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Deutsche Bahn says station alcohol ban cut conflicts in its first month

Security staff approached more than 15,000 travelers in the first month, according to the rail operator, which says 80% support the rule

Saturday, November 14, 2026



Deutsche Bahn said Saturday that the first month of its nationwide alcohol ban at train stations has led to less trash, fewer conflicts and a better environment for passengers and employees, offering an early endorsement of a measure that has drawn both support and criticism in Germany.

A Deutsche Bahn spokeswoman said the company’s security staff have spoken to more than 15,000 people carrying or consuming alcohol at stations since the rule took effect on October 15. In most cases, she said, those approached either put the bottle away or left the station. Only a small number of cases led to people being ordered off the premises.

The ban applies across Germany in station concourses and on platforms, but not inside restaurants and other food service businesses located in stations. Deutsche Bahn said it sees the measure as a way to reduce tensions and improve safety in heavily used public spaces.

The company said enforcement has been handled by DB Sicherheit teams, while the federal police are called in only if a conflict escalates. Deutsche Bahn also said it has increased the number of security personnel to 5,000 from 4,500 in 2025.

According to the company, travelers also back the policy. The spokeswoman said a recent representative survey found that 80% of respondents support a ban on alcohol consumption at stations. Deutsche Bahn did not release further details in the initial summary cited on Saturday.

The rule was introduced nationwide after Deutsche Bahn tested similar restrictions at nearly 40 stations, including Cologne, Munich and Hamburg. The company had already described those pilot programs as successful before expanding the ban to the entire network.

The restrictions stop at the station gate. Rules on alcohol consumption aboard trains still differ depending on the service. On regional trains, policies vary by area. On long-distance trains, alcohol remains generally permitted as long as passengers show consideration for others.

The policy touches one of Germany’s biggest travel retail settings and could have implications for alcohol sales tied to rail passengers, particularly for shops and other businesses that serve people on the move. At the same time, the exemption for station restaurants and similar outlets means the direct effect on beer, wine and spirits sales is likely to differ from one operator to another.

Critics had raised concerns before the measure was rolled out. The Federal Working Group on Homeless Assistance warned that a ban would not change the underlying situation of people who spend time at stations and could instead push them out of sight. Joachim Krauß, the group’s deputy managing director, said at the time that homeless people could be driven into areas that offer less protection and weaker links to support services.

Germany’s station mission network voiced similar concerns. It said it generally supports the alcohol ban but feared the problems might simply shift from station property to the immediate surrounding area.

That debate is likely to continue as the policy remains in place and more data emerge on its effects. For now, Deutsche Bahn is presenting the first month as a success and as evidence that the restriction can be enforced on a broad scale with relatively little confrontation.