

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ

Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiʿūn. Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return. Qurʾān, al-Baqarah 2:156

We are sorry. Here is what happens next.

As soon as you can, call your masjid's funeral committee.

They will arrange the washing, the shroud, the prayer and the burial, and tell you which funeral company to use.

You do not have to do this alone, or all at once. Your masjid has done this many times. Follow the steps in order, and open each one when you reach it.

New This guide is new and has not yet been reviewed by people in Germany. If something here is wrong or out of date where you live, please tell us at hello@lifeistemporary.com.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS IN GERMANY

Registering the death at the Standesamt

The death must be registered at the Standesamt of the place where it happened, at the latest on the third working day after the death. A hospital, care home or other institution reports deaths there itself; after a death at home, a person who lived with the deceased must report it. In practice the funeral company usually does this and orders the death certificates. Personenstandsgesetz (PStG), §§ 28, 29, 30

Leichenschau, prosecutor and autopsy

A doctor must examine the body and write the death certificate; in North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, the family must arrange this straight away. If the death may not have been natural, the police report it to the public prosecutor, and burial needs the prosecutor's written permission. An autopsy is ordered by a judge, or by the prosecutor if delay would harm the investigation. Ask the prosecutor's office early, in writing, to release the body quickly for religious reasons. StPO §§ 87 and 159; Stadt Köln, Muslimische Bestattung (2023)

Burial times and burial abroad

Burial times are set by each state. North Rhine-Westphalia: from 24 hours and within 10 days; the town can approve an earlier burial on the family's application. Bavaria: from 48 hours (the town can allow earlier on application for a legitimate interest) and within 8 days of the death being confirmed, not counting weekends and holidays. Hesse: usually 48 hours; in Wiesbaden a shortening to 24 hours can be allowed on application under certain conditions. Lower Saxony: 48 hours, with exceptions from the health office. Baden-Württemberg: once a doctor has ruled out life, and within 96 hours unless the body is in a mortuary. In 2023 the Berlin Senate proposed removing Berlin's 48-hour wait; ask whether any wait still applies. Ask the funeral company for your state.

MAGS NRW FAQ; Bayern BestV §§ 18, 19; Wiesbaden, Islamische Bestattungen; Region Hannover; service-bw Erdbestattung; Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin Drs. 19/1351

Burial times and burial abroad

To bury abroad, an international body passport (Leichenpass) is needed in most cases; ask the funeral company which documents and office apply. In the Hannover region the family or the funeral company can apply, and it needs a certified copy of the death register entry, the original death certificate and, after a death that was not natural, the prosecutor's release, and costs €40. Under the international agreement the body travels in a soldered metal coffin inside a wooden one. The estate usually pays, or the family if there is no money in it. Ask the funeral company what it costs and who signs before you agree. Call the destination country's consulate early about its conditions. Region Hannover, Leichenpass page and application form with the Internationales Abkommen über Leichenbeförderung, Art. 3

Burial, shroud and graves

Whether a shroud without a coffin is allowed depends on the state and the cemetery. North Rhine-Westphalia's law has no coffin rule and most town cemeteries allow a shroud; Bavaria lets the cemetery allow it for religious reasons; Baden-Württemberg lists shroud burial as a type of burial; Hesse's law has allowed it since 2013 (in Wiesbaden on application); Hamburg's Ohlsdorf cemetery allows it in its Muslim graves. In Cologne the body must be carried within the cemetery in a closed coffin. Graves are leased: in Cologne a chosen grave is leased for 25 years and can be renewed. MAGS NRW FAQ; Bayern BestV § 30; service-bw Bestattungsarten; Wiesbaden; Hamburger Friedhöfe (2026); Stadt Köln (2023)

The Erbschein and the estate

Heirs often prove their right with a certificate of inheritance (Erbschein) from the probate court at the local court where the deceased last usually lived. Without a will, children inherit equally, sons and daughters alike, and a husband or wife takes a quarter beside the children (raised by a quarter under the usual marriage property regime). A child, parent or spouse left out by a will can claim half of their legal share, so ask a notary how the heirs can follow the Islamic shares. BGB §§ 1371, 1924, 1931, 2303, 2353; FamFG § 343

Refusing an inheritance in debt	We did not find a simplified procedure for small estates. If the debts may be larger than the estate, an heir can refuse the inheritance only within six weeks of learning that they are an heir and why (six months if the deceased's last home was only abroad, or the heir is abroad when the period starts). Ask the probate court how. BGB § 1944
Help with funeral costs and pensions	There is no general state death grant that we verified. The heir pays the funeral; if those responsible cannot reasonably pay, social assistance covers the necessary burial costs. A widow or widower of a pensioner can ask the Deutsche Post Renten-Service, within 30 days of the pensioner's death, for the deceased's full pension for the three months after the month of death, paid in advance, and must also claim the survivor's pension. Deutsche Rentenversicherung (2024); SGB XII § 74; BGB § 1968

From official sources, checked October 2026. Laws change; your funeral company and a notary can confirm them.

WHERE YOU ARE

Germany has one federal law for registering a death and for inheritance, and this guide describes it. Burial law is made by each of the 16 states (Länder), so the earliest and latest burial times, the coffin rule and the cemetery rules differ by state. We name the differences we checked for North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Berlin and Hamburg. For any other state, ask the funeral company (Bestatter) or the cemetery office.

1

Have the death confirmed

In the first hour

A doctor has to examine the body (Leichenschau) and write the death certificate (Todesbescheinigung). You need it to register the death and arrange the funeral. The rules on who must arrange this, and how fast, are set by each state.

- [ ] In a hospital or care home, ask the staff to call the doctor
- [ ] At home, call the family doctor or the out-of-hours medical service
- [ ] If the death was violent or unexplained, such as an accident or a suicide, call the police
- [ ] In an emergency, call 112
- [ ] Tell the staff early that the family needs a quick burial for religious reasons

STRAIGHT AWAY

In North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, the family must arrange the doctor's examination at once, and a funeral company then usually takes over the rest, such as getting the death certificate from the Standesamt. Stadt Köln, Muslimische Bestattung (Faltblatt 08/2023, geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

and

Close the eyes, cover the body, make duʿā

In the first hour · at the same time as the step above

Gently and without hurry. Those present can do this while the calls are made.

- [ ] Close the eyes and the mouth
- [ ] Straighten the arms and legs
- [ ] Cover the body with a clean sheet
- [ ] Pray for them, and say only good

EVIDENCE

The Prophet ﷺ closed the eyes of Abū Salamah and prayed for him. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 920

2 Call the mosque's funeral service

In the first few hours

Many mosques and Muslim funeral services help with the washing, the shroud, the prayer and the burial, and know which funeral company (Bestatter) to use. Some mosque associations run their own funeral funds.

- [ ] Call the mosque's funeral service or the imam
- [ ] Tell them where the body is and who the next of kin is
- [ ] If the deceased paid into a funeral fund, call its 24-hour number before you choose a funeral company
- [ ] Agree a time for the ghusl and the janazah prayer

NO NUMBER?
Call the nearest large mosque. They will know who to call.

FUNERAL FUNDS
Some mosque associations run funds for their members. The DİTİB fund takes members who die in Germany to a grave in Germany, Türkiye or the Balkans. The VIKZ fund covers the main burial and transport costs and takes calls about deaths day and night. Check the fund's own terms.
DİTİB-Sosyal Dayanışma Merkezi Derneği, Cenaze Nakli Yardımlaşma Fonu (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; VIKZ Sterbefonds gGmbH (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

3 Ask whether the prosecutor is involved PAPERWORK

If the death was sudden or violent

If there are signs that the death was not natural, the police must report it to the public prosecutor (Staatsanwaltschaft). There can then be no burial until the prosecutor gives written permission. The prosecutor may ask for an autopsy.

- [ ] Ask the doctor or the police whether the death was recorded as not natural or unexplained
- [ ] Ask the prosecutor's office early, in writing, to release the body quickly for religious reasons

PERMISSION TO BURY
After a death that may not be natural, burial needs the prosecutor's written permission.
Strafprozessordnung (StPO), § 159

- [ ] Ask the funeral company to collect the prosecutor's written release as soon as it is given

AN AUTOPSY
A judge orders it, or the prosecutor if waiting would harm the investigation. Two doctors carry it out. We have not found a rule that lets the family refuse it on religious grounds, so explain the family's needs to the prosecutor's office early.
Strafprozessordnung (StPO), § 87

A HOSPITAL AUTOPSY
An autopsy only to find the cause of death, outside any investigation, is governed by state law, which we have not checked. Tell the hospital straight away if the deceased objected.

4 Register the death at the Standesamt PAPERWORK

By the third working day

The death is registered at the civil registry office (Standesamt) of the place where it happened, at the latest on the third working day after the death. A hospital or care home reports it itself. Ask the funeral company whether it will do this and order the death certificates (Sterbeurkunde) for you.

- [ ] Ask the funeral company or the Standesamt which documents they need, such as the doctor's death certificate and the deceased's ID and marriage or birth certificate
- [ ] If the death was at home, a person who lived with the deceased must make sure it is reported
- [ ] If the death was in a hospital or care home, ask the staff to confirm they have reported it

THE DEADLINE
At the latest on the third working day after the death, to the Standesamt where the person died.
Personenstandsgesetz (PStG), § 28

WHO REPORTS IT
First a person who lived with the deceased, then the person whose home it was, then anyone who was present or knows of the death. A hospital, care home or other institution reports deaths there itself. After an official investigation, the authority reports it.
Personenstandsgesetz (PStG), § 29 ; Personenstandsgesetz (PStG), § 30

5

Choose the funeral company and the grave PAPERWORK

Within the first day

A funeral company (Bestatter) collects the body. Ask which paperwork it will handle for you, what it costs and who signs before you agree. Whether the body may be buried in a shroud without a coffin depends on the state and on the cemetery's own rules, so ask the cemetery office early.

- [ ] Ask the cemetery office whether it allows burial in a shroud (Tuchbestattung) and has a Muslim field
- [ ] Ask where the washing can be done, and who may do it
- [ ] Ask how long the grave is leased for, and whether it can be renewed
- [ ] Ask for a written quote before you agree

SHROUD OR COFFIN

North Rhine-Westphalia's law has no coffin rule: each cemetery decides, and most town cemeteries allow a shroud, while church cemeteries usually require a coffin. In Bavaria the cemetery can allow a shroud for religious reasons. Ministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales NRW, FAQ Bestattungswesen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Bayern, Bestattungsverordnung (BestV), § 30

OTHER STATES

Baden-Württemberg lists shroud burial, "especially for Muslims", as a type of burial. Hesse's law has allowed burial without a coffin since 2013; in Wiesbaden it is done on application. Baden-Württemberg, Lebenslage „Bestattungsarten" (Freigabe Sozialministerium 4. Mai 2026), auf der Seite der Stadt Gerlingen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Landeshauptstadt Wiesbaden, Islamische Bestattungen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

LOWER SAXONY AND HAMBURG

In Lower Saxony an exception from the coffin rule is decided by the health office. At Hamburg's Ohlsdorf cemetery the Muslim graves allow burial in a shroud. For Berlin and other states, ask the cemetery office. Region Hannover, Bestattung: Ausnahmen nach dem Bestattungsgesetz (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Hamburger Friedhöfe AöR, Islamische Grabstätten, Ohlsdorf (2026, geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

TO THE GRAVESIDE

In Cologne, the body must always be carried within the cemetery in a closed coffin, and for a shroud burial the family must provide the bearers. In Bavaria a shroud burial is not allowed for bodies that are infectious or highly contagious under the regulation. Ask your cemetery about its rules. Stadt Köln, Muslimische Bestattung (Faltblatt 08/2023, geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Bayern, Bestattungsverordnung (BestV), § 30

THE WASHING

Some cemeteries have a washing room. In Cologne the washing can be done at the Westfriedhof even if the burial is at another cemetery. At Hamburg's Ohlsdorf cemetery ritual washing is possible before burial. Stadt Köln, Bestattung von Bürger*innen unterschiedlicher Konfessionen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Hamburger Friedhöfe AöR, Islamische Grabstätten, Ohlsdorf (2026, geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

HOW LONG A GRAVE LASTS

Graves are leased, not bought, and each cemetery sets the term. In Cologne, for example, a chosen grave (Wahlgrab) in a Muslim field is leased for 25 years and can be renewed. Ask your cemetery for its terms before you sign. Stadt Köln, Muslimische Bestattung (Faltblatt 08/2023, geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

and

Wash and shroud the body

Within the first day · at the same time as the step above

Done by trained Muslims of the same sex, or by the spouse. The funeral service usually provides the cloth.

- [ ] Confirm who will wash
- [ ] Confirm the kafan is ready

How the washing and shroud are done ›

SPOUSES
A wife may wash her husband: Ibn al-Mundhir reports consensus. Most scholars allow a husband to wash his wife, and the Prophet ﷺ told ʿĀʾishah that if she died before him he would wash her (Ibn Mājah 1465); the Ḥanafī school does not allow the husband to. Ibn Qudāmah, al-Mughnī (Ḥanbalī, with the other schools), 2:390 ; Ibn ʿĀbidīn, Radd al-Muḥtār (Ḥanafī), 2:198–199

6

The janazah prayer and the burial

As soon as possible

The prayer is often held after one of the daily prayers, and the burial follows straight after.

- [ ] Tell family and community the time of the prayer
- [ ] Confirm the grave in a Muslim field or Muslim cemetery
- [ ] Ask the funeral company the earliest time your state allows, and whether it can be shortened
- [ ] Ask the cemetery whether it buries on Saturdays

How to pray the janazah prayer ›

HASTE
The Prophet ﷺ told us to hurry with the funeral. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1315

EARLIEST
It differs by state. North Rhine-Westphalia: from 24 hours after the death, and the town can allow earlier on the family's request. Hesse: usually 48 hours, which can be shortened to 24 on request. Ministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales NRW, FAQ Bestattungswesen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Landeshauptstadt Wiesbaden, Islamische Bestattungen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

EARLIEST, CONTINUED

Bavaria: from 48 hours, but the town can allow earlier on request for a good reason. Lower Saxony: 48 hours, with exceptions decided by the health office. Bayern, Bestattungsverordnung (BestV), § 18 (Fassung ab 1. April 2025) ; Region Hannover, Bestattung: Ausnahmen nach dem Bestattungsgesetz (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

NO FIXED WAIT

Baden-Württemberg allows burial once a doctor has ruled out any possibility of life, and requires it within 96 hours if the body is not kept in a mortuary. In 2023 the Berlin Senate put a bill to parliament to remove Berlin's 48-hour waiting period; ask the funeral company whether any wait still applies. Baden-Württemberg, Leistungsbeschreibung „Erdbestattung – Beerdigung beauftragen“ (Freigabe Sozialministerium 13. April 2026), auf der Seite der Stadt Gerlingen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, Drucksache 19/1351, Gesetz zur Änderung des Bestattungsgesetzes (Vorlage des Senats, 29. September 2023)

LATEST

North Rhine-Westphalia: within 10 days. Bavaria: within 8 days of the death being confirmed, not counting Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, or, if the body is going elsewhere, on its way within that time. For other states, ask the funeral company. Ministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales NRW, FAQ Bestattungswesen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Bayern, Bestattungsverordnung (BestV), § 19

MUSLIM FIELDS

Many cities have Muslim fields facing Mecca. Berlin has them in six state and four Protestant cemeteries, but not all can give out graves at present, and there is no Muslim-run cemetery there yet. At Hamburg's Ohlsdorf cemetery the community can pray the janazah outdoors. Senatsverwaltung Berlin, Islamische Bestattungen in Berlin (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026) ; Hamburger Friedhöfe AöR, Islamische Grabstätten, Ohlsdorf (2026, geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

and

If the burial will be abroad PAPERWORK

Before the coffin is closed · at the same time as the step above

Many families bury their dead in another country, for example in Türkiye, the Balkans or the Arab world. In most cases an international body passport (Leichenpass) is needed. Ask the funeral company which documents and which office apply for your route. The estate usually pays, or the family if there is no money in it. Ask the funeral company what it costs and who signs before you agree.

- [ ] Tell the funeral company early that the burial will be abroad
- [ ] Call the consulate of the country early: it sets its own documents and conditions
- [ ] Ask the consulate whether it requires embalming
- [ ] Check any funeral fund, insurance or bank-card cover first

BODY PASSPORT

In the Hannover region, for example, the family or the funeral company applies to the health office. It needs a certified copy of the death register entry, the original death certificate and, after a death that was not natural, the prosecutor's release. The fee there is €40. Region Hannover, Bestattung: Ausnahmen nach dem Bestattungsgesetz (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

THE COFFIN

Under the international agreement on moving bodies, the body is placed in a metal coffin that is sealed airtight (soldered) and fixed inside a wooden coffin. Region Hannover, Antrag auf Ausstellung eines Internationalen Leichenpasses, mit Auszug aus dem Internationalen Abkommen über Leichenbeförderung (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

THE CONSULATE

Each country sets its own requirements. Ask its consulate in Germany early, before the coffin is closed.

7 Get copies of the death certificate PAPERWORK

In the first week

Banks, insurers and others often ask for a death certificate (Sterbeurkunde) from the Standesamt. Ask each one what proof it needs.

- [ ] Order several copies when the death is registered, or ask the funeral company to
- [ ] Ask the Standesamt for more later if needed

WHO CAN ASK

The person's husband or wife, registered partner, ancestors and descendants. Others must show a legal interest. Ask the Standesamt the fee.

Personenstandsgesetz (PStG), § 62

8 Pay the funeral costs and list every debt

In the first weeks

The funeral is paid from the estate first, then the debts. Nothing is inherited until both are settled.

- [ ] Pay the funeral costs from the estate
- [ ] List loans, bills and money owed to family
- [ ] Ask a scholar about any unpaid zakat
- [ ] If the debts may be larger than the estate, read the six-week rule below before you accept anything

THE ORDER

Funeral, then debts, then bequests from a third, then the heirs. al-Sirājiyyah (al-Sajāwandī), opening chapter

WHO PAYS

German law puts the funeral costs on the heir.

Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 1968

REFUSING AN ESTATE IN DEBT

An heir can refuse the inheritance only within six weeks of learning that they are an heir and why. It is six months if the deceased's last home was only abroad, or if the heir is abroad when the six weeks would start. Ask the probate court (Nachlassgericht) how.

Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 1944

IF THE FAMILY CANNOT PAY

Social assistance pays the necessary cost of a burial when those responsible cannot reasonably be expected to pay. Ask the social welfare office (Sozialamt) before the funeral if you can. Sozialgesetzbuch XII (Sozialhilfe), § 74

and

Find the will, and claim the pension advance PAPERWORK

In the first weeks · at the same time as the step above

Anyone who holds a will must hand it to the probate court (Nachlassgericht) without delay. A widow or widower of someone who was drawing a pension can ask for a three-month advance.

- [ ] Check papers at home, email, and with any notary
- [ ] Hand any will you find to the probate court, even if you think it is not valid
- [ ] If the deceased drew a state pension, ask the Deutsche Post pension service (Renten-Service) for the advance within 30 days of the death
- [ ] Secure the house and car, and keep the phone line active for sign-in codes

HAND IT IN

A will that is not in official keeping must be handed to the probate court as soon as the holder learns of the death. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 2259

REGISTER OF WILLS

The central register holds wills made with a notary or kept by a court, not wills kept at home. The Standesamt tells the register of every death; the register then informs the offices keeping any will and the probate court. Bundesnotarkammer, Zentrales Testamentsregister (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

PENSION ADVANCE

For the three months after the month of death, the widow or widower receives the deceased's full pension, paid in advance in one sum, if they apply to the Renten-Service within 30 days of the pensioner's death. A formal survivor's pension claim must also be made. Deutsche Rentenversicherung, Sterbevierteljahr: Witwen und Witwer können Vorschuss beantragen (21. November 2024)

9

Settle and divide the estate PAPERWORK

In the months after

Heirs often prove who they are with a certificate of inheritance (Erbschein) from the probate court. German law shares an estate without a will equally between sons and daughters, so dividing by the Islamic shares usually needs a valid will or the heirs' agreement.

- [ ] Ask the probate court, or a notary, about the Erbschein if a bank or the land registry asks for it
- [ ] Close accounts and cancel subscriptions
- [ ] Pay any bequest, up to one third, to people who are not heirs
- [ ] Divide the rest by the fixed shares

See how the estate divides ›

ONE THIRD

A bequest is limited to a third, and an heir cannot receive one. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2742 ; Sunan Abī Dāwūd 2870 (ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ)

THE ERBSCHEIN

The probate court issues it on request. The court is the local court (Amtsgericht) where the deceased last usually lived. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 2353 ; Gesetz über das Verfahren in Familiensachen und in den Angelegenheiten der freiwilligen Gerichtsbarkeit (FamFG), § 343

WITHOUT A WILL

Children inherit first, in equal shares. A husband or wife takes a quarter beside the children. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 1924 ; Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 1931

MARRIAGE PROPERTY

Under the usual marriage property regime (Zugewinngemeinschaft), the husband's or wife's share is raised by another quarter of the estate. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 1371

THE RESERVED SHARE

A child, parent or husband or wife left out by a will can claim a reserved share (Pflichtteil): half the value of what they would have inherited without a will. Ask a notary whether and how the heirs can agree a different division. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 2303

10

Look after the family

Four months and ten days

A woman keeps the prescribed mourning (iḥdād: setting aside adornment and perfume) for no more than three days for any death, except for her husband: then four months and ten days, the length of her ʿiddah, or until she gives birth if she is pregnant.

- [ ] Bring food and help with the household
- [ ] Help the widow with errands and appointments
- [ ] Make duʿā for the one who has died

What to say and do when you visit ›

EVIDENCE

A woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day does not mourn beyond three days, except for a husband: four months and ten days. A pregnant widow's term ends with the birth. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1280 ; Qurʾān, al-Ṭalāq 65:4

FOOD

Prepare food for the family, for what has happened has occupied them. Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3132 (ḥasan, al-Albānī)

ʿIDDAH DATES

Work out when four months and ten days have passed, by the Hijri and the Western calendar. Open ↗

11

Write your own Islamic will

For those left behind

Without a valid will, German law decides who inherits, not the fixed shares, and sons and daughters inherit equally. An Islamic will in Germany is an ordinary German will that directs the estate by the shares, as far as the reserved shares allow.

- [ ] Write it entirely by hand and sign it with your first and family name; or make it before a notary
- [ ] Write the day, month, year and place on it
- [ ] For it to be registered, make it before a notary, or hand a handwritten will to a court for official keeping
- [ ] Ask a notary how the reserved shares affect the Islamic shares

Work out the Islamic shares to take to a notary ›

VALID WILL

A handwritten will must be written and signed entirely in your own hand. It should give the date and the place. A minor cannot make a handwritten will. The other ordinary form is a will made before a notary. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 2247 ; Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 2231

THE RESERVED SHARES

Children, parents and a husband or wife can each claim half of what the law would have given them. Keep each one's Islamic share at or above that, or ask a notary how to plan for it. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB), § 2303

ANOTHER NATIONALITY

In general, German law applies to the estate of someone who usually lived in Germany (for Turkish citizens, see below). A person can instead choose, in a will, the law of a country whose nationality they hold. A court can set aside a foreign rule that clearly conflicts with German public policy, so ask a notary before relying on this. Verordnung (EU) Nr. 650/2012 (Europäische Erbrechtsverordnung), Art. 21 und 22 ; Verordnung (EU) Nr. 650/2012, Art. 35 (öffentliche Ordnung)

TURKISH CITIZENS

A treaty between Germany and Türkiye still comes first for a Turkish citizen: their movable property (money, cars, belongings) follows Turkish inheritance law, and land follows the law of the country where it lies. Ask a notary which law applies before relying on any of this. Justiz NRW, Internationales Erbrecht: Türkei und das Deutsch-Türkische Nachlassabkommen (geprüft am 10. Oktober 2026)

General guidance, not a fatwa or legal advice. Burial law in Germany is made by each of the 16 states, so burial times, the coffin rule and cemetery rules differ by state; your funeral company and a notary can confirm them.

Last reviewed October 2026. Something wrong? Tell us