

## File a criminal complaint

If you have become aware of a criminal act, regardless of whether you yourself were harmed or witnessed a crime, you can file a report with the police. In doing so, you inform the law enforcement authorities (police and public prosecutor's office) about the event and the course of events.

### Competent Department

- [Polizei Bremen](#)

### Basic information

You can file a criminal complaint whether you are injured, can witness a crime, or are an uninvolved party. Fast processing is encouraged by selecting the state in which the event occurred. You can file a report informally, by phone, online and at the police station, either anonymously or by providing your contact information. The online report is to be considered an additional offer.

The criminal complaint focuses on the notification of a criminal offense. A distinction is made between different groups of offenses.

Please note that criminal offenses from the following offense groups can be reported online: Theft/Property Crime and Property Damage. To promote the fastest possible processing, please select an appropriate offense.

When you file a report, you are a witness in the criminal proceedings. Regardless of the report you file online, it may be necessary to summon you to the police station responsible for this as part of the further processing of this, for example, in order to be able to conduct a witness interview with you in person.

Furthermore, it is possible to attach photos, receipts or documents to the report as electronic attachments. This option should be used in particular to send evidence (purchase receipts, receipts or pictures of stolen items, damaged items or screenshots of screen contents) to the police with the report.

## Requirements

Any person who has knowledge of a crime can file a complaint. You do not have to meet any specific requirements.

### What documents do I need?

- Proof of identification (photo ID: identity card, passport, etc.)

Proof of identity is mandatory for filing a criminal complaint.

By e.g.: Identity card, passport, other form of photo ID with address, etc.

- Invoices, proof of ownership for stolen items, equipment or serial number.
  - Invoices
  - Proof of ownership
  - Equipment numbers
  - Serial numbers
- Filled out criminal complaint

Application available for download under "Further information" - "Forms".

## Procedure

A report can be made or given online, in writing, by phone or verbally.

If you want to submit the ad online:

- There are several steps to submitting an ad online.
- You can file a criminal complaint via the Internet portal. This can involve various offenses.
- You call up the Internet portal via a central URL. The selection of the federal state responsible for processing is made via the incident location. After selecting the appropriate offense-oriented form for filing a report, you can provide basic information about yourself (e.g., personal data, cell phone number, e-mail address). You can then enter data on the crime scene, the time of the crime, the perpetrator and the event itself. The recording process is accompanied by legal instructions (witness and defendant instructions as well as the requirement to file a criminal complaint and a notice of discontinuance).
- It is possible to submit documents such as purchase receipts, receipts and/or pictures such as screenshots, pictures of damage or stolen items with the report.
- Once the report has been submitted and accepted, you will receive an e-mail with a case number and the contact details of the Bremen police.
- The responsible police department will receive the report and check it. If you report a crime that was committed outside of Germany or in another federal state, the law enforcement agency will forward the report to the competent authority.
- Only if there are no investigative leads whatsoever will the public prosecutor's office discontinue the preliminary proceedings. The chances of success differ depending on the type of crime. Basically, the more information you provide, the higher the chances that the police will find the perpetrator.

- Anyone who knowingly and falsely suspects a person commits a criminal offense. The law provides for a fine or imprisonment of up to five years for this.

If you want to file your report in person on site:

- You can file reports in person on site during the following opening hours at these locations:
  - Vegesack Police Station  
Kirchheide 51  
28757 Bremen  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Wednesday and Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
  - Bremen Police Headquarters  
In der Vahr 76  
28329 Bremen  
Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
  - Downtown Precinct (next to the main train station)  
Beim Handelsmuseum 1  
28195 Bremen  
Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- To avoid waiting times, we recommend that you make an appointment online in advance using the online appointment service

If you would like to place your ad by telephone:

- You can reach the telephone ad desk at 0421 362-12700.
  - Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
  - Saturday and Sunday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Legal bases

- [§ 158 Strafprozeßordnung \(StPO\)](#)

## More information

- If you file a criminal complaint, you are basically a witness in the criminal proceedings. It may be necessary to summon you to the police station responsible for this as part of the further processing of your complaint, for example, in order to be able to conduct a witness interview with you personally.
- Anyone who has knowledge of a criminal act but does not report it may be liable to prosecution. No special formal requirements apply. Caution is advised if the crime is suspected. Defamation and false suspicion are punishable by law
- in this case, the person who makes the report must expect legal action against him or herself. In the case of crimes such as murder, robbery, war crimes and high treason, there is a duty to report.
- A criminal complaint cannot be withdrawn. You should therefore think carefully about whether you want to file a criminal complaint. According to the principle of legality, the authorities are then obliged to investigate.

## **What deadlines must be paid attention to?**

There is no time limit to be observed. However, you should observe the respective statute of limitations, because criminal offenses usually become time-barred after a certain period of time.

## **How long does it take to process**

After receipt of the online ad, you will receive an email confirmation with a process number. The processing time depends on various factors. A time limit is not possible.

## **What are the costs?**

Filing a criminal complaint is free of charge.