

Information about membership of the Mieterverein

- Tenants' Association for Heidelberg and Surrounding Area -

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email: beratung@mieterverein-heidelberg.de

website: www.mieterverein-heidelberg.de

Opening hours: Mon-Thu 9am-12 noon + 2pm - 6pm, Fri 9am-2pm

Why join a Mieterverein?

Tenants usually find themselves in a weaker position than their landlord or landlady. While one owns an apartment or even an entire apartment building, the other is dependent on their goodwill for renting a place to live.

For the most part there are too few apartments. Whoever does not have enough money or comes from a socially disadvantaged background has particular difficulties in finding a suitable apartment. And once you've got one, new problems may arise:

- What do I have the right to use (e.g. the garden, the garage)?
- When is it my turn to clean (e.g. the hallway, the stairs)?
- Have the utilities been correctly calculated?
- Am I allowed to reduce the rent because of defective heating, plumbing etc.?
- Do I have to pay all increases in rent?
- What happens when an apartment is being transformed into a privately-owned apartment?

The Tenants' Association for Heidelberg and Surrounding Area gives advice and assistance. We advise our 12,000+ members through lawyers specialising in tenants' law in Heidelberg and in our branches in Wiesloch, Walldorf, Schwetzingen, Sinsheim and Eberbach.

Membership

Interested?

Alone, an individual often cannot cope with these problems. The Heidelberg Tenants' Association offers assistance to its over 12,000 members. Here you will find knowledgeable advisors. The Tenants' Association does not just advise its members – it also has a public role defending the interests of tenants. Through press releases, mailings and personal appeals, the Association attempts to ensure that tenant-friendly laws are passed, that enough apartments are built and that rents are affordable. In addition, the Association tries to establish contacts with politicians and administrators at the federal, state and local level. Whether we succeed depends on the number of members and their involvement.

Anyone who acknowledges the constitution of the Association can become a member. As a member, you are entitled to use our legal advice services, by appointment. Thanks to the large number of over 12,000 members, you can benefit from the service for only €48 per year.

Should a lawsuit become necessary, you can either be represented by a lawyer of your own choice, or you can choose one of our contract lawyers. Possible court costs will, however, be your responsibility.

How to join

Your membership will come into effect after signing an application to join. Please give us your address and we will be glad to send you the necessary forms. The first full annual membership fee (€48) and the one-time admission fee (€17) should be paid together (€65) upon joining. By signing the application form you automatically recognise the Association's constitution, which may be obtained from the office upon request. The membership fees are calculated on a quarterly basis and you will receive an annual invoice.

Bank accounts of the Mieterverein Heidelberg

Sparkasse Heidelberg sort code: 672 500 20 account: 17949
Postbank Karlsruhe sort code: 660 100 75 account: 18726-755

Direct Debit Procedure

To save us and yourself work you can authorise us to have our bank debit your account directly. That means that your membership dues will be automatically transferred from your account into ours. The authorisation needs to be in writing. You may give us written notice to cancel the direct debit arrangement at any time. As a bonus your admission fee will be reduced by €7.

Transfers / Changes of Address

Your membership does not automatically end if you leave the area we cover. If you move to another city, we can transfer the balance of your membership account to the Tenants' Association in your new area so that joining again will not be necessary. Please inform us by telephone, fax or email of all changes of address.

Ending Membership

According to section 4.2 of the Association's constitution, you can only terminate your membership at the end of the year after the calendar year following the year in which you first joined the Tenants' Association. For example, if you joined on August 1st, 2009 you can officially leave on December 31st, 2011. Beyond this period, you can cancel your membership as of the end of a calendar year by giving notice **in writing** at least 3 months in advance (i.e. before the end of September).

Services

Legal Advice

After joining the Association, you have the right to **free legal advice** even for immediate problems. We conduct all necessary correspondence, for instance with the landlord/lady, at no extra charge. Our legal advisors are experts in tenants' law (see list of names at the end). You can phone or visit the Heidelberg office to arrange an appointment with an English-speaking advisor – **remember to have your membership number at the ready**. Please bring along copies of the most important documents (leases, correspondence, bills). New members can combine joining the Association with the first advice session, either in Heidelberg or at one of the branch offices.

Representation in Court?

The Tenants' Association is *not allowed* to appear for you in court, neither can it assume the costs of legal representation. You must see to this yourself, in good time - possibly in the form of taking out an insurance policy against legal costs (*Rechtsschutzversicherung*). In addition, as a member of the Mieterverein you can still take out separate insurance for the protection of tenants (*Mieter-Rechtsschutzversicherung*) which costs €23.07 a year. Our head office holds information and registration forms or you can download these from our website (see „Ausdrucke“). Please note there is a waiting period of 3 months until such an insurance comes into effect.

Branch Offices

Over half of our members live outside Heidelberg. Our branch offices are open weekly in Wiesloch (on Thursday), Walldorf (on Monday), Schwetzingen (on Wednesday), Sinsheim (on Monday) and fortnightly in Eberbach (on Monday). Appointments should always be made by telephone via the Heidelberg office.

Member's Newsletter

Every two months, every member of the Association receives the German Tenant Federation's *Mieterzeitung* (Tenants' Newsletter). This includes news from the Baden-Württemberg region, including the Heidelberg area. See also the Federation's website at www.mieterbund.de or www.mieterbund-bw.de.

Brochures and Information

Members can purchase several brochures about tenants' law and a tenants' reference guide in the office at a reduced price.

Who we are

The Mieterverein has a long tradition

Our Heidelberg Tenants' Association was founded in 1910. It is a member of the Baden-Württemberg section of the Deutscher Mieterbund. The over 1.3 million organised members see it as their duty to strengthen and define their rights, and to protect themselves against demands by organised property owners going against the public interest. The main concern of the tenants movement is to influence legislation, municipal administration and political parties, in the interest of tenants.

Along with this work, which we undertake in the name of all tenants, we represent the rights and interests of our over 12,000 members concerning all questions of tenants' rights. Even though most members join up because of a conflict with their landlord/lady, it is still advisable to remain a member after this has ended. Only through large numbers is it possible for the general interests of members to be effectively presented.

This is why all tenants should belong to the Tenants' Association. We are looking forward to welcoming you as a member of the Mieterverein for Heidelberg and the surrounding area.

The people at the Mieterverein

Since 1998 our offices have been situated in Poststrasse 46, Heidelberg-Bergheim, near the city library. Most of our consultations take place here. Our opening hours are from Monday to Thursday: 9am-12 noon and 2pm-6pm and on Fridays from 9am-2pm.

The honorary board of the Association:

<i>Lothar Binding</i> from Heidelberg	1st Chairperson since 2009 (board member since 1996)
<i>Klaus Stütz</i> from Dossenheim	2nd Chairperson since 1987
<i>Waltraud Burger</i> from Schriesheim	board member since 1993
<i>Rosi Kirsch</i> from Heidelberg	board member since 2002
<i>Stephen Dörr</i> from Heidelberg	board member since 2009

Office staff:

Tanja Klingel, *Marion Leins*, *Heike Vierling*, *Selma Gezen* and *Christoph Nestor*

Appointments

Please make **all arrangements** through our head office in Heidelberg even if you would like the consultation to take place in Wiesloch, Walldorf, Schwetzingen, Sinsheim or Eberbach.

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Internet www.mieterverein-heidelberg.de.

Our legal advisors, all practising lawyers, most of them specialising in tenants' law (*):

Mr. <i>Klaus Flock</i> *	Vangerowstr. 33, 69115 Heidelberg, 06221-9711-0
Mrs. <i>Kristina Gellissen</i> *	Ludwigstr. 52, 67346 Speyer, 06232-292 160 (also in Schwetzingen + Walldorf)
Mrs. <i>Simone Hartwig</i> *	Kleinschmidtstr. 24, 69115 Heidelberg, 06221-6 555 515 (also in Sinsheim)
Mrs. <i>Beate Otto</i> *	Kleinschmidtstr. 24, 69115 Heidelberg, 06221-6 555 515 (also in Wiesloch + Walldorf)
Mr. <i>Roland Obst</i> *	Bachstr. 14-16, 69121 Heidelberg, 06221-60 72-0 (also in Schwetzingen)
Mr. <i>Eric Schuh</i> *	Bachstr. 14-16, 69121 Heidelberg, 06221-60 72-0 (also in Sinsheim)
Mr. <i>Krystian Hipp</i> *	Bachstr. 14-16, 69121 Heidelberg, 06221-60 72-0
Mrs. <i>Sigrid Schwab</i> *	Jahnstr. 9, 69120 Heidelberg, 06221-411 811 (also in Eberbach)
Mr. <i>Fritz Vollrath</i> *	Jahnstr. 9, 69120 Heidelberg, 06221-411 811
Mr. <i>Florian Reh</i>	Jahnstr. 9, 69120 Heidelberg, 06221-411 811