

# Districts [*Bezirke*] of the German Democratic Republic (1952)

## Abstract

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In 1952, the GDR abolished its five states [*Länder*], which had been created in 1946-47. They were replaced with thirteen districts [*Bezirke*], which were named for their respective seats of power: Rostock, Schwerin, Neubrandenburg, Magdeburg, Potsdam, Frankfurt/Oder, Cottbus, Leipzig, Halle, Erfurt, Suhl, Gera, Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz), and Dresden. Unlike the former states, these districts had no political independence. Instead, they were "authorities" [*Behörden*] and were directly subordinate to the party and the national leadership of the GDR. The borders of the new administrative districts were deliberately drawn so as *not* to be congruent with those of the former states. (East) Berlin did not belong to any district and was considered a special region. Its borders were strictly patrolled – not only the borders with West Berlin, but also those with the GDR districts of Potsdam and Frankfurt/Oder – right up to the building of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961. The districts remained in place until the five states were reconstituted in October.

## Source

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Source: Original cartography by IEG-MAPS, Institut für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz, A. Kunz, 2005.  
Revised cartography (WCAG-compliant) by Gabriel Moss, 2021.

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