintain following distance
Achtung! - attention!
Allee - avenue
an geraden Tagen - on "even" days
 (i.e. Tue., Thur.)
an ungeraden Tagen - on "odd" days
 (i.e. Mon., Wed., Fri.)
an Sonn- und Feiertagen - on Sundays and
 holidays
Anfang - start, begin
Anlieger frei - residents and local traffic allowed
Anlieger bis Baustelle frei - residents and local
 traffic allowed as far as construction site
Anlieger oder Parken frei - residents, local traffic
 and parking allowed
Anwohner frei - residents allowed
auch - also
auf dem Seitenstreifen - on the shoulder
Ausfahrt - exit
Ausfahrt freihalten - keep driveway exit clear
Autobahn - freeway, superhighway
Autobahndreieck - Autobahn "triangle"
 (i.e. "T"-crossing)
Autobahnkreuz - Autobahn crossing
Autogas - liquified propane gas

Mi - Wednesday
mit Ausweis Nr. - with permit number
mit Parkausweis Nr. - with parking permit number
mit Parkschein - with parking voucher
Mo - Monday
Mofas - mopeds

Nebel - fog
Nebenstrecke - secondary route
Nothalt - emergency stopping area
Notruf - emergency telephone
nur - only

Ölspur - watch for oil on lane

P + M - carpool parking
P + R - park & ride
Parkausweis - parking permit
Parken in gekennzeichneten Flächen 2
Std. - parking in marked spaces for 2 hours
Parken in gekennzeichneten Flächen erlaubt -
 parking in marked spaces allowed
Parken Sa und So erlaubt - parking permitted on
 Saturday and Sunday
Parkhaus - parking garage (above ground)
Parkplatz - parking place, lot

Autohof - truck stop

Bahnhof - railway station

Baustellen ausfahrt- construction site exit

Baustellenfahrzeuge frei - construction vehicles allowed

Behelfsausfahrt - auxilliary exit

bei Nässe - during wet conditions

bei Rot hier halten - stop here on red

besetzt - full (*e.g. parking lots*)

Betriebs- und Versorgungsdienst frei - service and maintenance vehicles allowed

Bewohner frei - residents allowed

bis Baustelle frei - allowed as far as construction site

Di - Tuesday

Do - Thursday

Durchgangsverkehr - through traffic

dürfen überholt werden - are allowed to be passed

Einbahnstraße - one way street

Einfahrt - entrance

Einfahrt freihalten - keep driveway entrance clear

einordnen - get into lane, merge

Einsatzfahrzeuge frei - operations vehicles allowed

Ende - end

Fährbenutzer frei - ferry users allowed

Fahrrad - bicycle

Fahrradstraße - bicycle path

Fahrschule - driving school (*marked on vehicles operated by student drivers*)

Feuergasse - fire lane

Flughafen - airport

Forstwirtschaftlicher Verkehr frei - forestry vehicles allowed

Fr - friday

frei - exempt, allowed (*e.g. "Anlieger frei" = "Residents allowed"*); also means "available" (*i.e. parking spaces*)

freihalten - keep clear

Frostschäden - frost/freeze damage

Fußgänger - pedestrian

Gasse - alley, lane

gebührenpflichtig - toll/fee required

Gefahr- danger

gesperrt - closed, blocked (*e.g. "Straße gesperrt" = "road closed"*)

Glatteis - "black ice"

grüne Welle bei 60 km/h - all green signals ("green wave") at 60 km/h

h - o'clock (*e.g. "8-16 h" = "8am - 4pm"*)

Hafengebiet; Schienenfahrzeuge haben Vorrang - harbor area; rail vehicles have right-of-way

Haltebrucht - wayside/stopping area

Haltestelle - bus/tram stop

Parkscheibe - parking disc

Parkschein - parking voucher

Parkscheinautomat - parking voucher dispensing machine

Parkuhr - parking meter

Pkw. - passenger vehicle (car)

Polizei - police

Radfahrer absteigen - bicyclists dismount

Radweg - bicycle trail

Rasthaus - service area

Rasthof - service area

Raststätte - service area

Rauch - smoke

Reißverschluss erst in 200 m - "zipper" merge begins in 200 meters

Richtung - direction of travel

Rollsplitt - loose gravel/chippings

Sa - Saturday

Sackgasse - dead end, cul-de-sac

Schleudergefahr - skidding danger

Schnellstraße - expressway

Schule - school

Schulbus - school bus

Schülerlotse - school crossing guard

So - Sunday

Sperrgebiet - restricted area

Sperrung - closure

Spur - traffic lane

Spurrillen - lane grooves

Spurrinnen - lane grooves

Stadtmitte - downtown/city center

Stau - congestion/traffic jam

Straße - street

Straßenbahn - streetcar

Std. - hours (*abbr. for "Stunden"*) (*e.g. "2 Std." = "2 hours"*)

Straßenschäden - road damaged

Streugut - road sand/salt

Stunde - hour

Tankstelle - filling station

Tiefgarage - underground parking garage

Tollwut - rabies (*used on signs to warn of a rabies outbreak area*)

überholen - overtake, pass

Umleitung - detour/diversion

Unfall - accident

verboten - prohibited

Verkehr - traffic

Verkehrshelfer - school crossing guard

verschmutzte Fahrbahn - dirt/mud on road

Verkehrsführung geändert - traffic pattern has been changed

Vorfahrt - right-of-way/priority

Vorfahrt geändert - right-of-way has been changed

hier gilt die StVO - official traffic laws are in effect here (*used on private parking lots*)

Industriegebiet; Schienenfahrzeuge haben

Vorrang - industrial area; rail vehicles have right-of-way

kein/keine - no (*e.g. "Keine Mofas" = "no mopeds"*)

keine Wendemöglichkeit - no place to turn around (*i.e. on dead-end street*)

Kfz. - motor vehicle

Krankenfahrzeuge frei - ambulances allowed

Kreuzung - intersection

Kreuzung freihalten - keep intersection clear

Landwirtschaftlicher Verkehr frei - agricultural vehicles allowed

Land- und forstwirtschaftlicher Verkehr frei - agricultural and forestry vehicles only

Licht! - turn on your headlights (*when entering a tunnel*)

Licht? - turn off your headlights (*when coming out of a tunnel*)

Licht ausschalten - turn off headlights

Licht einschalten - turn on headlights

Lieferverkehr frei - delivery vehicles allowed

Linienverkehr frei - scheduled transit vehicles allowed

Lkw. - truck

Vorfahrtstraße - priority road

Vorrang - right-of-way/priority

Vorsicht - caution

Wasserschutzgebiet - water protection area

Weg - way, lane


Werktags - workdays

Wildtollwut - rabies (*used on signs to warn of a rabies outbreak area*)

Zentrum - downtown/city center

Zufahrt bis 25 frei - access permitted as far as 25 (*house number or other location*)

SIGNALS

Traffic signals in Germany are the same type found in the US and elsewhere. Signals are usually located on same side of the intersection as the approaching traffic and are often mounted overhead as well as on the right and left sides of the road. Signals generally operate the same as most other places, but there are a few idiosyncrasies. Below are illustrations and descriptions of various signals and related signs that you will come across in Germany. Items marked with  are especially important for US visitors.



Typical German traffic signals

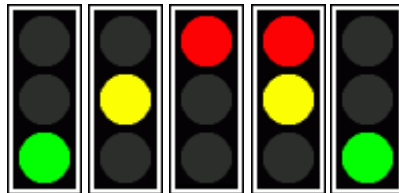


Figure 1

Traffic signals in Germany use the same red, yellow, and green lights found in the US and elsewhere. Red, of course, means *STOP*. Green means *PROCEED with caution*, and yellow means *PREPARE TO STOP*. In Germany, however, an extra phase is added: just before the light changes from red to green, the yellow signal comes on briefly in conjunction with the red. This means *PREPARE FOR GREEN* and is helpful if you are driving a manual transmission to give you a bit of warning to get into gear. **Figure 1** (left) shows the signal cycle.

Some locations have partial signals consisting of just the red and yellow lamps as shown in **Figure 2** (right). These function just like regular traffic signals minus the green phase. So, when the green light would normally be on, there is instead no signal. If you come upon one of these signals showing yellow or red, obey it like you would any traffic signal. Otherwise, ignore the signal and obey any other signs or signals, or in the absence of such, use the default right-of-way rules. These types of signals are usually located at railway crossings.

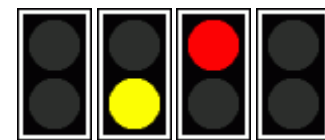


Figure 2

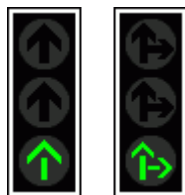


Figure 3

Intersections in Germany often have signals controlling each permitted direction of travel, such as the examples in **Figure 3** (left). If signals at an intersection show these arrows and you don't see a signal with an arrow for the direction you want to go, then traveling that direction may not be permitted; be sure to look for signs. A full green signal without any arrows (like in **Figure 1** above) usually means you may travel straight ahead or make a right or left turn unless otherwise prohibited by signs.

In the case of left turns, the signal shown in **Figure 4** (*right*) indicates a protected left turn.



Figure 4

⚠ When the right-of-way for left turns changes from permitted to protected (or vice-versa), a different style of signal is used. In this case, the left turn signal is located across the intersection on the left corner. There are two varieties in use: a green-yellow combination, or a single green signal. The combination signal consists of a flashing yellow arrow (**Figure 5** *below*) or a solid green arrow (**Figure 6**). The yellow flashing arrow shown in Figure 5 indicates a left turn is permitted but not protected-- use caution and yield to oncoming traffic. When the green arrow is on, as shown in Figure 6, then the turn is protected. In some cases, there is only the single green arrow signal (i.e. no flashing yellow arrow.) Just as in the other cases, the green arrow indicates a protected left turn. If the arrow is off, then obey the signals for through traffic and yield to oncoming traffic when turning left.



Figure 5



Figure 6

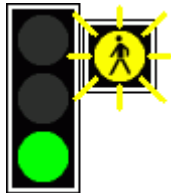


Figure 7

Always watch for and yield to pedestrians and cyclists when turning left or right. Sometimes there will be a flashing yellow signal like the one shown in **Figure 7** (*left*) adjacent to the other signals warning you that pedestrians crossing the intersecting street also have a green light.

⚠ Right turns on red are not universally permitted in Germany. However, such a turn is permitted at intersections with the green arrow sign shown in **Figure 8** (*right*) but only after coming to a complete stop and yielding to all other traffic and pedestrians. This is the only traffic law retained from the former East Germany and thus is still somewhat rarely found in the western states, although it is now being implemented more in many areas.

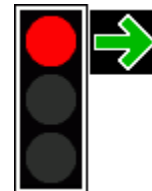


Figure 8

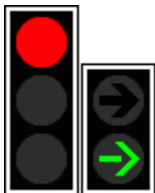


Figure 9

Many intersections have special right turn signals. These two-section signals consist of green and yellow arrows and are used to allow traffic to make a free right turn while the signal for through traffic is red. So, if you encountered the signals in **Figure 9** (*left*) and you wanted to turn right, you could do so without having to stop. When the right turn signal is dark, you must obey the signals for through traffic.

⚠ A flashing yellow traffic signal or a traffic signal with no lights showing indicates that the intersection is currently not being controlled by the signals. Most traffic signals in Germany are switched off at night and sometimes on weekends as well. Also, some pedestrian crossing signals turn themselves off after a period of

inactivity. To provide for traffic control in this situation, nearly all traffic signals also have right-of-way signs installed nearby, usually near the rightmost signal face. Motorists must obey the signs when the signal is off or flashing. So, if you encountered **Figure 10** (below), you would have to yield. If you encountered **Figure 11**, you would have the right-of-way. The signs also provide regulation in the rare event of signal malfunction. Where used, a flashing yellow almost always indicates that you must yield or stop. However, you may have to stop or yield even if there is no flashing yellow-- watch for the signs. There is no flashing red signal in Germany. When the signals are off and you are required to stop, you do not need to stop at the stop line or sign; instead, you should stop at a location where you can safely see the traffic on the intersecting street.

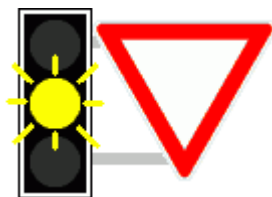


Figure 10

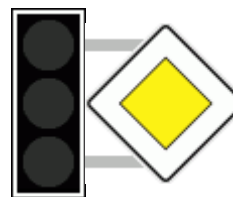


Figure 11

⚠ When the traffic signals are in operation, the signal takes precedence over the sign. Therefore, if you encountered **Figure 12** (below), you would have to stop. In **Figure 13**, you could proceed without stopping.

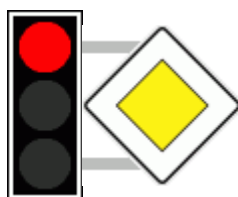


Figure 12



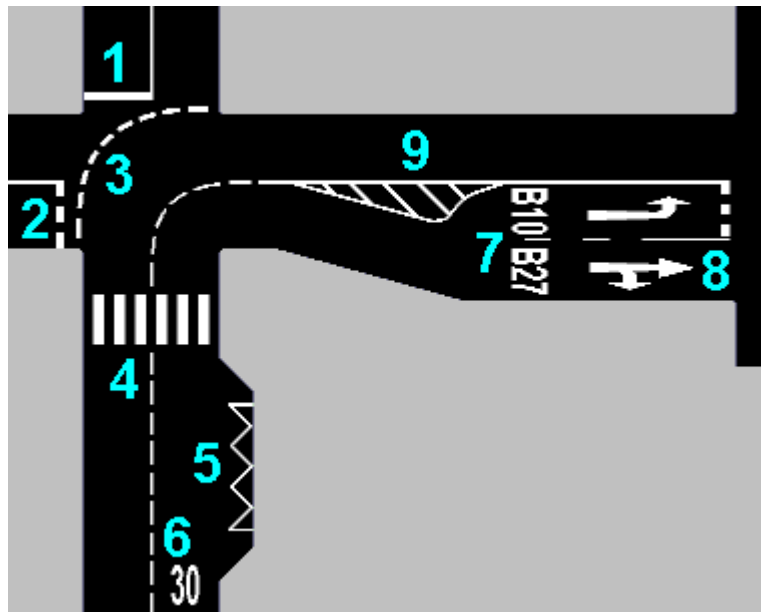
Figure 13

Lane control signals are used in areas where reversible lanes are used, or in areas where lanes may need to be closed periodically. They are also used in conjunction with the electronic sign systems found on the Autobahn and urban expressways to close lanes after accidents and during road work. They are the same standard arrow and X symbols used in many other countries:

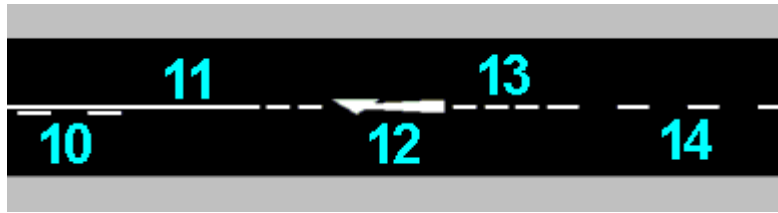
**Lane open****Lane closed ahead**
Merge in the direction indicated**Lane closed**
You may not drive in this lane

ROAD MARKINGS

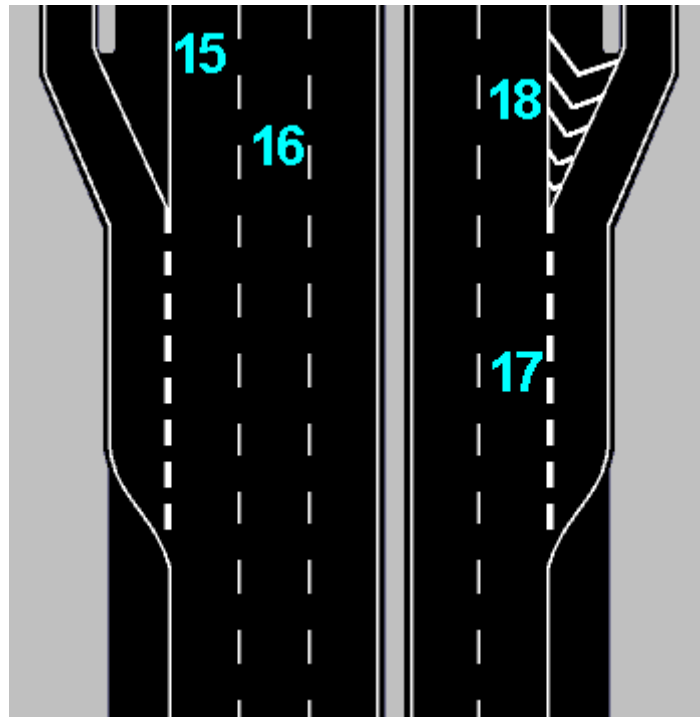
Road pavement markings in Germany are generally similar to those in the US. Unlike the US, however, all regular road markings in Germany are white, include those used to separate opposing traffic. Yellow road markings are used in construction areas and supersede the regular white markings. Below are diagrams and descriptions of most of the road markings you will encounter in Germany. The light blue numbers on the diagrams correspond to the explanations.



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 | <i>Stop line</i>
You must stop behind the thick solid line across your lane. |
| <i>Wait line</i> | |
| 2 | A thick broken line across your lane is the equivalent to a yield sign (and is often used in conjunction with it.) If necessary, you must wait behind the broken line across your lane. |
| <i>Priority road</i> | |
| 3 | A broken line passing through an intersection along the edge of one of the roadways indicates the path of the priority road. |
| <i>Pedestrian crosswalk</i> | |
| 4 | Zebra-striped markings across the roadway mark a pedestrian crosswalk. You must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in the crosswalk. |
| <i>No stopping/parking zone</i> | |
| 5 | Zig-zag lines next to the curb mark a specific area (often near a bus stop or driveway) where you may not stop or park. |
| <i>Numbers</i> | |
| 6 | Numbers on the pavement in your lane usually indicate the speed limit. Often used during sudden drops in the speed limit for safety reasons. |
| <i>Letters and numbers</i> | |
| 7 | A combination of letters and numbers on the pavement usually indicate route numbers. These are frequently used at complicated intersections to guide motorists into the correct lane. For instance, a marking such as "B27" indicates that the lane you are in follows the B27 highway. |
| <i>Intersection arrows</i> | |
| 8 | Arrows on the pavement in your lane indicate which turns are allowed from your lane. |
| <i>Restricted zone</i> | |
| 9 | You may not drive in an area with diagonal lines. |



- No passing in one direction**
- 10** You may pass only if you have a broken line on your side; you may not cross a solid line on your side to pass.
-
- 11** **No passing**
You may not cross the solid center line to pass.
-
- Merge arrow**
- 12** An arrow slanting toward the right in the center of the roadway warns passing traffic to merge to the right as a no passing zone is approaching.
-
- 13** **Lane separation line**
Short broken lines between opposing traffic lanes indicate that the passing zone is ending.
-
- 14** **Lane separation line**
Long broken lines between opposing traffic lanes indicate passing is allowed (unless prohibited by a sign). This marking is also used to separate traffic lanes traveling in the same direction.



- Edge marking**
- 15** A solid line along the side of the roadway marks the edge of the roadway or separates the travel lanes from the shoulder.
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- 16** **Lane separators**
Long broken lines separate traffic lanes traveling in the same direction.

Acceleration/deceleration lane

- 17** Short, thick broken white lines separate a deceleration (exit) lane or acceleration (entrance) lane from the main traffic lanes.

Restricted zone

- 18** You may not drive in an area with diagonal lines.

Colored curb markings are not used in Germany. Head-in and parallel parking lines are obvious and similar to those used in the US.

On streets not signed as one-way, here are the default lane assignments based on the number of marked lanes on the street:

- **2 lanes:** The left lane is for oncoming traffic; the right lane is for traffic moving in your direction.
- **3 lanes:** The center lane is reserved for left turns only. You may not pass. The far left lane is for oncoming traffic; the far right lane is for traffic moving in your direction.
- **4 lanes:** The left two lanes are for oncoming traffic; the right two lanes are for traffic moving in your direction. These are usually separated by a single or double solid white line. Even if separated by a broken white line, you may not cross the center line to pass.
- **5 lanes:** Same as 4 lanes except that center lane is for left turns only. (Very rare.)

Odd lane arrangements or assignments are usually marked fairly obviously, either on the road surface or by signs.