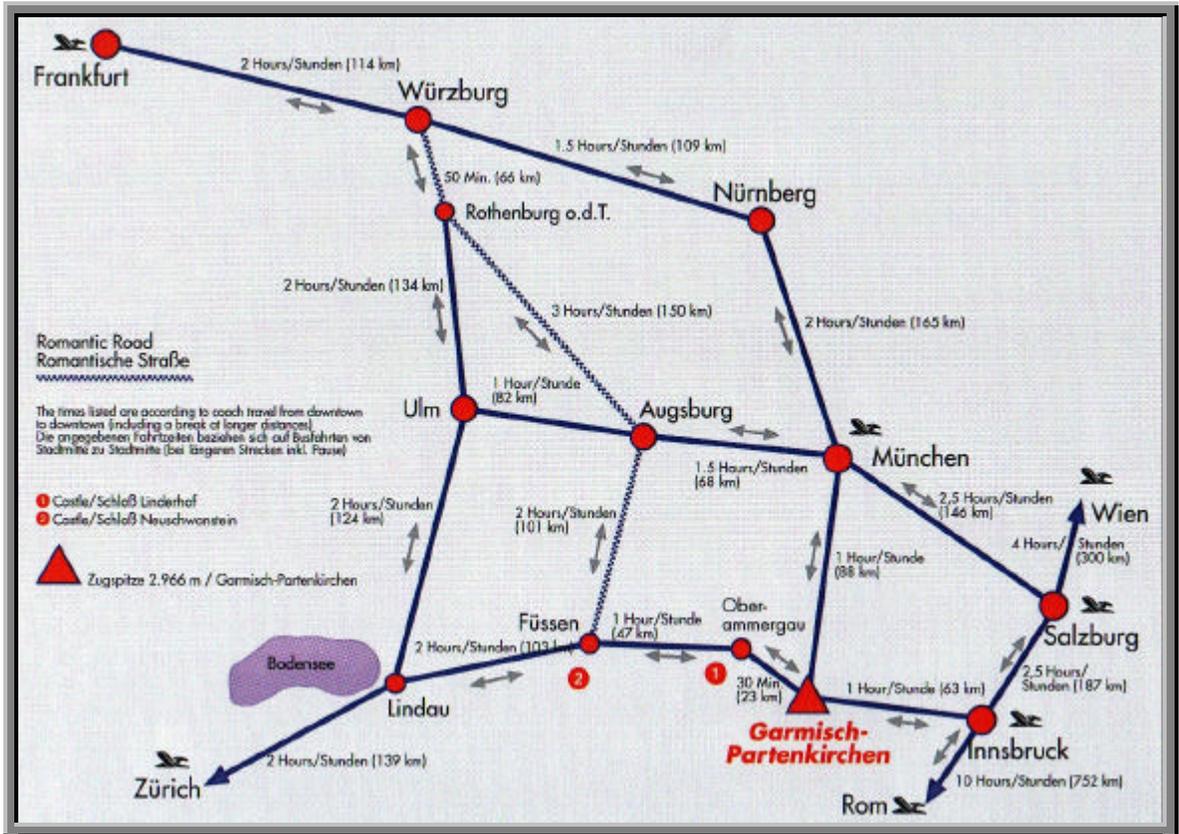


GERMANY

Must Know before You Go



Map from <http://www.garmisch-partenkirchen.de/tourist/english/index.htm>

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GERMANY

M u s t K n o w b e f o r e Y o u G o

The following pages are excerpts from various SITES throughout Germany (*from Friedberg/Geissen, Ansbach, Bad Aibling, Wuerzburg, Stuttgart, Ramstein AB, Spangdahlem AB, Bamberg, Hanau, Mannheim, Darmstadt, and Grafenwoehr.*) Many views on what was “MUST KNOW ITEMS” or “REGULATIONS” were copied and pasted omitting any specific building, phone number or office. It was apparent that the two-week orientation and training for newcomers was appearing for all posts/bases.

The requirements for a USAEUR driver’s license have recently changed. If you were stationed in Germany before, you may want to pay special attention to the requirement for a “**valid**” stateside license. If you are from a state that does not require you to renew your license if you are military to be valid ... if it is out-of-date on the license, it is not recognized as being valid in Germany, no matter your state’s policy of “valid without renewing it as long as you are active duty”.

For parents with teens please note that the **LEGAL DRINKING AGE IN GERMANY is 16** years of age. The local bars welcome and serve youth of this age, both German and American. Discos are also very popular in Germany. In many of the local discos you will find marijuana, hashish, and ecstasy. We encourage you to check with other parents or the Security Police concerning the discos your teens should avoid.

TEMPORARY LODGING EXPENSE (TLE)

- Payable when a member or dependent(s) occupies temporary quarters in the CONUS due to a PCS move.
- Must have had at least one other duty station.
- You may only receive UP TO FIVE DAYS TLE.
- If you will stay in the local area with friends or relatives, you will need to sign a statement providing the period claimed, address and name of your host.

ADVANCE HOUSING APPLICATIONS

- Member or Sponsor should visit the local housing office and submit a DD Form 1746, Advance Housing Application.
- Many Housing Offices accept advance applications anytime after a member has orders.

- Once received, the member will be placed on the housing list not earlier than 30 days prior to their arrival.
- An information letter explaining how the housing program works, to include the member's expected waiting time, can be mailed.

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

- Non-US citizens are not able to apply for US civil service positions or with AAFES. The non-US citizen will be considered as local national candidates.
- Many of the local national jobs require the ability to speak, read, and write in German.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

Once you are overseas, it is **NOT** possible to sign-up for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI) through the Social Security Administration. If you have a spouse or child with a disability it is essential that before going overseas, you visit your local Social Security Office. It could make a significant difference in your family income.

WIC and FOOD STAMPS

WIC (Women, Infants and Children), food stamps, and other federal financial assistance are **NOT** available overseas. Also, some grocery items such as milk, bread, and fresh produce cost more than in the United States. We currently do not have any WIC services in Germany.

The **Food Stamp Program** is **not available** overseas and there is not an equivalent program. Due to the changes recently enacted by Congress, it is expected that WIC will be available in the future.

Coupons

Don't forget to bring your grocery coupons. Overseas, these coupons are **valid for six months after** their expiration date.

Catalogs

Don't forget to bring along your favorite catalogs. Make sure you inform these companies of your address change. Ship them to Germany in your Household Goods, especially if you need children's, extra large, tall or petite clothes or narrow-width shoes. Also send your favorite office/computer catalog, craft source catalog, gourmet foods and any other catalogs you may need.

Clothing

At this time the supply for clothing is very limited. AAFES is working to expand their clothing section to better serve their customers. If you anticipate that you will need specific clothing, for example, petite, large, or small, in addition to narrow-width shoes, it is best to buy it in the states and ship it to Germany. Don't forget the option of shopping on the economy. There are lots of stores to choose from.

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

If you are within 60 days of leaving your installation and have not heard from your sponsor or have not received a sponsor package, please contact your Family Support Center and have them send an email message to the Relocation Assistance Program at the new installation indicating your sponsorship problem. Be sure to give them your name, social security number, and gaining unit.

It is imperative that you bring all essential items such as linens, blankets, pillows, towels and other small household items. If possible, mail these items ahead of time or make arrangements with your sponsor to provide them.

****Remember to bring linen (sheets, towels, blankets, pillows)****

USAREUR personnel should get and keep birth and citizenship evidence. This document often is required on short notice to apply for a passport, marriage license, and birth registration for a newborn child or U.S. immigrant visa for a non-U.S. citizen spouse or child.

Shopping hours and available merchandise are limited. Some AAFES facilities (the PX, video store) close as late as 2100 (9 pm), many close earlier. It is advised that you bring extra medicine, diapers, and formula (if you are traveling with small children). This will allow time for you to get settled and to find alternate brands, if necessary.

The supply of many items in the PX is usually limited and quickly exhausted. For this reason, if you can anticipate a need for any of the following items, you may wish to bring them with you from the States:

- (1) Children's Clothing and Shoes
- (2) Adult Shoes
- (3) Large Items - Such as Rugs
- (4) Sewing Notions. Bring some of the next season's clothing since your household goods may be delayed in arriving and the seasons may change unexpectedly early.

Government quarters are small and **government funded storage is not available**. One to four bedroom quarters are available and individuals will normally be housed according to their requirements. It is advised that excess furniture not be shipped (leave in stateside storage; contact your local transportation office). Most government quarters are what is referred to as "Stairwell Apartments" with six to eight apartments in each stairwell. Residents share a common laundry area with American type machines. The apartments are small by American standards and noise is a big concern with consideration for others an important issue.

Government furniture is available for **temporary use only** for soldiers **E5 and above** (this restriction may or may not be enforced at your duty station but that could change so be prepared to ship furniture if necessary). At this time, **E4 and below** are authorized government furniture support for the **duration of their tour**. Availability of some items is limited (couches, double bed, etc.).

The Army Community Service Lending Closet carries **NO LINEN!** Linen should be carried in luggage, mailed or sent in hold baggage. Kitchen items such as cooking utensils and dishes are readily available for use for no more than 60 days. The Lending Closet also has port-a-cribs, playpens, high chairs, car/booster seats and strollers for 30-day loan but it is recommended that these items also be sent in hold baggage.

The identification/passport section of servicing personnel detachment can provide U.S. citizens with information on where to write in the United States for birth and citizenship evidence. Non-U.S. citizens must get this information from an embassy or consulate of their home country.

Germany is the only country in Europe, and one of the few in the world, which does not have a speed limit for many stretches of its freeways, or autobahns. This means fast, aggressive driving. In order to meet demands, your car must be in great shape and be able to pass through stringent safety inspections. Therefore, do not bring the old family car over here. If you do not own a car able to meet German safety standards, you will find plenty of opportunities in Germany to buy new and used cars that can stand up to this kind of driving.

HAND CARRY

Hand-carry your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Please remember that special education records are not in cumulative files. You must ask for them separately.

Important documents to hand carry: birth certificates and shot records for your children in order to register for child care and school; if seeking employment bring school transcripts, updated resume or SF171, personnel qualifications statement, professional certifications or licenses; proof of car insurance; family immunization records; pet registration license; and bank records.

DOCUMENTS TO HAND CARRY

New Unit Phone Number and Sponsor	Power of Attorney	Family military ID cards
Stock and bond certificate	Installment payment contracts	Family Social Security cards
Family shot records	Court orders for divorce, child support or child custody	Phone numbers for family/friends
Will	Marriage certificates	Real Estate documents
Adoption papers	Citizenship papers	LES statement
Bank account information and extra checks	Complete military address of military service member	School Records, including Individual Education Plan (IEP)
Car titles	Car registration	TDY or PCS orders
Insurance papers	Birth certificates	Family travel orders
Credit card account information	Passports	POV shipping documents
Household goods shipping documents	Family Medical/Dental records	Driver s License
Pet Records	SITES and Welcome Packet	Employment Records/References

When preparing to PCS to Germany, be sure to carry on your person: all medical records for you and your family, extra refills for needed prescriptions (enough to get you by for a month or so to get established with the local Health Clinic), your children's school records, addresses of all your creditors, bank(s), realtors, insurance companies, etc, additional copies of your orders and the inventory sheets of your property shipments and POV shipment documents (and the extra set of keys to all POV locks.)

These are just a few suggestions. Any other phone numbers, addresses or important papers particular to you and/or your family should be considered. It is also a good idea to have originals of any legal documents you have, i.e. marriage certificates, birth certificates, divorce degrees, adoption papers, school transcripts. Occasionally you may need certified true copies of these, which can be obtained through the Legal Assistance Office, but only if you have the originals in your possession. Other information such as a name, address and/or telephone number of a hometown florist (it is expensive to send flowers from overseas), or your favorite mail order catalog(s) are also nice to have. Eyeglasses can also be expensive. If you wear them, purchasing an extra pair before you PCS may be a good idea.

MAIL WHILE ENROUTE

Send your sponsor 2 copies of your orders and about **ninety days prior to your arrival date**, your sponsor can contact the post office to obtain a mailing address for you to begin forwarding your mail. Be sure to send or fax him/her copies of your orders as soon as you receive them. All mail received will be held for your arrival. If you are delayed in route, it is imperative you notify your sponsor to inform the post office so that your mail will not be returned to sender.

DOGS and PETS

Germany does not quarantine animals but does require a health certificate, which **cannot be more than 10-days old**. Rabies vaccinations must be at least 30-days old and not more than one year old. Your military veterinarian can provide information about host country requirements. **Pets may or may not be allowed in billeting and temporary lodging**. A (possibly \$50 or more) fumigation fee and daily pet rate of \$6 or more per pet per day apply to pets when allowed in billeting/temporary lodging. Families arriving with pets may be housed at a local German hotel when pets are not allowed at the guesthouse. **It is wise to get the health certificate as close to departure date as possible in case of any flight delays in route.**

- You must have a health certificate with a German translation.
- Your entry to Germany must be within ten (10) days of obtaining your health certificate.
- You can obtain these forms from stateside Vet Services offices.
- Upon arrival you are required to register your pet at the vet clinic.

German law requires that all dogs be kept on **leashes at all times** and animal **droppings must be promptly removed**. A few paper towels and plastic bag are convenient to have on hand when walking or exercising your pet.

First, if you are planning on bringing **MORE THAN THREE** pets with you to Germany, you'll be required to obtain an import permit prior to arrival. Permits can be obtained stateside, however, it is probably easiest for your sponsor to contact the responsible office here in Germany, request a permit and have the permit delivered to the sponsor's home (there is a DM 36 fee, COD). Your sponsor can then forward the permit to you prior to your departure.

Next, be sure to arrange transportation for your pet from Frankfurt to your duty station. Although pets are allowed to ride the shuttle bus on a space available basis only, pets will be transported beneath the bus in the luggage area. Also, since **pets are NOT allowed to ride in government vehicles, you may be better off asking your sponsor to make arrangements to pick both you and your pet up at the airport in one or more privately-owned vehicles**. A private company located in Frankfurt offers a pet transportation service. If you need to make a reservation for transportation, call Pet-Air. They can be reached at civ: 011-49-69690-71915. The cost is currently DM 250 per trip, rather than by how many pets you have.

Another issue to be aware of concerning animals is that some German landlords are wary of renting to tenants with pets and base housing has a limit of 2 four-legged pets per unit. Although it is not impossible to find German landlords who will accept pets, the 'perfect' house may be harder to locate and may prolong the house-hunting process. If your pet(s) is and/or has been a cherished member of your household, it is recommended you **DO NOT** split up your 'family' when you relocate - many families have brought their pets with them and are glad they did! It just takes a little more effort to find suitable living quarters once you arrive. Again, **give your sponsor a 'heads up' if you plan to bring a pet and let them get a head start on house hunting for you!**

The following dog breeds, including any mix that includes any portion of the following breeds, are **ILLEGAL** to place/board/live in Bavaria:

**Pit Bull, Staffordshire Bullterrier, Bandog,
Tosa-Ina, American Staffordshire Bullterrier**

The **burden of proof** concerning the breed is **on the owner**. These dogs must be registered immediately upon arrival in Germany. While there is no cost for registering these dogs, the owner will be told at the German Office for Safety and Environment (Offentliche Ordnung und Umweltfragen), that the dog will have to be taken to a German Veterinarian to be **TEMPERMENT TESTED**. There is a cost for this testing. A dog must be at least three months old in order to be temperament tested. The granting of a permit may be combined with certain

requirements such as keeping the dog on a leash and/or use of a muzzle or keeping the animal locked up. Please remember that this is a German office and there may not be anyone there who speaks English.

The following dogs are assumed to be aggressive or dangerous and absolutely illegal and should not be brought to Bavaria, since they will be **impounded and killed**:

**Bullmastiff, Bullterrier, Dog Argentino Fila Brasileiro,
Dogue de Bordeaux, Mastiff, Mastino, Napoletano,
Rhodesian Ridgeback, and Mastin Espanol**

Again, the burden of proof is on the owner.

If you have any questions, contact you local Military or Civilian Veterinarian.

SHIPPING A POV

If your vehicle is **financed**, it is recommended you obtain a **statement from the lending organization** that either:

- a. authorizes your vehicle to be out of the continental United States or
- b. acknowledges authorization is not required.

This is to protect you in the event of the vehicle being involved in an accident while overseas.

**Vehicles that are LEASED are not to be removed
from the continental United States
without dealership approval.**

If you plan to ship a privately owned vehicle (POV) to Germany, there are a few things you'll need to know. POVs shipped at government expense will be processed through a Vehicle Processing Center (VPC). The VPC is closed on German and American holidays.

From arrival at the port, vehicles are transported to local communities for pick up. It is imperative that personnel notify the transportation office of their duty assignment upon arrival. DOD Gen. 42A, AFP-75-52, NAVSUPPUB 590 (revised 1994), "Shipping your POV" is a pamphlet provided by the transportation office which covers general car shipping information. Your car must pass an inspection for safety, condition and reliability. To make your transition smooth, it is recommended that any needed **repairs** be completed **prior to shipping your car to Germany**. Repair labor and parts are very expensive, and parts may take time to arrive in Germany. It would be to your advantage to make all repairs

stateside. Check vehicles for rust, torn fenders, chips, cracks or star fractures in the windshield, or oil leaks. Inoperative lights, horn, speedometer, and more can prevent your car from passing inspection.

Before picking up your vehicle you need to have: a USAEUR driver's license, insurance, registration, and shipping document (DD Form 788).

We recommend that you bring small replacement parts for your vehicle, especially if it's an American model or a rare foreign make. There are American dealerships around the area: Ford, Chrysler, and Chevrolet. Keep in mind, it will be more expensive.

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE POV INFORMATION

- Your catalytic converter does not need to be removed; unleaded gas is available in Germany.
- Body damage - If your car has severe body damage it will not be allowed on the road.
- Check your lights, exhaust system, seatbelts (in Germany there is a mandatory seatbelt law), brakes, windshield and windows.
- It is also suggested that pull-out radio, cassette, and CD players be removed to reduce chance of pilferage.
- All vehicles must pass an annual vehicle inspection to determine mechanical condition, prior to being registered for use.
- AAFES automotive parts store is one of the few places to have your vehicle serviced. Parts and shipping are expensive.
- High speeds and road conditions demand your automobile be in excellent mechanical condition.
- Inspect your car for any leaks, loose or worn steering and suspension components, properly working lights, gauges, horn, defroster, exhaust, speedometer, windshield wipers, mismatched, worn, or oversized tires, and missing body components (bumpers, grills, etc.).
- Tires - They should have a minimum of one millimeter depth over the entire tread, and the sizes are those recommended by the manufacturer and do not stick out beyond the fender. Also, don't mix radial tires with non-radial tires.
- If your parts are even slightly worn, consider replacing them.
- Check with your local TMO for the latest restrictions and information before shipping.

Vehicle mechanical and safety requirements are more stringent in Europe. Replacement parts for American vehicles are difficult and time consuming to obtain. **The preparation of your privately owned vehicle for shipment to**

Europe should be a detailed one. The following inspection checklist should assist you in the preparation of your vehicle. This list serves to inform you of what defects will cause you to fail inspections:

1. Hand Brake: Improperly adjusted, will not hold, cable broken/missing or inoperative.
2. Foot Brake: Improperly adjusted right/left, front/rear brake line badly rusted, brake hoses badly deteriorated.
3. Wheel brake cylinder leaks, master brake cylinder leaks. Air system, too much free travel. Brake pads worn front/rear.
4. Windshield Wiper: Blade worn left/right, inoperative or missing.
5. Rear View Mirror: Inside blind, broken, loose, missing. Outside blind, broken, loose or missing.
6. Horn: Inoperative, sound level.
7. Head lights: Improperly adjusted, control light inoperative. Reflector blind, left/right. High/low beam inoperative left/right.
8. Parking Lights: Inoperative left/right.
9. Tail Lights: Inoperative left/right, license plate light.
10. Fog Lights (if applicable): Inoperative left/right control light.
11. Back up Lights: Inoperative left/right.
12. Suspension: Springs/pads, springs front/rear broken sagging. Suspension front rear, shock absorbed front/rear leaks, inoperative.
13. Seatbelt: Wrong type, not operational, missing.
14. First Aid Kit: Wrong type, missing.
15. Warning Triangle: Missing.
16. Four Way Flashers: Missing, inoperative front/rear control light.
17. Direction Indicators: Inoperable front/rear, left/right control light.
18. Steering: Excessive play, steering gear, drag link, and tie rod. Steering wheel not approved or loose.
19. Tires and Wheels: Front wheel bearings, alignment, balance. Wrong type, tread, front/rear or left/right, worn, cut or cracked. Wheels may not protrude outside the body of the vehicle.
20. Exhaust Line: Leaks, muffler front pipe, tailpipes, noise level.
21. Glass: Cracked driver's side, unauthorized stickers.
22. Fuel Tank and Lines: Leaks, loose connections.
23. Speedometer: Inoperative, works erratically.
24. Trailer Connections: Electrical installation, fastening.
25. Frame and Body: Bent, rusted out, tracking impaired. Part of chassis bent, rusted out.
26. Bumpers: Front and rear.

The proper first-aid kit and warning triangle can be purchased in Germany.

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SHIPMENT

- Costs range from \$600 - \$1400.
- Check with your local Transportation Management Outbound.

- Cars are very expensive to purchase here; many take a loss on resale.
- Try to stagger the shipment to ensure you have transportation before you leave and have the other car available once you arrive.
- Car rental is expensive and vehicles are limited.

MOTOR VEHICLES TINTED WINDOWS

USAREUR Regulation 190-1 states "Transparent or tinted (after-market) material attached to the rear or side windows to reduce glare will be of a professional nature and must not distort the drivers vision. When after-market material is used on the windshield, it may be placed on the top edge only, and will not extend more than 4 inches (100 mm) downward on a horizontal plane from the top where the windshield and care body connect." The complete regulation can be accessed at the web site provided. (<http://www.aeaim.hqusareur.army.mil>)

ARRIVING in GERMANY

Remember that **concurrent travel** allows family members to travel **up to 60 days after the sponsor's departure**.

When making your travel decisions, it is important to take a few things into consideration. **If you received a direct assignment, there is no guarantee that that assignment will not be changed upon arrival at the 64th Repl. Company at Rhein Main.** That could present some inconvenience to a family traveling together. If all goes well, your assignment will be received/verified and you will be on the bus to your new community by 1300 hrs that same day. That is the norm but there are always exceptions.

In-processing in Germany may take up to one month due to the draw down and combining of facilities. In addition to a possible delay in arriving at your new community, the Commanding General, CG USAREUR, requires the service member to attend two weeks of training. The training is done at the In-Processing Training Center (ITC). Each community has one. The training is designed to complete the entire in-processing procedure. Once the training is finished the service member will have received community and host nation language training, drivers testing, and a complete community and USAREUR orientation. Spouses and family members are not enrolled in the ITC, as much of the training is military related. However, many of the briefings are of interest to spouses and can be attended on a space available basis.

One other thing to keep in mind before traveling, the 64th Repl Company is not equipped with enough personnel to assist incoming families with their luggage. **Please pack wisely!** You are entitled to bring two bags per person, but you must

also carry them. Be sure to **reference the Reporting Procedures in your SITES for additional information on what to expect when you arrive at the airport.**

Soldiers and their families can travel overseas on a military aircraft or they may choose to travel on a commercial airline with both arriving in Frankfurt, Germany. If you are flying commercial, you will most likely arrive at Frankfurt International Airport, just across the flight line from Rhein-Main AB. (These facilities are adjacent to each other and they share the same runway.) After processing through customs, you must go to one of the USO booths, which are located in Terminal 1 and Terminal 2. You and your family will be taken to 64th Replacement and inprocessed for your tour overseas. If you fly via a military contract carrier, you will arrive at the Rhein-Main AB Terminal. All personnel arriving in Germany by plane at Rhein Main Air Force Base/Frankfurt International Airport will process through the 64th Replacement Detachment at Rhein Main Air Base and will be transported to their duty station by the sponsorship bus. Individual sponsors are not allowed to greet the incoming soldier at Frankfurt International Airport or Rhein Main Air Base. Follow the signs to the baggage claim area to retrieve your bags and/or pets and clear customs. Directions and instructions will be given for luggage claim and the processing area. Personnel with the rank of Major and below are required to ride the sponsorship bus to their duty assignment. Please keep in mind that the length of the bus ride requires some preparation, i.e. snacks, diapers (if traveling with a baby). Pets will travel in the luggage section.

In order to drive in Germany, either on or off-post, you must have a USAREUR Driver's License.

NOTE:

If you do not have a USAREUR license, DO NOT RENT A CAR at the 64th Replacement (fines range around \$6,000!!!).

TEMPORARY LODGING

Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA) partially reimburses service members for occupying temporary lodgings (transient accommodations on- or off-post, cost of meals and transportation to meals) while seeking permanent quarters on arrival. In order to draw TLA, you must apply for government quarters within a specified timeframe upon arrival at your duty station. TLA can be claimed in 10-day increments and is generally limited to 60 days for arriving service members. TLA repayments will be credited into your direct deposit paycheck account within one month of filing the paperwork with housing. A briefing on TLA entitlements and on how to file for TLA will be given after arrival.

Before picking up your vehicle you need to have: a USAEUR driver's license, insurance, registration, and shipping document (DD Form 788).

IMPORTANT GERMAN LAWS

Many Americans run into problems with two German laws. These two important German laws may affect you if you live in an apartment on the economy or near a public road in family housing.

- First, '**Quiet Time**'. It states that there should be no loud or unusual noises to disturb others between the hours of 1200 to 1500 and 2200 to 0700 daily. People are expected to keep noise to a minimum. There is a legal basis for this and not observing it can lead to a fine and/or court appearance! This is not to say that loud noise at any other time is acceptable but it is best to discuss it with the neighbors before practicing the tuba, etc.
- Second, failure to observe the **solemn character of Sundays and German holidays**. In other words, the law forbids you to mow your lawn or wash your car or weed your garden on Sunday or German holidays. The law also forbids you to hang up your laundry on your balcony. Such actions, although overlooked occasionally, can and do result in stiff fines as well!!

Americans often get into trouble in Germany by not heeding this law:

**Unless otherwise posted,
THE DRIVER COMING
FROM THE RIGHT AT ALL INTERSECTIONS
ALWAYS HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY.**

Following too closely and driving too fast for road and weather conditions and failing to yield to the right at intersections are the most common causes of auto accidents involving Americans.

Criminal Offenses

In Germany, active duty military are generally released to military authorities for justice under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UMCJ); however, be aware that jurisdiction in some cases may be retained by German authorities. Civilians, to include family members, are under the jurisdiction of the local German authorities. Again, they may or may not, depending on the infraction, and at their

discretion, relinquish custody/jurisdiction to the local military Commander for action under the provisions of the Civilian Misconduct Action Authority (CMAA). Family members are sponsored in USAREUR by the service member, therefore **the service member is responsible for his/her family members and will normally have to answer to any misconduct.** Depending on the situation, family members can be returned to the States before the service member's tour of duty is completed.

Civil offenses

Recent changes to the Status of Forces Act (SOFA) now allow German authorities to serve process directly on individuals in cases such as divorce, landlord/tenant disputes, etc., without going through the judge advocate of the force. Also, German courts will be able to incarcerate personnel for contempt of court in civil cases for such things as failure to appear in court when properly summoned.

MISCELLANEOUS

ID CARDS

Military personnel must obtain an application for an ID card from their unit PAC. Civilian employees must go through the Civilian Personnel Office. Members of the Armed Forces are entitled to tourist passports without any special authorization from their command. **Command sponsored dependents are entitled to NO-FEE passports. To receive a passport you need the following:**

- a. Proof of U.S. citizenship, an old passport will do
- b. 2 passport size photos (can be obtained through the TSD, Training Support Division)
- c. identification (military ID card).

You must be physically present when applying. There may be times when you will need a certified true copy (with a raised seal) of a legal document, i.e. birth certificate, marriage certificate, divorce degree. **Obtain these before you leave the States** if you do not already have them. It is often difficult and time consuming to obtain them from overseas. The legal office can certify true copies but only if they have a certified copy to work from.

Failure to wear seatbelts can result in a **DM 50+ fine and/or loss of driving privileges.** Also, if you are involved in an **ACCIDENT AND ARE NOT WEARING YOUR SEATBELT, INSURANCE COMPANIES HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE TO PAY FOR INJURIES BECAUSE OF YOUR NEGLIGENCE!**

Traffic

Traffic in Germany is typical of any congested locale; however, driving in Europe requires the operator to be aware of different regulations, customs, and rights-of-way. In the United States, you are accustomed to fitting into tight parking spots; sometimes a gentle bumper contact may occur with the car to the front or rear. Such shoe-horning is not permitted in Germany, the rule is "no contact!" You will also have to accustom yourself to higher speeds on freeways, known here as autobahns. Unless marked, these autobahns have no speed limits and traffic moves at sharply varying speeds. The rule is to drive in the right lane and use the left only for passing -- remember, check behind before moving into the right lane as that car coming up from behind may be traveling well in excess of 100 miles per hour. Flashing headlights or using the turn signal in order to induce traffic in front to move over is illegal. You may initially find the German driving style to be aggressive and intimidating. Observe the defensive driving techniques that you learned in the States and you can help make the European roadways safer for yourself and other drivers as well.

If you are ever involved in an accident, the German police are in charge. You must fill out a report on the accident for the military police. Contact the Military Police nearest your location. Remain at the scene and place your reflectorized warning triangle a sufficient distance away from the rear of the scene. Notify your insurance company even if you are not at fault. Refer to the Driver's Manual for more information when involved in an accident.

SNOW & ICE REMOVAL

During Winter months, drivers who fail to remove snow and ice from their vehicle (windows, roof, trunk, etc.) are subject, under German traffic laws, to being ticketed and fined.

FORCE PROTECTION

When you arrive in Germany, you will be involved in the Force Protection program. Each tenant unit has a responsibility on a particular installation and this may include, but is not limited to, vehicle searches, roving patrols and building checks. Our host nation will provide us with assistance that may include K-9 support, traffic control, and German military personnel. YOU are the eyes and ears for the community. You should have a "blue tourist" passport in addition to your official passport. Your awareness is critical for noticing anything suspicious in your areas and reporting it to the Military Police.

Should you ever be requested by the German police (Polizei) to take an alcohol blood test, do not resist them. It is their duty to require that you do so and they can

insist that you comply. Enjoy yourself, but when it is time to go home take a taxi, use public transportation, or ride with your designated driver.

Germany has a **GOOD SAMARITAN LAW** that requires everyone, in case of an accident, common danger, or distress, to render all aid that could be expected under the circumstances. Failure to render aid can result in a fine or imprisonment. Drivers will notify MPs or SPs of accidents on US installations. Drivers will notify both German police and MPs or SPs, if the accident occurs outside of a US installation.

Crime

You need to be as cautious and aware of crime in communities as you are anywhere you live or travel. Some communities do have a curfew for young people. The military police investigators run random checks through the housing areas and community checking for any out-of-the-ordinary situations. The Provost Marshal's office provides briefings on crime prevention and will assist in any way possible.

Crime exists in Germany just as in other countries. However, there are things you can do to protect yourself and your belongings. Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings, blend into your locale, use a hip pack or wallet instead of a purse. Utilize Operation Identification (USA plus SSN), to engrave identification information on your personal property. Local authorities, in conjunction with the Provost Marshal Office (PMO), will assist you in performing home security evaluations or wherever else needed. USECOM PAM 25-1 entitled Coping with Violence Abroad is a good source of information. Local Military Police can also provide you with location-specific information.

As Americans living in Germany, we must abide by all German laws. Crime exists in Germany just as in any other country. However, there are things that you can do to protect yourself and your belongings: be alert and aware of your surroundings; blend in; use a fanny pack instead of a purse. Utilize Operation Identification (USA plus SSN) to engrave identifying information on your personal property. Local authorities, in conjunction with the Provost Marshal's Office (PMO), will assist in performing home security evaluations.

Photography within the unit areas is prohibited without prior permission.

RESTRICTED AREAS

There are restricted areas in Germany. Contact the local Provost Marshall's Office for specific information. Militarily speaking, there are few restricted areas in Germany. The few that are, are clearly marked. Occasionally a business establishment is listed as 'Off-limits' to Americans (ID card holding Americans).

These are publicized through official channels and the local media. The Provost Marshal can provide more details.

Recycling

German law requires all residents to support recycling. Trash must be separated and disposed of (aluminum, bottles, paper, etc.) in recycling containers located at various locations throughout the local community.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

The USAREUR driver's license is now known as the USAREUR Certificate Of License.

Ensure that your stateside driver s license is **current and not near expiration**. The revised Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that went into effect in 1993, requires all U.S. personnel assigned to Germany to have IN THEIR POSSESSION A VALID STATESIDE LICENSE IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR LICENSING AND TO OPERATE POVs IN USAREUR. **NOTE that some states allow a service member to have an expired license while on active duty. This is NOT considered a valid stateside driver s license in Europe.** All personnel arriving without a valid stateside license will be required to attend driver training on the local economy at their own expense.

Before picking up your vehicle you need to have: a USAEUR driver's license, insurance, registration, and shipping document (DD Form 788). **German law requires** a standard **first-aid kit** and **warning triangle** in all POVs. Before buying insurance, soldiers should see their unit commander and be briefed on the difference between German and American tariff rates. **Auto insurance is expensive in Germany!**

Personnel assigned to Germany traveling outside of the country are able to drive on their USARUER certificate in Allied countries only. Personnel driving in **East Block** countries must be in possession of a **valid International License**. Applications can be obtained at the Driver's Testing office.

Within Germany, all service members and family members must obtain a USAREUR driver's license in order to legally operate a vehicle with USAREUR plates. **International licenses are not sufficient.** German law does not allow for youth under the age of 18 to drive while in Germany. USAREUR-assigned personnel may not drive a USAREUR-plated vehicle solely with an International or German Driver's License. Individuals must attend Driver's Orientation, and be 18 or over to obtain a USAREUR driver's license.

Soldiers and U.S. Civilians employee must have a current stateside license or a military vehicle operator's licenses plus a USAREUR Certificate Of Licenses. ALL personnel (active duty and civilians) must arrive with a **CURRENT stateside driver's license IN HAND (as of 28 March 1998)**. If you do not arrive with a current stateside license, you will be required to attend the off-base German driving school. This will cost you a GREAT deal of money, and will cause extensive delays in the acquisition of a USAREUR driver's license. The USAREUR Certificate Of Licenses will look about the same as the current USAREUR driver's license only with the new name. The procedure to obtain the Certificate Of License and renewal will also be the same as currently used for the USAREUR driver's license. Current USAREUR driver's licenses will be renewed as the USAREUR Certificate Of License when they are due to expire. **Current personal who do not have a VALID stateside license** will have to obtain either a stateside license, a military vehicle operator's license or a German license. **Family members** will be required to have either a stateside license or a German license that is very expensive (approximately 6,000 DM - or \$3,450.00).

Once in Germany you will need to take a written test to qualify for your U.S. Forces driver's license. Additionally, all new personnel and family members who drive must attend a mandatory drivers orientation before obtaining a USAREUR certificate of license. In order to operate a USAREUR-plated vehicle, you must have a USAREUR certificate of license.

The exam is easy once you have studied the manual. Manuals are available at the library. You may be given a copy of the manual at your overseas orientation before you leave the states. Ask for USAEUR Pamphlet 190-34/USAFE Pamphlet 125-11, "Driver's Handbook and Examination Manual for Germany".

Study booklets may be obtained from the driver's testing office or online at the web site provided (<http://rmv.hqusareur.army.mil/drivrmnj.htm>). If you already have a valid stateside driver s license, then the USAREUR driver's license test consists of both a:

- (1) 20 minute 50 question international sign identification
- (2) 100 question written rules (no time limit).

Getting a driver's license is one of the newcomer's largest frustrations upon arrival. We encourage you to take the time to become familiar with the German Driving Manual prior to arrival, so once you attend the Driver's Orientation, you will be ready to test. The test is in two parts (and a test of your vision and reflexes). The first test, time limit of 20-minutes, is identification of International and German signs. You must correctly answer 45 out of 50 questions on the road sign test to pass. While studying, pay close attention to those German signs that contain only German words. **You must pass the first test to be able to take the second one.** If you fail, you will be rescheduled to return another day. The second test consists of a 100-question written test (correctly answer 90 out of 100 questions to pass). There is a self-test in the back of the manual. If you can pass

this and are familiar with the signs, the test will not be a problem! You can take as long as you need for the second part. Testing normally lasts about two hours total. Prior to initial testing an orientation is mandatory. Contact the testing center for dates and times of classes and tests.

Each applicant must bring:

- a. A valid ID card
- b. A valid stateside driver's license
- c. The Traffic Safety slip you will receive from your Safety briefing
- d. Service member's local unit, unit address and phone number
- e. Personal mailing address
- f. \$10 check or money order (NO CASH) – (cost may vary)

The one-week ITC portion of in-processing through the Central Processing Facility includes a USAREUR driver's license test. More information on taking the driver's test will be given at the NEWCOMER'S BRIEFING at initial in-processing.

If all procedures are completed successfully, the driver's testing clerk will complete the application, issue the applicant a temporary driver's license valid for 60 days and forward the application with your check or money order for \$10.00 to the USAREUR Vehicle Registry for completion and issuance of the USAREUR six year driver's license.

Motorcycles

If you have a valid stateside license with motorcycle endorsement, you must pass a motorcycle-driving test before being able to legally drive a motorcycle in Germany. If you do not have a motorcycle endorsement you can take a required course on the local economy at your expense. Motorcycle license testing is offered April through September only. Each applicant is required to bring:

- a. A valid stateside license with motorcycle endorsement
- b. A valid USAREUR POV license
- c. Motorcycle and Protective Headgear
- d. \$10 check or money order (NO CASH), -- (cost may vary)

NOTE: The same requirement applies to all individuals (active duty and civilian) who wish to obtain a motorcycle license...you **MUST** arrive **WITH** a current stateside motorcycle license and Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) card **IN HAND!**

REMEMBER!
YOU MUST POSSESS A VALID STATESIDE DRIVER'S LICENSE.

GASOLINE and GAS COUPONS

Unleaded gasoline is now plentiful in Europe. **Unleaded** and **diesel** are the only types available in Germany. Gas is of good quality and is purchased in liters instead of gallons. AAFES gas stations are few and far between. Gas for your vehicle is rationed in Germany. Depending upon the size of the engine, you will be authorized purchase of 200 or 400 liters per month. Your vehicle registration will contain your gas ration card. Gas coupons are sold for unleaded, super and diesel gas and can be purchased at the main PX or the Shoppette. The coupons are valid throughout **Germany** and the **Netherlands**. Gas stamps for **Italy** can only be purchased in Italy and only with your registration and a valid leave form. The coupons can be used in Germany at all participating ESSO stations on the economy and at the BP stations only on the Autobahn. Without gas coupons, you would pay approximately \$5 for a gallon of gas at a German gas station. With the gas coupons, you pay average stateside prices; use of the coupons allows you to pay "post" prices for off-post gas.

The PX gas station accepts coupons, dollars, checks or credit cards. More information regarding gas coupons will be provided at the Newcomer s Briefing at initial in-processing.

Although the Army/Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) offers automotive repair services and auto parts, you might want to ship any parts that might be unique to your vehicle in your household goods. Not all parts for US made vehicles are carried by AAFES and the wait time for ordering parts from the US can sometimes be excessive. There is often a wait for an appointment at the AAFES garages.

VEHICLE REGISTRATION (USAREUR)

A double white insurance card (DWIC), shipping document, USAREUR driver's license, emergency warning triangle, first aid kit and check/money order for \$12.00 are required to register a vehicle. A single sponsor may register one vehicle; a married/accompanied sponsor may register two vehicles. Sponsor may also register a motorcycle or trailer.

Registration is authorized for only two vehicles per family unless an exception to policy is obtained. The vehicle registration office will assist with the initial registration, renewing your registration and inspection procedures.

In order to obtain **USAREUR license plates** from Vehicle Registration, you need to provide the following documents:

- a. Shipping document, DD Form 788, (or proof of ownership for second or replacement car)

- b. Double White Insurance Card (DWIC) - Ask your insurance carrier if they have sent this to you with your insurance papers. Some insurance companies may put it into a computer database and Vehicle Registration can then look it up on that database, but check with your carrier to make sure where the DWIC is. Make sure the following is correct on the DWIC: the chassis number, and the effective date is the date you want to pick up your USAREUR license plates (The DWIC can be up to 60 days old). The vehicle registration clerk cannot correct any deficiencies that are on the DWIC. The only authorized person who can make these changes is your insurance agent.
- c. Vehicle registration application form AE FM 190-1AA (obtained at the Vehicle Registration Office).
- d. A valid ID card.
- e. A valid USAREUR driver's license.
- f. A German approved emergency kit and reflective warning triangle (it is German law that these are in your vehicle at all times). Both of these items can be purchased for about \$20 (total) at the PX or a PX Auto Parts.
- g. Stateside registration and/or title.
- h. check or money order for the amount prescribed locally (NO CASH).
- i. AE Form 1598 and inspection stamp for locally purchased vehicle

Only drivers possessing a USAREUR driver's license
are authorized to drive USAREUR plated vehicles.
 All other drivers must be approved as an exception to policy requested through the Provost Marshal's Office and is for a limited time only, i.e. visiting family members with a valid International Drivers License.

VISITING RELATIVES WHO DRIVE

- Relatives who are visiting may drive your vehicle if they have an international license.
- You need to register them as drivers at the (appropriate local) Customs Office. The vehicle owner must be present and provide proof of an International Driver s License, Passport, and Vehicle Registration.

VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

All vehicles must pass an inspection before being registered in USAREUR. If need be, a vehicle may be registered non-operational for a limited time to receive necessary repairs. All vehicles must meet the standards as outlined in USAREUR REG 190-1. The AE FORM 190-1H, Vehicle Mechanical Safety Inspection Record, contains the following areas to be inspected:

- 1) **HAND AND FOOT BRAKES** - will be either Brake Machine tested or road tested. Hoses and lines will not be creaked, chafed, corroded, cut, badly rusted or worn, or flattened. Master cylinder and wheels will be examined for fluid leakage. When the brake pedal is fully depressed, the distance the pedal traveled from its free position will not exceed 80% of the total distance from its free position to the floorboard. The hand brake must prevent the vehicle from rolling on a 6-degree incline.
- 2) **WINDSHIELD WIPERS** - will be operational and blades serviceable to ensure visibility. Defroster will be functional if installed.
- 3) **REAR VIEW MIRROR** - Each passenger car will have an inside rearview mirror and an outside rearview mirror on the driver's side.
- 4) **HORN** - Must be operational and able to be heard 200 feet away.
- 5) **LIGHTS** - head, parking, tail, backup, turn signals, 4-way flashers. Must be operational and aligned properly without broken or missing lenses. All lights, switches, light indicators, flashers and wiring must be operational. Fog lights are not required but if mounted should be operational and only with low-beam headlights. Fog lights that only operate with high-beam headlights or are not operational will not be cause for rejection but the owner must be advised that non-operational fog lights and the operation of fog lights with high-beam headlights violate German law and could result in a fine.
- 6) **SHOCK ABSORBERS AND SPRINGS** - Mountings, shackles, leaf and coil springs, and U-bolts will be attached securely. They will not be broken, modified, or extended above the vehicle manufacturer's design height. Spacers, if installed, will be installed on all four springs. Absorbers will be examined for air, gas, or oil leaking from within and excessive free rocking motion. Installation or automatic level control, air or gas shock absorbers, or coil-spring air bags is authorized if it does not change the handling characteristics of the vehicle.
- 7) **SEATBELTS** - Intact and operational for all forward facing seat positions.
- 8) **FIRST AID KIT AND WARNING TRIANGLE** - Are required by German law but absence of one or both of these will not in itself be cause for rejection.
- 9) **STEERING** - Lash or free play in the steering system will not exceed 2 to 2 3/4 inches depending on the diameter or the steering wheel. Free play in the steering linkage will not exceed 1/4 inch. Power steering system must be operational. Rejection can result if tie-rod steering arm assemblies (steering arms, idler arms, drag links), ball joints, and kingpins have excessive play or are damaged or worn. If the rear axle is bent or the wheels are positioned improperly or not aligned with the axles.
- 10) **TIRES AND RIMS** - It is a German law that all tires are the same type, radial or bias-ply, and they have a minimum of 1mm tread.

Tires must be free of chunking, breaks, bumps, knots, or bulges. The use of re-grooved tires is prohibited. Tires where the treads extend beyond the outermost portion of the fender weld are not authorized. Studded tires are prohibited. The tire rim (wheel or disc) will have no visible cracks, elongated bolt holes, or indication of repair by welding. Wheel nuts and bolts will be in place and tight. Tires and rims other than the size recommended by the manufacture will not cause rejection provided safety is not compromised. Spare tires will not be inspected, but owners must be advised that they will be in violation of German law if they have a flat tire on the Autobahn and do not have a spare.

- 11) EXHAUST LINE - Will be secured tightly, free of leaks and excessive wear. Mufflers that permit excessive noise are prohibited.
- 12) GLASS - Must be safety glass unless Plexiglas is installed by the manufacturer. Glass will not have breaks or cracks that impair or distort the driver's vision. Decals that distort or impair the driver's view will not be attached to the front, rear, or side windows.
- 13) FUEL TANK AND LINES - Must be DOT-approved or equivalent design and permanently attached to the vehicle. A missing fuel tank cap or fuel leaks will cause the POV to be rejected.
- 14) SPEEDOMETER - Must be operational
- 15) Trailer connections - Trailer towing vehicles must be equipped with electrical receptacles for connecting trailer lights (taillights, directional lights, and stoplights), and two outside rearview mirrors. Commercially designed trailer hitches will be attached to the vehicle framework for vehicles towing trailers with a gross weight (trailer including load) over 2,000 lbs. Hitches will be attached to the vehicle according to manufacturer's specifications if the gross weight is less than 2,000 lbs.
- 16) FRAME AND BODY - All latching devices will be operational. Frames and one-piece bodies will not be broken, bent, or corroded to an extent that the chassis is weakened or the wheel tracking is impaired. Excessive rust damage on the undercarriage, structural parts of floorboards that are rusted through and frames rebuilt with filler or riveted sheet metal will cause rejection. Deficiencies such as missing grill or fenders, broken windows, extensive body damage, deteriorated tailgates, engine covers, trunk lids, or running boards, broken or misaligned headlights, loose exhaust system, broken mirrors can cause a vehicle to be rejected. License plates must be properly and securely attached and completely visible. Excessive body rust and corrosion that could threaten safety, metal posts and panels repaired by use of body putty or other filler material will cause the vehicle to be rejected. Except for motorcycles or motorbikes, vehicles should have bumpers of the kind provided by the manufacturer firmly attached to both the front and rear of the vehicle. If the bumper has been removed, all mounts and other protrusions must have also been removed.

- 17) It should be noted that vehicle parts, especially tires, and repairs can be very costly in Germany, even when done through AAFES. It is highly recommended that you give your vehicle(s) a good safety check before shipping and complete servicing before leaving the States. A new set of tires couldn't hurt if the ones you have now show any signs of wear at all. Speed rated tires are not a requirement, but keep in mind the high speeds often found on the Autobahns. If you think you may join the majority of drivers, speed rated tires should be a consideration.

Vehicle Checks

All vehicles are subject to a safety inspection at any time. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure the safety of his/her vehicle and to insure their vehicle meets German standards at all times. You must have both a warning triangle and a first-aid kit in your vehicle at all times. Due to a new German law, the first aid kit must now also contain a foil blanket and two pairs of latex/medical gloves.

An annual inspection is required to maintain a USAREUR registration. The inspections are free of charge to all authorized personnel. Occasionally, USAREUR or the local commands will conduct force protection exercises. When this occurs, all vehicles driven on the kaserne (post designation in Germany) must under go a security check. The driver must open both the hood and the trunk for the MP's to check inside and mirrors are used to check underneath the vehicle. The driver must be prepared to present his/her ID card, USAREUR driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. All vehicle passengers and pedestrians coming onto the kaserne must also present an ID card or Installation Pass (needed for non-US Forces personnel).

Some other restrictions that may prevent your vehicle from passing inspections:

1. Wheels may not protrude outside the body.
2. Bumpers are required front and rear.
3. License plates attached incorrectly.
4. No additional lighting and tinting of lights (except fog and driving lights).
5. All exterior lights must be operational.

Germany is the only country in Europe, and one of the few in the world, which does not have a speed limit for many stretches of its freeways, or autobahns. This means fast, aggressive driving. In order to meet demands, your car must be in great shape and be able to pass through stringent safety inspections. Therefore, do not bring the old family car over here. If you do not own a car able to meet German safety standards, you will find plenty of opportunities in Germany to buy new and used cars that can stand up to this kind of driving.

CAR SEATS and SEAT BELTS

According to German Law and AFI 31-204, SAB Supplement 1 (see more from AFI excerpt below), children under 12 years of age and under 4' 11" are required to be in a car seat. Also, children must be over 12 years old to ride in the front seat. **Be sure your sponsor knows if you are bringing children and will need car seats or booster seats since they can be borrowed from Family Services for the trip home from the airport and until your goods arrive.**

(Excerpt from AFI 31-204, SAB Supplement 1) 2-9 Passengers

- a. Children under the age of 12 are prohibited from riding in front seats except when other seats are occupied by children of a younger age.
- b. Vehicles will not be operated while passengers are improperly seated or when the number of passengers exceeds the number the vehicle was designed for or interferes with the operation.
- c. Children under 12 years of age and shorter than 4'11" are required to use suitable Economic Commission for Europe (ECE 44) approved or U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) approved child restraint devices when being transported in a USAREUR plated motor vehicle. While DOT child restraint devices are permissible when traveling in a USAREUR plated vehicle, German child restraint devices must be used when traveling in a German plated vehicle.

All children up to 4 years and under 50 pounds must be restrained in a child safety seat. These seats must be certified as meeting U.S. or German safety standards. Children who exceed the 4 year, 50 pound limit but are under 12 years and shorter than 150 centimeters (4'11") are required to be seated on a booster seat. These seats are designed to be used with the shoulder type seat belts. These booster seats as well as toddler and infant seats, can be purchased rather inexpensively through AAFES. In Germany, all children must be seated in the back seat of the automobile.

- Children weighing more than 48 lbs will use approved booster seats or other suitable approved devices designed for use with the vehicle's three point (lap and shoulder harness) seat belts
- Booster seats will not be used with two point seat belts.
- Owners of a vehicle equipped with only two point seat belts in the rear seats should consider having three point systems professionally installed.
- Vehicles equipped only with two point seat belts in the rear seats must transport a child weighing over 48 lbs in a suitable approved device secured in the front seat with a three-point seat belt. Additional

children weighing over 48 lbs will be secured using the two-point seat belt in the rear area.

SEATBELTS

- Seatbelts are mandatory at all times for all passengers while operating any vehicle on- or off-post. Pregnant women must also wear belts at all times. If for any reason the seatbelt cannot be worn, a medical certificate must be presented.
- Failure for you, or your passengers, to wear a seatbelt can result in a DM 50, or more, fine.
- Use of child safety restraint systems is mandatory while operating a POV in USAREUR. Germany has authorized the use of DOT approved child restraint systems.
- Infants 2-19 pounds or up to 9 months old, are required to ride rear facing, in the rear seat, in an approved infant carrier.
- Children 19-38 pounds or 9 months to 3 years old, are required to ride in the rear seat in an approved car seat.
- Children 33-79 pounds or 3-11 years old, are required to ride in the rear seat in an approved booster seat.
- Children 12 years of age or older may ride in the front seat.

**INSURANCE COMPANIES CAN
REFUSE TO PAY FOR INJURIES RECEIVED IN AN ACCIDENT IF
YOU WERE NOT WEARING YOUR SEAT BELTS AT THE TIME.**

ACCIDENTS

Traffic accidents that occur off-post will be investigated by the German police. Remember to contact the nearest military police to report the matter. If an accident occurs on-post the military police will investigate the matter.

Accidents must be reported to the Military Police.

If you are involved in an accident and are unable to move your vehicle, place your warning triangle or warning flasher 200 meters behind your car if on the Autobahn (100 meters on other roads). It is German law that all vehicles be equipped with a warning device. Don't forget to turn on your flashers. If you are involved in a two-car accident, especially if the other car is German, it is best not to move your car. Call the German police (Polizei) at 110, normally the military police will also come to the accident scene. You will be required to give details

concerning the incident and about your car. You must fill out an accident report for the military police, usually at their station. **For the German authorities you have the right to say nothing about the facts, and you have the right to get a lawyer before you say anything.** You may be asked by the German police to sign an accident report. The best thing to do is to write on the report "**I do not speak or read German and I do not understand this report**", before signing your name. Be sure to get the name, address, license number, and insurance company name and/or policy number of the other driver, as well as the name and telephone number of any witnesses. Sometimes, if there is only minor damage (below DM 3,000), the police will assess the damage and you may be able to settle out of court. **DO THIS ONLY IF YOU ARE NOT AT FAULT!** German insurance is very expensive and many German drivers would rather pay for damages on their own than have their insurance premiums raised even more. If you are at fault, report it to your insurance company. Although we pay rates comparable to the Germans, our policies are a bit different. Your insurance premiums will not be raised because you make a claim. Let your insurance company pay the damages, not your wallet. It is always best to contact Legal Assistance if your situation is too complicated or you have questions. There is frequently a German attorney on their staff to assist with situations dealing with German authorities. In addition to the warning triangle, German law also requires you carry a first aid kit and it must comply with the norm DIN 13164. This is marked on the box. The warning triangles and first aid kits are sold through AAFES auto parts stores and gas stations.

Unless otherwise posted, **the driver coming from the RIGHT at all intersections ALWAYS has the right of way.** This law as well as following too closely and driving too fast for road and weather conditions are the most common causes of auto accidents involving Americans.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

In Germany, **liability insurance is mandatory.**

Automobile insurance is considerably more expensive than in the United States. Budgets should be reviewed to incorporate this cost. Variables such as age of the car, engine size, make, model and weight of the car can influence the insurance rates. Also the driving record and age of applicant affect the cost of car insurance. Liability insurance is based on the age of the primary driver and whether the person is married or single. **Persons under 25 years of age will find insurance prices extremely high.** If your vehicle is financed requiring full coverage, it can be a financial burden to insure your vehicle here. Insuring with a US company that has an agreement with a German company is a possibility of holding the cost down.

It is not unusual for a young couple to make monthly insurance payments that are greater than their car payments. This is something that must be considered and planned for. If you own your car (paid for and not financed) and are not required to obtain full coverage, you must keep in mind the cost of car repairs in the event of an accident. Should you be involved in a one-car mishap or a hit-and-run, the cost of repairs, towing, etc., can be extremely high.

- Drivers under 25 years of age pay as much as \$1,200 or more per year for liability coverage itself.
- **BE PREPARED TO PAY MORE FOR FULL-COVERAGE.**
- Request a letter or statement from your insurance company stating your good driving record to possibly reduce your insurance cost.

Proof of insurance is required before your vehicle can be registered. USAA has offices and representatives in Germany. Other U.S. companies may subcontract with a local insurance company. **Shop around when purchasing car insurance** and make sure you understand your coverage. German law requires the following minimum coverage: 1,000,000/1,500,000 DM for personal injury; 400,000 DM for property damage; and 40,000 DM for damages other than personal injury or property. For more information, read USAREUR Pamphlet 550-160, Insuring Your Car in Germany at the web site provided:

(<http://www.aeaim.hqusareur.army.mil/library/pam/550-160A.htm>). Your sponsor may be able to call one of the local insurance companies and get a quote for insurance based on your vehicle, age, driving record, etc. If your sponsor cannot do this, contact Relocation (email address in SITES) or Family Support Center in Germany and we will try to get an estimate for you.

GREEN CARD - An international motor insurance card (commonly referred to as the Green Card) is required when crossing borders of most European countries. POV owners can obtain the Green Card upon request at no charge from their insurance company.

Seat belts in Germany are mandatory for every person in the car. You can be fined for not wearing seat belts and **insurance companies can refuse to pay for injuries received in an accident if you were not wearing your seat belts at the time.**

Car insurance is expensive. Variables such as age of the car, engine size, make, model and weight of the car can influence the insurance rates. Proof of insurance is required before your vehicle can be registered. USAA has offices and representatives in Germany. Other U.S. companies may subcontract with a local insurance company. Shop around when purchasing car insurance and make sure you understand your coverage. German law requires the following minimum coverage: 1,000,000/1,500,000 DM for personal injury; 400,000 DM for property damage; and 40,000 DM for damages other than personal injury or property

Automobile Clubs

There are automobile clubs in Germany that are similar to AAA and other clubs in the United States. These clubs offer a variety of services to assist you in the event of an accident or other emergency while traveling. Services may also include trip planning and maps. ADAC is a German roadside assistance service similar to AAA in the states and is available at reasonable costs. Army Community Service Center has applications in English should you want information regarding this matter. ADAC is inexpensive and well worth the small, annual fee (especially when you are in a disabled car on the side of the road or autobahn far from your post/kaserne.) Be aware though that programs vary, in some cases only one family member may be covered (the one who signed up), or coverage may be limited within Germany. Make sure you read the materials offered and, if in doubt, see your local Legal Assistance Office.

TRAFFIC NOTES

Americans often get into trouble in Germany by not heeding this law: Unless otherwise posted, **THE DRIVER COMING FROM THE RIGHT AT ALL INTERSECTIONS ALWAYS HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY**. This law as well as following too closely and driving too fast for road and weather conditions are the most common causes of auto accidents involving Americans.

GERMAN SAMARITAN LAW:

The German criminal code states that every driver who comes upon an accident is obligated to render aid so long as this is reasonably possible. If you do not render aid you may be punished with **imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or by a fine**.

Traffic in Germany can be quite congested. If this is your first tour in Germany, you will have some adjusting to do when it comes to driving. Germans take their driving very seriously and tend to drive much faster than we are accustomed. More often than not, they are very aggressive drivers especially on the Autobahns (superhighways) but generally obey the traffic laws. The differences in the roads, traffic and driving habits will take some getting used to. It is not necessary to obtain an international drivers license before traveling to Germany. The USAREUR driver's license is valid for members of the US military, including family members, for most European countries.

Traffic accidents that occur on post are investigated by Military Police. The German Polizei investigates accidents that occur off post.

German law **prohibits drivers to idle their vehicles** for a long period of time. Please be conscious of this when first starting your vehicle or when waiting for long periods of time in traffic or at railroad crossings.

Turning right on a red light is generally prohibited, unless a green arrow mounted next to the traffic light shows that it is permitted.

Also, remember that when driving on the **AUTOBAHN** the **left lane is only for passing. Passing in the right lane is prohibited and tailgating is also prohibited.**

Should you ever be requested by the German police (Polizei) to take an alcohol blood test, do not resist them. It is their duty to require that you do so and they can insist that you comply. Enjoy yourself, but when it is time to go home take a taxi, use public transportation, or ride with your designated driver.

Drivers will notify MPs or SPs of accidents on US installations. **Drivers will notify both German police and MPs or SPs, if the accident occurs outside of a US installation.**

Traffic accidents that occur on-post are investigated by the Military Police; accidents that occur off-post are investigated by the German Police. If involved, **YOU MUST REMAIN AT THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT.** Do not leave the scene of any accident until directed to do so by appropriate authorities. Failure to do this may result in criminal charges and the loss of your license. Contact the nearest military police or use emergency phones that are located along most German roadways to contact local authorities, medical or ambulance services. All motorists are required to place their warning triangle about 150 feet behind their vehicle following an accident or breakdown. Germany also has "good Samaritan" laws that require the rendering of First-Aid to accident victims. We recommend all family members participate in Red Cross First-Aid and CPR classes.

Drivers involved in a **single POV accident** that results in property damage must report the accident immediately or face charges of **hit-and-run**. In the case of an accident, if your car is disabled and cannot be moved, immediately place your warning triangle out to warn oncoming traffic. It should be placed at least one hundred meters away from your vehicle. Next, call the German police at telephone number 110-(or use the call box). The military police should also come to the accident scene. You will be required to give details concerning the incident. The military police will also need you to fill out an accident report at the station. For the German authorities, you have the right to get a lawyer before making any statements. You may be asked by the German police to sign an accident report. The best thing to do is to write on the report, "I do not speak or read German and I do not understand this report", before signing your name.

When driving on an Autobahn, should you have a breakdown, it is best to try to bring your car to the extreme right parking lane, called the "Standspur". The Standspur is provided for emergency use only. On the Autobahn, you will find white posts at regular intervals. On these posts, small black arrows point the way to the next emergency box. These call boxes are located, at 1km (0.6 mile) intervals throughout the entire German Autobahn system. Simply lift the shutter and wait until someone from the local highway service talks to you, then give the number of the call box so they will know where you are located.

SPEED LIMITS

The strictly enforced speed limit on all posts is 30 km/h (18 mp/h).

There is a suggested Autobahn speed limit of 130 km/h (about 80 mp/h). Although there are stretches of the autobahn that have no speed limit, if you are involved in an accident in which you were driving faster than 130 km/h, you could be held responsible. In cities, towns, and villages the maximum speed is 50 km/h, (30 mp/h) unless the road signs indicate a higher or lower speed limit. In slow-traffic zones, now very common in residential areas and city centers, the maximum speed limit is 30 km/h (18 mp/h). Outside cities and villages the top speed limit is 100km/h (60 mp/h). **The speed limit on all posts is 30 km/h (18 mp/h) and is strictly enforced.**

Although the German Autobahn system is one of the best highway systems in the world, traffic is typical of a congested city. During vacation periods and rush hours, the traffic on the Autobahn quickly backs up (called a "Stau"). A "Stau" may occur at caution points, construction sites, or during environmental test stretches and will (normally) be posted. While typically no speed limit is posted on an Autobahn, there is a suggested speed limit of 130km/h (80mph).

Using a horn, flashing lights, or using hand gestures is considered rude and can lead to large fines from the police. For more information on driving in Germany, consult the Driver's Manual.

Be aware that German police are authorized to impose fines and receive payment for minor traffic violations. If the vehicle operator cannot pay, then a ticket will be issued that requires payment either through the mail or at a local German bank. Delay in paying tickets will result in an increase in the fine charged.

TELEPHONES

If you have a mobile/cell phone from the states, you will NOT be able to use it here. You will have to purchase a new one. The phones themselves are inexpensive but the cost to maintain and use one is **high**.

When renting telephones through the TELEKOM, (German Telephone Company) the minimum contract time is three years. If you cancel your telephone prior to 3 years, TELEKOM will charge you approximately 50% of the rental fee for the period between termination and the end of three years. If you buy your own telephone, this can be done through the TELEKOM Shop or at any electrical store. Also, American phones with a phone jack adapter can be bought at AAFES.

To call the United States, we recommend you research savings for long distance **calling card services** and long distance **dial-back services**. This offers substantial savings from calling on the German phone system or calling collect. Look in the Stars & Stripes newspaper when you arrive in Germany for various company ads.

It's important to understand what you're getting yourself into before you pick up a pen and sign on the dotted line. This is particularly true when it comes to German telephone contracts. To have your phone service turned off normally requires a minimum of six working days. However, if a one-year service contract has been entered special rules apply. For example, terminating your phone service is not possible during that one-year period. An automatic renewal of the contract will take place. In order to stop the automatic renewal process a termination letter must be sent at least three months before the contract is up for renewal. **There is no exception clause for service members who PCS or ETS from Germany.** However, negotiations are underway to try and help those who signed a service contract while unaware of its full impact. U.S. personnel should avoid signing service contracts by purchasing a phone compatible with the German system. You will save money in the long run. Look into the various commercial phone services to save money.

Telephone bills are one of the largest reoccurring costs soldiers encounter in Germany. ACS provides an extensive briefing on phone service and options as part of the ITC orientation -- family members are encouraged to attend this.

U.S. cordless phones, cell phones and baby monitors with the 900 MHz frequency are **ILLEGAL** in Germany as they interfere with the German emergency system. U.S. phones with cords can be used with a phone jack adapter.

If you plan on using an online service with your computer, you will also need this phone jack adapter for your computer.

Some cautions:

1. **U.S. cordless phones are illegal** for use in Germany due to different telecommunication frequency allocations by the respective governments.
2. German contracts (cell phones and beepers), generally, are for two years and have automatic renewal provisions unless the user notifies the company of cancellation, **IN WRITING**, during a specific time period.

If you live in a German house or apartment, you will have to pay utilities (like electricity, water and phone). You may also be required to put down a deposit on your phone, water and electric services. There are several ways in which you can pay these bills, either with a standing order from your bank account or at the local German post office, keeping in mind that you pay an extra DM6 - DM10 charge for each bill.

Telephone bills easily get out of control in Germany. There are no "local calls" in Germany. Each call is charged based on the call's time of day, duration, and distance. Long distance services are offered by a number of independent companies. **Do not call the US without a long distance telephone plan!** While you may be able to use a stateside telephone in your quarters, the German Telekom Office would prefer that you use a German phone. You have the option of renting or buying a phone. Mobile Telephones or "Handys" are extremely popular in Germany. Look before you buy; there are a variety of billing plans and manufacturers.

Telephone installation fees from the German telephone company are DM100 for a first time installation or DM50 if the number has not been reassigned. Monthly base charges are currently DM 26,40 per month. All bills are not itemized but this service can be had for a one-time fee of DM20.

The German telephone rates can be very high. Please, use your phone with caution. Each call is measured in units. The cost and length of the unit varies with the time of day, the length of the call, and the distance you are calling. Phone cards can be purchased for use in most German pay phones. The cards can be purchased for varying amounts of money. The telephone reads the amount of money available on the card and deducts your calls accordingly. **It is not a bad idea to purchase a phone card and make your first few calls from a pay phone to get an idea of the cost of your stateside call.** This can save you from a surprisingly large bill once you have your phone installed and you call from your quarters. The German phone bills do not provide an itemized list of calls, unless you request a special bill for which you will be charged a one-time nominal fee. The bill simply states the amount owed for the basic service and a cumulative total for all your calls.

Another option, for overseas calling is a calling card from one of the major telephone companies, AT&T, MCI, SPRINT, all of which can be accessed from Germany. Pre-paid AT&T cards can also be purchased at the PX. There are several 'call-back' services available also. These services are 30%-60% less than the cost for overseas calls charged by the major telephone companies. The call-back services are easy to obtain. Ads are readily available in the European Stars & Stripes newspaper or you can stop by ACS for more information.

ELECTRICITY, VOLTAGE, APPLIANCES AND TRANSFORMERS

Adaptor: A small, inexpensive plug cover for cord plugs that allow them to plug directly into the German wall sockets.

ADAPTORS DO NOT EQUAL TRANSFORMERS!

Transformer: An appliance that reduces the voltage from 220-volts down to 110-volts. Stateside the only appliance that use 220-volts are the electric range and the electric clothes dryer on a 220-volt circuit with special plugs (that your ordinary 110-volt appliances like clothes washer or refrigerator cannot use because of the special 220-plug.) The transformers come in different sizes. The larger ones are needed for those 110 appliances that have a larger power use. Transformers are equipped to handle different wattage. The wattage required should be listed on the back of the appliance. For example, your vacuum cleaner would require a large one and a small, hand mixer a smaller one.

You can plug your stateside hand mixer into a **transformer** and mix your food. If you use an **adapter** and plug it into a German wall socket, the hand mixer will work for a couple of seconds and then will be unusable, forever. You will have burned it up.

Most appliances with heating elements (toaster and irons) operate satisfactorily with a transformer.

Most government housing has both 110- and 220-volt plugs. Transformers range in size from 75-watts for small appliances to 3000-watts for larger appliances. Below is a list of tips that will help you with transformers:

- 1) Look on the back of each American appliance to determine the size (wattage) of transformer it needs. If the appliance lists no wattage, determine its need by multiplying amperes by volts (e.g., an appliance marked "2 amperes, 110-volts" needs a transformer of at least 220-watts.)

- 2) Avoid using transformers to power American 110-volt light bulbs. Instead, buy 220-volt light bulbs at the PX and screw them into your American lamps. Use the 110-to 220-volt adapter plugs and plug the lamp in to the German outlet.
- 3) If you need to buy transformers, try to purchase them at the Thrift Shop. They will be a lot cheaper there.
- 4) **Never exceed the rating of a transformer.** If it's limited to 750-watts, do not plug a 1000-watt appliance into it. You could burn up the transformer. The transformer wattage can exceed the appliance wattage.

German housing or government-leased housing requires 220V appliances, but 110V appliances can be used with transformers. Some government quarters may have the capability to run on 110V or 220V without transformers. Operation on a transformer can reduce the life of appliances. Check to see which items are convertible (switch on back for 110 or 220.) Microwave ovens with 60 Hertz cannot be used at 50 Hertz and do not operate properly with a transformer. Most small appliances and daily essentials can be purchased at the PX or on the economy.

WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU BRING DUAL VOLTAGE APPLIANCES. Transformers can be purchased at the local PX. They may be available through the Loan Closet for short periods, 45 days or so, when you first arrive. Contact the ACS Center for more details.

German electrical current is 220-volt, 50-cycle. This is different than the 110-volt, 60-cycle current in the United States. You can run some 110-volt appliances through transformers that reduce the voltage. Note however, that this may reduce the service life of the item. Transformers also do not adjust the cycles, so appliances that rely on 60-cycle current will not run properly. Some examples of this are clocks and microwave ovens. PLEASE NOTE that AAFES also sells plug adaptors and that these adaptors ARE NOT TRANSFORMERS.

However, even with the use of a transformer, some appliances will not run properly on European current and should not be shipped. Examples of items that will not run properly at 50 cycles are clocks and turntables, which will run at 5/6 speed, and items with large motors such as air conditioners, large mixers, and microwaves. (The alarm clock will lose 10 minutes every hour.) While these items will operate on a transformer, permanent damage can be done to the motors by operating them at 50 cycles for an extended period of time. Also, they will not run as efficiently. Freezers will also not operate properly and should not be shipped. However, dual voltage items (110/220-volt) and/or items which are rated at 50/60 cycles operate correctly.

Bring your lamps, most German apartments and houses do not have ceiling lights. You can use a small plug adapter that allows you to plug your lamp into German wall sockets. Remember to use only 220-volt light bulbs! Do not pack

any light bulbs from the states. Also, you will have to be sure to buy the correct light bulbs as the PX sells both 110- and 220-volt bulbs.

Do Not bring a washer and dryer.

German curtains and drapes are **hung from the ceiling** not from the wall therefore; they are longer than the average American curtains. American curtains can be adapted by sewing a special hanging tape to the upper edge of the curtains but may be the wrong length. You cannot use the usual curtain rods that we have stateside. German houses may not have carpeting and Government quarters are only partially carpeted; bring all of the rugs you will need. Bring your own beds and lamps. Housing has items available for a loan period of 90 days. Cribs are not available but may be purchased from the PX or Thrift Shop. ACS has pots, pans, dishes and tableware available for temporary loan (some loan closets may have port-a-cribs.)

Utilities:

If you live in a German house or apartment, you will have to pay utilities (like electricity, water and phone). You may also be required to put down a deposit on your phone, water and electric services. There are several ways in which you can pay these bills, either with a standing order from your bank account or at the local German post office, keeping in mind that you pay an extra DM6 - DM10 charge for each bill. Utilities also are more costly than most stateside locations. Utility bills are pro-rated based on estimated usage.

CABLE/SATELLITE DISHES

English speaking cable TV is available **only on-post**. In addition to a connection fee, the monthly fee is approximately 40 Deutsche Marks per month (approximately \$23.00). Armed Forces Radio and Television Services (AFRTS) is available with a satellite and AFN Decoder for those living off-post. The system can be leased or purchased through the PX. For more information on AFN Decoders, visit the AAFES web site.

Armed Forces Network (AFN) provides American radio and TV programs. AFN television presently provides one station for American viewing and does a pretty good job of satisfying most viewers most of the time. However, they are implementing a plan that will provide three additional channels, Newsports, Spectrum and Satnet. For those who have been stationed in Germany before, this expansion probably sounds pretty good and for the rest of you, it may seem pretty boring. But there are other viewing options for TV buffs.

Satellite dishes can be installed. If you think you will be interested in satellite reception, it will be necessary for you to purchase a satellite and receiver **once you arrive** as the reception/signals are different. The **equipment made for use in the States will not work**. If you or your family have a favorite program or enjoy special TV presentations, you may want to make arrangements with someone in the States to tape them and mail you the tapes. The majority of the big sporting events, football, baseball, basketball, etc. are televised live. This is both good and bad. The good part is obvious, seeing the event live, and the bad part is that it may not be your favorite team and the time difference means late night or early morning viewing.

MONEY/CURRENCY

The monetary system in Germany is the Deutsch Mark (DM) most commonly referred to as just "marks". A mark consists of 100 pfennings, just as a dollar is made up of 100 pennies. There are 1, 2, 5, 10, and 50 pfenning coins and 1, 2, and 5 DM coins. The paper denominations begin with DM 5 and go on up, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, etc. Prices written in marks have a DM preceding the number just as we have the dollar sign (\$), i.e. DM 25. Marks are necessary for all purchases and financial transactions made on the German economy. Marks can be purchased at the American banks on the installations, the military finance offices, and credit unions. Marks can also be purchased at all German banks, train stations and the airport. However, there is often a charge and generally the exchange rate is not as good as the American financial institutions. The rate of exchange for dollars to Deutsch marks is set daily in Frankfurt at the Germany Monetary Exchange. The proceeding day's rate is always announced on the American Forces Network (AFN) radio at 1400 in the afternoon. Recently, the exchange rate is \$1.00 = DM 1,75. To give you an idea of the dollar's fluctuation, in May of 1991 the rate of exchange was \$1.00 = DM 1,68 and during the same time in 1995, \$1.00 = DM 1,40.

There are no restrictions on bringing Deutsche Marks or any other currency into Germany or taking them out of the country. It is recommended that **all incoming personnel have some Deutsche Marks for incidental expenses, telephone calls, food, etc.** Currency exchange rates change daily, for current rate exchange information, check with your local bank. It is also a good idea to have some coins (such as pfenning coins for the toilets). As the banks stateside will only give you paper DM, check with those that have returned from Germany as they collect and bring back to the states change as you may have a penny collection.

Most service members stationed in Germany receive a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). COLA is a tax-free entitlement based on current living costs in a geographical area.

Germany, as with the rest of Europe, operates under the metric system, i.e. kilometers, often referred to as 'klicks', instead of miles (1 mile = 1.6 kilometers), kilograms or 'kilos' instead of pounds (1 lbs = 0.45 kilos), liters instead of quarts (1 qt = .95 liters). If you are unfamiliar with the metric system and do not have access to a conversion chart, be sure to stop by ACS in Germany and they can provide one for you. This system may seem a bit awkward at first, but you will soon become accustomed to it and quickly be able to calculate approximately.

In Germany, **time** is written based on the **24-hour** day, the same as that used by the military, unlike the 12 hours a.m. and 12 hours p.m. used in the civilian world Stateside. Thus, 0700=7:00 a.m., 1100=11:00 a.m., 1300=1:00 p.m., 1500=3:00 p.m., 2100=9:00 p.m., and so on.

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT):

In Germany, a 16% tax is added to almost all purchases and services. The price of goods on the German economy includes a 16 percent tax (Mehrwertsteuer). Some retailers accept a Value Added Tax (VAT) form which exempts military members and Americans working for the Department of Defense (ID card holders can use a VAT form to receive an exemption) from this tax on amounts over 50 DM. Both the VAT office and the German government regulate these forms. These VAT forms are "controlled" items and can be purchased for \$3.00 each. More information on the use these forms will be provided at the Newcomer's Briefing at initial in-processing. Contact your local VAT office for the rules and regulations.

