



HELPING WITH HOUSING IS HELPING TO STAY
A HOUSING GUIDEBOOK FOR ALL (CASES)

Jährlich wenden sich 2500 Personen
hilfesuchend an das
Netzwerk Wohnungssicherung.

Eine gesicherte Wohnmöglichkeit ist die
Grundlage für ein selbstbestimmtes Leben
und Voraussetzung, sich den täglichen
Anforderungen des Lebens stellen zu können.

Eine gesicherte Wohnumgebung ist aber
auch Grundlage für erfolgreiche Integration.

Als Hilfestellung und Unterstützung für
gefährdete Haushalte, aber auch als
Unterlage für Gemeinden,
Hausverwaltungen und
Beratungseinrichtungen hat der Verein
Wohnplattform diesen sehr praxisbezogenen
und klar gestalteten

Wohnratgeber für Alle (Fälle)

in 6 Sprachen erstellt.

Herzlichst

Ihr WOHNPLATTFORM-Team

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Before you start looking for a flat

Before you actively start looking for a flat, you should absolutely consider the following:

- **How much monthly rent can I afford?** Remember to account for additional operating expenses such as energy, phone, household insurance, etc
- **Which one-time up-front costs** (share of construction costs, deposit, first month's rent, etc.) must I budget for and can I afford them?
- **What floor area do I require?** Do my wishes correspond with my financial situation?
- **Where should the flat be located?** Accessibility of infrastructure like public transport, nursery schools, schools, shops, etc. should be taken into consideration.

„What is a flat going to cost me?“

- **Gross rent (Bruttomonatsmiete) plus operating costs (Betriebskosten)** (water, sewerage, refuse collection, real estate tax, cleaning, electricity for public areas, etc.). The total must be paid monthly in advance to the landlady/landlord (regardless of whether your salary is paid on the 8th or 15th of the month!)
- **Bills for electricity and heating (Strom und Heizung).** These costs largely depend on your usage patterns. In a rental flat, you can save a large amount of money by being careful about your energy consumption (electricity, heating)!

Do not forget to budget for radio, internet, TV and household insurance!

„Which one-time costs must I budget for when renting a flat?“

Sample calculations for renting a flat:

- **Deposit (Kaution).** A deposit has to be paid in case that the tenant fails to meet his liabilities for rent or damage. Normally this amounts to two or three month's rent (six month's gross rent is the legal maximum). The landlord/landlady only returns the deposit including any accrued interest after the rental property has been returned in the condition stipulated by the tenancy agreement.
- **Share of construction costs (Baukostenbeitrag).** In a subsidised flat, the tenant has to finance a share of the construction costs out of his or her own resources. This share decreases by 1% each year and is repaid when the tenant moves out.
- **Membership fee (Mitgliedsbeitrag).** Sometimes housing associations charge a membership fee.
- **Commission (Vermittlungsprovision).** If you engage an estate agent to find a flat for you, he will charge a commission of up to two month's rent.
- **Stamp duty (Vergebührung).** The tenant also has to pay the fees charged by the tax authorities for registering the tenancy agreement.
- **First month's rent (1. Monatsmiete).** This also has to be settled before taking possession of the flat.

Single flat

landlady/landlord: private from estate agent
42 sq.m, hall, bathroom/WC, open-plan kitchen, bedroom
location: urban area
lease term: 3 years

monthly rent:

€ 408,34 (including VAT and operating costs)

up-front-costs:

€ 2.000,00 deposit
€ 147,00 stamp duty
€ 898,35 commission (two month's rent including VAT)
€ 408,34 first month's rent
€ 3.453,69

total

Family flat

landlady/landlord: nonprofit housing association
76 sq.m, hall, bathroom, WC, kitchen, living-dining room, bedroom, children's room
location: rural area
lease term: unlimited

monthly rent:

€ 461,33 (including VAT, operating costs and heating)

up-front-costs: € 1.651,47 share of construction costs
€ 167,00 stamp duty - tenancy agreement
total € 461,33 first month's rent
€ 2.279,80

You are looking for a flat

Your first and most important step: Get registered with a (nonprofit) housing association or your municipality as someone who is looking for a flat.

It is also possible to get registered with several housing associations. Normally, any registration fees will be refunded with the 1st rent or when you withdraw your registration. Do not be put off if you are told of long waiting lists. If you don't get registered, you will never get a flat!

Further information on - and contact details for housing associations offering rental objects in your desired location, can be obtained from your municipality.

Some housing associations have special rules governing membership by non-EU citizens, just as some municipalities have qualifying rules when registering you for council housing. Information about this is directly available from the respective municipalities and housing associations.



If you need a flat urgently, you can look into the private housing market. But experience shows that in most cases this only yields tenancy agreements with limited term at higher prices.

9 | If you are looking for a flat in the private housing market:

Regularly read newspaper advertisements

Quickly arrange a date to view the flat

(cheap flats are in great demand).

Take account of the commission due when dealing with estate agents

Advertise in newspapers/online, or place ads on bill-boards in supermarkets, municipalities, universities, etc.

Note: such advertisements should be free of charge or at least very cheap.



Hint: Note that buying necessary household equipment and furnishings (e.g. kitchen, home appliances, lamps, bed) also costs money. Normally, you are not obliged to buy furniture from the previous tenant! Cheap second-hand furniture can be purchased from social services or welfare trusts. Municipalities and social counselling centres provide further information.



Hint: Make sure that the contract gives you the right to terminate your tenancy even in the case of a limited term tenancy.

Viewing a flat

Make absolutely sure you take the time to inspect the flat properly, so that you can take note of any deficiencies in the flat (such as for example damp spots, damaged flooring, cracks in sanitary installations, mould patches, etc.). It is always helpful to take someone else along. Clarify any uncertainties with your landlady/landlord or the representative of the property management.



Checklist for viewing a flat

- How large is the flat?
- What is the condition of the flat? (check the sanitary installations, walls, floors, windows, doors, hot water tank, heating appliance, etc.)?
- What are the monthly rent, operating costs and up-front cost?
- How much did the previous tenant pay for electricity and heating?
- How near are shops, schools, public transport and other facilities?
- When can you move in?
- If you have pets: are they allowed in the property?



Hint: Compare your answers to these questions with the ideas you had before you started looking for a flat!

Renting a flat

Important: Without a written tenancy agreement with paid-up stamp duty, you will not receive housing benefit!



Hint: Before signing any contract, read it through thoroughly. Clarify any ambiguities or uncertainties and do not let yourself be hurried into signing! You can get free legal advice on questions concerning housing from the legal aid office of the labour chamber (“Arbeiterkammer”) All member organisations of the tenant’s rights association offer this service for a fee (membership).



Checklist for taking over a flat

- Receipt confirming the payment of the up-front cost
- Signature on the tenancy agreement
- Receipt of all keys to the flat
- Handover certificate: jointly written by the landlady/landlord and yourself! It is absolutely essential to record the condition of the flat and in particular to take pictures of any pre-existent deficiencies. Thus, when moving out, you cannot be held liable for deficiencies which were already present before you moved in.
- Record the electricity and heating meter readings.



Immediately after taking over the flat

- Register your new principal residence with the responsible municipality within 3 working days
- Notify the electricity/gas/district heating companies (do not set too low a monthly or quarterly rate in order to avoid high end-of-year payment)
- Set up mail forwarding at your old post office
- Notify the telephone-, cable- and internet provider of your change of address
- Notify the employer, job centre, bank, insurance companies, health insurance company, social services, nursery school, etc. of your change of address
- Set up household insurance
- Register/transfer the registration of your car (within one week)
- Apply for housing benefit

Housing benefit

As the main tenant of a rented property (whether privately rented or not) you are entitled to housing benefit from the state of Upper Austria, provided that stamp duty has been levied on your written tenancy agreement by the tax authorities and you meet certain criteria. On application, housing benefit is granted for one year.

The application form and further information is obtainable from the housing association department of the state of Upper Austria (see address section).

Non-EEA citizens may be eligible for housing benefit provided that they

- have lawfully had their main residence in Austria for more than 5 years without interruption, and
- are in receipt of income which is subject to income tax and
- have previously been in gainful employment and thereby having made contributions to the Austrian social security system, are currently in receipt of benefits from the social security system (e.g. unemployment benefit) and
- have been in receipt of said income for 36 months out of the last five years.



Correct heating and ventilation

We spend most of the day in enclosed spaces. Thus, sufficient provision of breathable air as well as a comfortable room temperature are very important. Problems with mould can arise, particularly during the winter months. These can only be prevented by correct heating and ventilation.

Correct heating

- Keep your thermostat turned off during your daily ventilation routine
- Do not tilt the windows: when the windows are tilted, constant heat loss results, leading to higher heating costs!
- Do not hide the radiators behind curtains or furniture: this reduces their output.
- Regularly bleed the radiators.
- Do not completely switch off heating during the night or when leaving the flat in order to avoid cooling off of external walls which leads to condensation.
- Have the heating appliances and hot-water storage in your flat maintained by a professional on a regular basis

Correct ventilation

- Aerate the whole flat at least twice a day by completely opening all the windows for 5 to 10 minutes.
- The colder it is outside, the shorter the required aeration period.
In transitional times (spring/autumn) aerate more often than in winter.
- Aerate bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms particularly thoroughly.
- Keep all windows closed when not aerating the flat.
- Allow steam (for example from cooking, ironing, bathroom etc.) to escape from the flat as quickly as possible.
- Aeration of the flat is just as important during wet weather!



Hint: Do NOT let your laundry dry in the flat, but use the designated drying room or let it dry outside. Humidity may otherwise increase in the flat, leading to mould.

If mould is already present, small patches may be treated with a solution of soda: dissolve 150 grams of crystals of soda in half a litre of water and dab on with a cloth, including 20 cms of the surrounding area. This is cheap and relatively harmless compared to bleach. Do not paint over using emulsion, as this is particularly prone to mould.

Energy saving

The basic principle is: Energy saving pays off! It not only helps the environment, but your purse as well.



Simple energy saving tips:

- New appliances of the category A+ are often much more energy efficient than old ones
- Avoid using the stand-by mode of appliances
- Use energy-saving lamps or LEDs instead of conventional bulbs
- As far as possible, use lids on your pots while cooking
- Shower instead of taking a bath
- Do not overheat the rooms



Hint: Detailed information and various leaflets on energy saving are available from the Upper Austrian energy saving organisation (see address section).



Waste separation

Upper Austria has a superbly organised waste collection system. This makes possible sensible recycling of the separated waste.

The waste is separated into the following categories:

Organic waste

Glass

Metal

Paper and cardboard

Plastics and composite packaging

Residual waste

Make sure you always separate your waste correctly and dispose of it in the appropriate containers. Information may be found on the containers and is also provided by your municipality or by the waste disposal company.

Caution: Bulky refuse (e.g. old furniture) and hazardous waste (for example dye, varnishes, drugs, batteries, tyres, ...) are not to be disposed of with domestic waste, but have to be taken to a waste recovery centre. Normally, you may call to fix a date for collection of bulky waste free of charge.

Leaving bulky waste on the pavement without a fixed collection date is NOT permitted and is a punishable offence.

Hint: Avoiding waste as well as correct refuse separation reduces operating costs and protects the environment.



A few simple tips on how to avoid waste and how to dispose of it:

- Give preference to reusable articles and packaging
- Use your shopping bags several times
- Avoid products with extensive or environmentally problematic packaging
- Only purchase the amount of food that you really need
- Cancel the delivery of unwanted advertising to your postbox
- Do not pour waste into your WC



Assistance with housing problems


Problems in the flat

The house rules give you guidelines concerning rest periods of quiet, orderliness, house-keeping, security or the keeping of animals. By adhering to these guidelines, you may avoid many problems in the flat and with your neighbours.

Should any problems or damage for which the tenant is liable occur in the flat despite your precautions, please contact the janitor/housekeeper/landlady/landlord first.

Should a problem arise with the neighbours, it is always advisable to seek to clear it up by talking it through together. Mutual understanding and consideration are the basis for good neighbourhood!

Information regarding the duties and rights of tenants and landladies/landlords is available from your janitor, from tenant counselling organisations (see address section) or on the internet.

 **Hint:** Regularly check the bill-board in your building. Up-to-date notices and information from your landlady/landlord are on display there.

Television

Be aware that not all landladies/landlords permit a parabolic reflector to be mounted on the outer walls. You should therefore ask your janitor/landlady/landlord in good time about the possibility of receiving cable TV in the flat.


Eviction

Three major reasons for early termination of the tenancy agreement by the landlady/landlord are:

- Rent is in arrears despite reminders
- Unacceptable behaviour (for example disturbing the peace, inconsiderate behaviour towards neighbours),
- Serious abuse of the property (neglect of the flat, contravention of the terms of the lease ...)

The landlady/landlord may only terminate the tenancy by court order. If the landlady/landlord terminates or intends to terminate the tenancy agreement, contact your local social counselling centre, municipality or institution of the network for security of tenure.

Addresses of these institutions are listed in the chapter “Further information, support and help”

 **Hint:** It is no disgrace to seek help or support when you are in difficulties. If you are at risk of being evicted from your flat, do not hesitate to seek help – the earlier the better.

Moving out and handing over of flat

Termination of the tenancy by the tenant is only valid when put in writing. Keep to the cancellation period specified in the tenancy agreement.

Hand over the flat to the landlady/landlord in the condition specified in the tenancy agreement. You may only hand over the flat to the landlady/landlord in person.

If the flat is returned in the correct condition, you are entitled to the return of your deposit or building contributions. The tenant is only responsible for damage in the case of excessive wear and tear or damage caused by inappropriate usage.

The following tenant is under no obligation to buy any furniture left in the flat. If such a sale is desired, it may be negotiated with the following tenant, preferably by contract in written form.



Hint: Make enquiries from your janitor, a tenant counselling service (see address section) or consumer protection board if anything is unclear to you.



Checklist for moving out of the flat:

- Return of the flat in good condition (handover certificate) and return all the keys
- Cancel or reregister electricity, gas, district heating (read the meter)
- Cancel or reregister the telephone, cable-TV, Internet etc...
- Notify the registration office of the municipality
- Forward the new address to the banks, insurance, employer etc..
- Arrange forwarding of your mail to your new address
- Instruct the bank to cancel any standing order for rental payments



**tenant counselling bodies
(MieterInnenberatungsstellen)**

Mieterschutzverband Österreichs
Lederergasse 21
4020 Linz
0732/771288
www.mieterschutzverband.at
msv-linz@aon.at

Mietervereinigung Österreichs

Noßbergerstr. 11
4020 Linz
0732/773229
www.mietervereinigung.at
oberoesterreich@mietervereinigung.at

Schlichtungsstelle für Wohn- & Miet-
rechtsangelegenheiten der Stadt Linz
Bezirksverwaltungsamt
Hauptstr. 1-5, Neues Rathaus
4041 Linz
0732/7070
schlichtungsstelle.bzva@mag.linz.at

AK Oberösterreich

Volksgartenstr.40
4020 Linz
050/6906-0
info@akooe.at
www.arbeiterkammer.at

Amtstage beim Bezirksgericht
Dienstags kostenlose Auskunft in
Rechtsfragen

Rechtliche Informationen im Internet
www.help.gv.at

**institutions of the network for security of tenure
(Einrichtungen des Netzwerks Wohnungssicherung)**

Linz, Linz-Land,
Wels, Wels-Land, Eferding, Grieskirchen
Verein Wohnplattform
Harrachstr. 54, 4020 Linz
Martin-Lutzer-Platz 1, 4600 Wels
0732/603104
delo@verein-wohnplattform.at

Freistadt, Perg, Rohrbach, Urfahr-Umgebung

Arge für Obdachlose REWO
Marienstraße 11
4020 Linz
0650/8107374, 0650/8107375, 0650 / 8809661
rewo@arge-obdachlose.at

Gmunden, Vöcklabruck

Wohnungslosenhilfe Mosaik
Hauptstr. 34
4802 Ebensee
06133/7051-40
mosaik.ebensee@sozialzentrum.org

Steyr, Steyr-Land, Kirchdorf

Verein Wohnen Steyr
Blumauergasse 29
4400 Steyr
07252/47324
netzwerk.wohnungssicherung@b29.at

Braunau, Ried/Innkreis, Schärding

Caritas für Menschen in Not
Riedholzstr. 15a
4910 Ried/Innkreis
07752/81198-10
netzwerk.wohnungssicherung@caritas-linz.at

energy saving (Energiesparen)

Amt der OÖ Landesregierung
OÖ Energiesparverband
Landstr. 45
4020 Linz
0732/7720-14380
office@esv.or.at
www.esv.or.at

Energiespar-Hotline

0800/205206

AK Oberösterreich

Volksgartenstr. 40
4020 Linz
050/6906-0

housing benefit (Wohnbeihilfe)

Amt der OÖ Landesregierung
Direktion Soziales und Gesundheit
Abteilung Wohnbauförderung
Bahnhofplatz 1
4021 Linz
0732/7720-14140
wo.post@ooe.gv.at

equal rights (Gleichbehandlung)

Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft
Regionalbüro OÖ
Mozartstr. 5/3
4020 Linz
0732/783877
www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.at

Antidiskriminierungsstelle Oberösterreich

0732/7720-11737
www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at/thema/antidiskriminierung

Caritas-MigrantInnenhilfe

Hafnerstr. 28
4021 Linz
0732/7610-2311
sozialberatung@caritas-linz.at
www.caritas-linz.at

Hier erhalten Sie auch Informationen über
regionale Angebote.

**Volkshilfe Flüchtlings- und
MigrantInnenbetreuung**

Stockhofstr. 40
4020 Linz
0732/603099
www.volkshilfe-ooe.at
fluechtlingsbetreuung@volkshilfe-ooe.at

Hier erhalten Sie auch Informationen über
regionale Angebote.

Migrare

Humboldtstr. 49
4020 Linz
070/667363
www.migrare.at
e-mail: office@migration.at

Hier erhalten Sie auch Informationen über
regionale Angebote.

social counselling centres in Upper Austria (Sozialberatungsstellen in Oberösterreich)

Aigen
Altheim
Andorf
Ansfelden
Attnang-Puchheim
Bad Goisern
Bad Ischl
Bad Leonfelden
Baumgartenberg
Braunau
Eberstalzell
Eferding
Engerwitzdorf
Enns
Esternberg
Feldkirchen/Donau
Freistadt
Garsten
Gaspoltshofen
Gmunden
Gramastetten
Grein
Grieskirchen

Grünburg
Gunskirchen
Hellmonsödt
Hörsching
Kirchdorf
Kremsmünster
Laakirchen
Lambach
Lembach
Lenzing
Leonding
Linz
Marchtrenk
Mattighofen
Mondsee
Neuhofen/Krems
Oberndorf
Ostermiething
Ottensheim
Pabneukirchen
Perg
Peuerbach

Pregarten
Ried/Innkreis
Rohrbach
Schärding
Schwanenstadt
Schwertberg
Sierning
St. Florian
St. Georgen/Gusen
Steyr
Thalheim
Traun
Unterweißenbach
Vöcklamarkt
Vorchdorf
Wels
Windischgarsten
Zell/Pram

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Unterstützen Sie „Spende 4 Wände“.

Das preisgekrönte Projekt ermöglicht es der Wohnplattform den von uns betreuten KlientInnen zum Beispiel Einstiegskosten als zinsenloses, rückzahlbares Darlehen vorzufinanzieren.

Ihre Unterstützungsmöglichkeit:

Hypo Oberösterreich | IBAN: AT91 5400 0002 0494 9937

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ZVR: 683864064
www.verein-wohnplattform.at



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5. aktualisierte Auflage
Alle Angaben ohne Gewähr.
Linz, April 2015

