IHK Signature Card

for experts publicly appointed and sworn by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHK)

What do experts need to sign electronically?

1. The personal signature card

Experts must be identified in person to apply for their expert signature card. They need their identity card or passport, which must still be valid for at least four weeks at the time of application. The expert signature card is now only available as a single-signature card.

There are two ways to apply for the expert signature card, which is valid for two years:

- Experts apply for their signature card in person at their competent IHK. Please check by phone in advance whether your IHK offers this service, and then make an appointment. Price of the expert signature card when applying at the IHK: single-signature card: €169.00 plus VAT.
- If the competent IHK does not offer a signature service, experts can also apply for the signature card via the PostIdent procedure. Price of the expert signature card via PostIdent application: single-signature card: €169.00 plus VAT. Application link: https://portal.d-trust.net/shop/KUqcIhtVPd/group/UIbHBBY4li

In both cases, the IHK must confirm on a standard form that you are publicly appointed and sworn as an expert with a specific scope of appointment.

Your signature application data is transmitted to D-TRUST GmbH, a subsidiary of Bundesdruckerei GmbH. D-TRUST is a trust service provider operating in compliance with the law. Your signature card is produced there and sent to you about three weeks after application. You will receive a PIN for your signature card separately.

- Unfortunately, follow-up cards for the IHK expert signature card cannot currently be ordered. Please therefore apply for a new signature card either at your IHK or via the PostIdent procedure.
- The signature card is invoiced by D-TRUST GmbH.

2. Card reader

To use your IHK signature card, you need a card reader that meets the following requirements:

- Class 3 card reader
- USB connection
- Suitable for contact-based signature smart cards

Card readers recommended by D-Trust are listed at https://www.d-trust.net/de/inbetriebnahme-karten. You are of course free to obtain other suitable card readers through alternative channels. Readers can also be obtained via the following D-Trust page: https://www.chipkartenleser-shop.de/bdr_hw/zubehoer-d-trust-card-5x

3. Application software

If you wish to sign files, various products are available – please contact the respective providers. D-Trust works closely with secrypt, which offers digiSeal office (suitable for the single-signature card) and, for high-volume signers, digitalSeal office pro 100 (suitable for the batch-signature card): https://www.chipkartenleser-shop.de/bdr_hw/zubehoer-d-trust-card-5x

To validate the electronic signature, recipients of electronically signed expert reports need free verification software. Recommended product for free download: https://www.secrypt.de/produkte/digiseal-reader/

4. Access to electronic legal communication

Since January 2024, experts have been expected to communicate with the courts via the electronic citizen and organisation mailbox (eBO). Information about the eBO and currently available software: https://egvp.justiz.de/buerger_organisationen/index.php

As the eBO is regarded as a secure transmission channel with an identity-verified sender, it is generally no longer necessary to additionally sign documents with a qualified electronic signature (QES). However, we continue to recommend using the IHK expert signature card within the eBO as well: if expert reports leave the secure eBO environment – for example when they are forwarded to recipients outside the eBO – the QES continues to ensure their integrity and authenticity.

5. Technical requirements

Internet access, Microsoft operating system Windows 10 or later, 8 GB RAM, USB port for connecting the card reader.

6. Next steps

Make an appointment with your IHK to apply for the signature card, or use the online procedure with PostIdent identification.

DE-CODA GmbH will be pleased to answer general questions about the signature card: https://www.de-coda.de/en/ihk-signaturkarte, phone +49 231 999527-0, email signaturen@de-coda.de