

## SAFETY IN GERMANY AND WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY



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Hochschule Bielefeld –  
University of Applied Sciences  
and Arts

Welcome Center

welcome@hsbi.de  
<https://www.hsbi.de/en/international-office/welcome-center>



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**Dear International Scholars,**

Even though Germany is a safe country and we hope that you will spend your time with us in peace and without any problems, it is good to know what to do in an emergency. That is why we have compiled general information on safety in Germany as well as information for specific emergencies and problems in this document. Please contact [welcome@hsbi.de](mailto:welcome@hsbi.de) if you have any questions or need additional advice.

Your HSBI Welcome Center

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# 1. Safety in Germany

## 1.1 Overview

Germany is considered one of the safest countries in Europe and the world. The country consistently scores well in the Global Peace Index thanks to an efficient police force and a strong judiciary. In addition, a stable healthcare system and reliable public infrastructure increase safety for residents and visitors alike.

Street crime in Germany is lower than in many other countries, although, as everywhere, street crime exists, especially in the larger cities. You do not have to take any special safety precautions when visiting Germany, but you should not take any unnecessary risks. If you are out alone at night, for example, you should avoid dark and deserted alleyways, parks and the areas around railway stations. At weekends, on public holidays and at football matches, you should keep your distance from crowds of drunk people, as they can get aggressive or behave inappropriately.

## 1.2 General Precautions

- Do not leave any bags unattended in public places.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash with you.
- Keep valuables locked up in your flat/hotel room whenever possible.
- Take extra care of your bag and wallet in large crowds.
- Always carry your passport/visa/residence permit with you and keep copies of these documents at home.
- Avoid dark and deserted areas at night.

# 2. Emergencies

## 2.1 Police: 110

The police in Germany have the task of ensuring general safety. **You can reach the police at the free emergency number 110.** Call the police if you experience or witness accidents, harassment, burglaries, assault or other criminal activities. In cases of accidents, assaults and similar incidents, the fire department and/or emergency medical services will also be alerted automatically. You should also call the police in the following situations: if you feel you have witnessed something suspicious, if you notice that a letterbox is full of letters and has not been emptied for a long time, if you hear loud screams or if you have accidentally damaged someone else's property (e.g., scratched a car).

For matters that are not urgent, you can call 0521 545-0. All police offices in Bielefeld and their contact details can be found [here](#).

Police officers in Germany are expected to be incorruptible and to treat all individuals without discrimination. Unfortunately, in reality, individuals who appear to be foreigners are often subjected to more frequent checks and treated with more



suspicion by the police. If you experience discrimination, you have the right to file a complaint.



## 2.2 Fire Brigade and Ambulance: 112

**You can call the fire brigade and ambulance at the free emergency number 112**

in case of accidents, fires, or when someone is in an acute, potentially life-threatening emergency. This applies, for example, in cases of severe injuries or burns, unconsciousness, symptoms of a stroke (paralysis, vision or speech disturbances) or signs of a heart attack (chest tightness, cold sweats, severe pain). You should also dial 112 in the event of an allergic shock or severe difficulty breathing, such as in a severe asthma attack. Even if the situation is unclear but could be life-threatening, do not hesitate to call 112.

## 2.3 Women's Helpline: (05 21) 12 42 48

If you experience sexual violence as a woman, you can contact Frauennotruf Bielefeld e.V. (Women's Helpline Bielefeld Association) free of charge. Counselling is available both in person and by telephone. You will receive support on the topics of sexual violence, date rape drugs, harassment in the workplace, stalking and more. You can remain anonymous if you wish.

Frauennotruf Bielefeld e.V. is located at Rohrteichstraße 28, 33602 Bielefeld and can be contacted at (05 21) 12 42 48 or by e-mail at [kontakt@frauennotruf-bielefeld.de](mailto:kontakt@frauennotruf-bielefeld.de).

Frauennotruf Bielefeld e.V. also offers counselling at Bielefeld University on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (13.00 to 15.00) in room L3-119. During these consultation hours, you can reach the counsellors by telephone at (0521) 106 - 4208 or by e-mail at: [frauennotruf@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:frauennotruf@uni-bielefeld.de).

# 3. Information and Counselling Centres

## 3.1 Lost and Found Offices

If you have found or lost an item, you can contact a lost and found office. An overview can be found here.

For items lost in Bielefeld on the tram or bus, you can contact the lost and found office of moBiel at Jahnplatz. Deutsche Bahn also has its own lost and found service.

At HSBI, lost and found items can be handed in and picked up at the information desk at the main entrance of the main building.



### 3.2 Medical Care

On the Welcome Center's website under "During your stay," you find lists of clinics with different specialisations in Bielefeld, Minden and Gütersloh.



### 3.3 Locksmith Service

If you have locked yourself out of your flat, you should be cautious, as there are many untrustworthy locksmith services. Call a local locksmith to avoid additional cost for a long travel time to your flat. It is important to agree on a fixed price that includes all costs, including travel and any additional charges before you task the locksmith with opening your door and to call different services and compare prices.

Inform the locksmith whether the door is just closed or locked, and make it clear that you want the lock to be opened, but not replaced. Replacing the lock is usually not necessary and very expensive. If possible, talk to the locksmith in the presence of witnesses. Only pay the agreed amount upfront. If you feel pressured, call the police at 110.

### 3.4 Loss of Bank Card

If you need to block your bank card, you can call the emergency blocking service of your bank or the general blocking service at the number 116 116.

Optionally, you can also inform the Federal Police so that your card is also blocked for direct debits. In case of suspected theft, you should additionally file a report with the police.

### 3.5 Loss of Campus Card

If you have lost your campus card, you can block it yourself through the user administration. Visit the website <https://www.hsbi.de/benutzerverwaltung> and follow the instructions to block your card. If you need support, please contact us.



Alternatively, you have the option to have the campus card blocked at the university's information desk. For this, you will need a photo ID.

### 3.6 Poison Emergency Hotline

In Bonn, the Poison Information Centre is at your disposal if you need help with acute or chronic poisoning. You can call the centre at 02 28 - 19 240 or send an email to [gizbn@ukbonn.de](mailto:gizbn@ukbonn.de). Further information can be found on the website [www.gizbonn.de](http://www.gizbonn.de). The experts provide free advice on poisoning caused by medicines, plants, drugs, animals, fungi, household products or chemicals. In cases of severe poisoning, however, you should call an ambulance or go to the hospital immediately.



### 3.7 Counselling for Scholars Attacked Because of Their Research

The Scicomm support team advises scientists who are treated with hostility because of their research. It is available 365 days a year from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. by telephone at 0157 923 448 04.



### 3.6 Psychosocial Counselling

The following hotlines provide anonymous support:

“Nummer gegen Kummer” – helpline for children and young people

**116 111**

“Nummer gegen Kummer“ – helpline for parents

**0800 111 0 550**

Helpline for women who experience or have experienced physical or psychological violence (in 18 different languages)

**116 016;**

<https://www.hilfetelefon.de/en.html>



Helpline for men who experience or have experienced physical or psychological violence

**0800 12 39 900**

Telephone counselling (in German only, but here in other languages as well:

<https://www.telefonseelsorge.de/international-helplines/>)

**0800 111 0 111 or 0800 111 0 222**



In addition, HSBI employees can make use of psychosocial counselling in a timely and confidential manner.



### 3.7 Support in Case of Discrimination, Harassment or Violence

In case you experience discrimination, harassment or physical or psychological violence, you will receive support from **HSBI's Gender and Diversity Office** and can report discriminatory behaviour either through an anonymous online form, in person or by e-mail. Our Welcome Center team, too, are always ready to lend an ear and will gladly support you within our possibilities.

