LOCATION GUIDE

Germany

Command sponsorship, pets, USAREUR driving, VAT forms, housing and base notes for every major U.S. community in Germany.

BOARDING PASS

FROM	TO	START
Your current duty station	Germany	6+ months out

COMMUNITIES	ALLOWANCES
KMC · Spangdahlem · Stuttgart · Bavaria · Wiesbaden · Ansbach	OHA + COLA

SERIES OCONUS PCS

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WELCOME

Germany at a glance

Germany has the largest U.S. military presence in Europe. Families live in communities from the Rhineland-Palatinate to Bavaria, and most live on the German economy.

INSTALLATION	AREA	MAIN SERVICES	NOTES
Ramstein AB / KMC	Kaiserslautern area	Air Force, Army	Largest community; LRMC
USAG Rheinland-Pfalz	K-Town, Baumholder	Army	Baumholder requires on-post living
Spangdahlem AB	Eifel, near Bitburg	Air Force	Schools on base
USAG Stuttgart	Stuttgart	Joint	EUCOM and AFRICOM HQ
USAG Bavaria	Grafenwöhr, Vilseck, Hohenfels, Garmisch	Army	No ER on any Bavaria post
USAG Wiesbaden	Wiesbaden	Army	USAREUR-AF HQ
USAG Ansbach	Ansbach	Army	Aviation; Bavarian dog rules

Five things that work differently here

1

Command sponsorship

Families need it to come on orders and to get housing.

2

OHA + COLA

Overseas allowances replace BAH; Army posts often put you on post first.

3

USAREUR license

Everyone who drives takes an online course and test first.

4

VAT forms

Tax-relief forms can save 19% on big purchases off base.

5

Quiet hours

Sundays and evenings are quiet by law — no mowing or loud work.

Start six months out

Overseas screening, passports and pet paperwork set the pace of the whole move.

COUNTDOWN

Command sponsorship and timeline

Every family member needs overseas screening and a no-fee passport. Without command sponsorship, your family can't be assigned quarters.

As soon as you have orders 6+ MONTHS OUT

- [ ] Request command sponsorship for your family
- [ ] Apply for no-fee passports — and tourist passports for leave travel
- [ ] Request a sponsor from your gaining unit
- [ ] Start overseas or EFMP screening for every family member
- [ ] Start the pet microchip and rabies vaccine
- [ ] Ask about your post's on-post housing rules

Book the move 90–120 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Request Patriot Express seats (or commercial travel)
- [ ] Split household goods: express, main and storage
- [ ] Gather school, medical and IEP/504 records
- [ ] Request pet spaces as soon as they open
- [ ] Decide whether to ship your car — check diesel bans

Final prep 30 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Get the SOFA stamp in no-fee passports
- [ ] Bring a 90-day supply of prescriptions
- [ ] Carry passports, orders and pet papers together
- [ ] Order some euros for the first week

How you'll arrive

Most families fly the Patriot Express into Ramstein, then ride a sponsor bus to their post. Stuttgart personnel often fly commercial into Stuttgart. Ask your sponsor.

FOUR-LEGGED FAMILY

Bringing pets to Germany

Germany follows EU pet rules, so there's no quarantine — but the order and timing of each step matters.

Four steps, in this order

1

Microchip

ISO 15-digit; implanted before the rabies shot.

FIRST

2

Rabies vaccine

Given at least 21 days before arrival, at 12 weeks or older.

21+ DAYS OUT

3

EU health certificate

From a USDA-accredited or military vet, endorsed by USDA.

WITHIN 10 DAYS

4

Register on arrival

With the base vet within 14 days; register dogs with the town.

AFTER ARRIVAL

An import fee applies at Frankfurt and Ramstein. Source: Public Health Command Europe; Stars and Stripes PCS guide.

Military-specific rules

- Germany bans importing Pit Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire and Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Bull Terriers and their mixes
- Patriot Express takes up to two pets per family, about 10 per flight
- SOFA members are generally exempt from dog tax but must still register dogs locally
- Bavaria has its own breed list; some breeds need permits and a character test
- Pet travel costs may be reimbursed up to $2,000 for one pet
- Barking over 10 minutes straight can count as a noise disturbance

Check housing pet limits

Most housing allows two pets; KMC allows three under 150 lb combined. Many off-base landlords refuse pets.

ON THE ROAD

USAREUR license, cars and driving

Many families ship one car and buy a second locally. German roads are excellent, but rules are strict and fines are steep.

Getting your license

1

Take the online course

JKO courses USA-007 and USA-007B; score 85% or better.

2

Visit the testing center

Bring your U.S. license, ID and orders; the fee is $30.

3

Get an IDP too

An International Driving Permit helps when you drive outside Germany.

Buying and owning a car

TOPIC	WHAT TO KNOW
Shipping	The government ships one POV on most orders; book through PCSmyPOV
Registration	About $45 with a 30-day temporary plate; inspection on post is free
Required kit	DIN 13164 first-aid kit, warning triangle and reflective vest
Tax-free cars	Military car sales dealers sell new cars tax-free
Fuel	The AAFES fuel card gives a monthly tax-free ration at AAFES and Esso stations
Diesel bans	Stuttgart's diesel ban covers Patch, Kelley and Robinson Barracks

Rules of the road

- 50 km/h in towns, 100 km/h on rural roads; 130 is recommended on the Autobahn
- Winter tires with the Alpine symbol are required in wintry conditions
- Blood alcohol limit is 0.05% — 0.0% for drivers under 21
- Form a rescue lane in every Autobahn traffic jam

WHERE TO LIVE

Housing, OHA and allowances

Overseas allowances replace BAH. Army posts like Baumholder and Hohenfels require on-post living if housing is available; elsewhere many families rent on the economy.

1

OHA

Covers rent up to your rank's cap, plus a monthly utility amount.

2

COLA

Paid to command-sponsored members; it shifts with the exchange rate.

3

MIHA and TLA

MIHA helps with setup costs; TLA covers lodging while you look (up to 60 days).

Double-check your rates — OHA and COLA change often.
OHA: travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Overseas-Housing-Allowance/OHA-Rate-Lookup/
Overseas COLA: travel.dod.mil/allowances/overseas-cost-of-living-allowance/overseas-cola-rate-lookup/

On post first CHECK YOUR GARRISON

- Report to the housing office within two business days
- Housing is often stairwell buildings shared by several families
- Baumholder and Hohenfels require on-post living unless you get a non-availability letter
- Loaner furniture and appliances are available

Living off base IF APPROVED

- Use homes.mil and the housing office's military rental contract
- Homes often have no closets — the base issues wardrobes
- Never sign a lease without the military clause for PCS
- Utilities are estimated monthly and settled once a year

Learn the house rules

Recycling is mandatory, glass is sorted by color, and quiet hours apply on Sundays and evenings. Your neighbors will notice.

KIDS

Schools and child care

DoDEA runs schools in every major community, so command-sponsored kids attend American schools on an American calendar.

AREA	SCHOOLS
KMC and Baumholder	12 schools, including Ramstein, Kaiserslautern and Landstuhl
Spangdahlem	Elementary, middle and high school on base
Stuttgart	Patch, Robinson Barracks and Stuttgart elementary; Patch Middle; Stuttgart High
Bavaria	Grafenwöhr, Netzaberg, Vilseck and Hohenfels; Garmisch has no high school
Wiesbaden and Ansbach	Elementary through high school

German Kita

Space-available preschool spots are open to Americans; apply to each Kita.

Military Interstate Compact

DoDEA follows it for records, placement and graduation rules.

School Liaison Officers

Every garrison has one for enrollment and IEP transitions.

Child care

- Request Child Development Center care on MilitaryChildCare.com as soon as you have orders
- Youth centers and teen programs run in every community
- Family Child Care homes on post fill gaps
- German Kitas are a popular option for ages 3–6

Bring complete records

DoDEA needs shot records, transcripts and any IEP or 504 plan at enrollment. Hand-carry them.

HEALTH CARE

Medical and dental

Germany is in the TRICARE Overseas Program. Landstuhl Regional Medical Center is the largest U.S. hospital outside the United States; a replacement is due in 2027.

1

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center

The only U.S. military ER in Germany. A new medical center at Rhine Ordnance Barracks is due in 2027.

2

Clinics

Every community has a clinic. Outside Landstuhl, emergencies go to German hospitals — call 112.

Before you go

- Complete overseas screening for every family member
- TRICARE Prime Overseas enrollment is automatic for command-sponsored families
- Call International SOS before going to a German hospital without a referral
- Bring a 90-day supply of prescriptions in original bottles
- Get copies of medical, dental and shot records
- Some German providers want payment up front

Good to know

TOPIC	DETAIL
Emergencies	Dial 112 for ambulance and fire
Patient liaisons	Help with language, transfers and discharge at German hospitals
Dental	Active duty uses base clinics; families use the TRICARE Dental Program overseas
Appointments	You can't book until you arrive and enroll

DAILY LIFE

Money, phones and daily life

Germany is efficient and orderly, but shops close early and Sundays are quiet. Your first weeks will go smoother if you know these.

VAT forms

An NF-1 form ($10) covers purchases up to €2,499.99. Get it before you buy.

Sunday closures

Most shops close on Sundays and earlier on Saturdays.

Electricity

220V. Base housing often has both 110V and 220V outlets.

Everyday details

TOPIC	WHAT TO KNOW
Money	Euros; landlords often want rent by German bank transfer
Banks	Service Credit Union and others have branches on several bases
Mail	You'll have an APO address; packages can take a week or more
Internet	Home internet can take about two months to install
Christmas markets	Late November to Christmas Eve in nearly every town
Time zone	6 hours ahead of the U.S. East Coast

Try the VAT app

The Remonon app bundles small receipts into one monthly VAT form — a big time saver.

LIVING IN GERMANY

Culture, safety and the NEO go-bag

Local customs

- Shake hands when you meet and leave
- Use "Sie" and last names with adults until invited otherwise
- Keep quiet hours on Sundays and evenings
- Don't touch other people's cars or gardens
- Expect strict move-out inspections

Safety

- Dial 112 for emergencies
- Rude gestures while driving are a reportable offense
- Border checks are back at Germany's land borders
- Carry your ID, passport and SOFA papers
- Enroll in STEP for State Department alerts

NEO go-bag KEEP IT PACKED

- [ ] Passports, orders and ID cards for everyone
- [ ] Medications for at least a week
- [ ] Water, snacks and a flashlight
- [ ] Pet carrier, food and records
- [ ] Copies of birth and marriage certificates
- [ ] Cash in euros and dollars
- [ ] Phone chargers and a battery pack
- [ ] A change of clothes for each person

NEO is part of overseas life

Command-sponsored families take part in noncombatant evacuation planning. Keep your NEO packet current and update it whenever your family changes.

BASE NOTES · WEST

KMC, Baumholder and Spangdahlem

Ramstein and Kaiserslautern (KMC) AIR FORCE · ARMY

- About 54,000 Americans; more than 85% live off base
- Lodging stays are limited to 30 days
- KMC Housing Office: Building 2020, Kapaun
- The German-American Community Office helps with off-base issues

HOUSING OFFICE | LODGING | CLINIC | VET CLINIC

Baumholder ARMY · SMITH BARRACKS

- About 45 minutes northwest of Kaiserslautern
- Family housing wait is about 1–8 weeks
- 100% on-post occupancy — off post needs a non-availability letter
- On-post housing has no air conditioning

Spangdahlem Air Base AIR FORCE · EIFEL

- Military Housing Office: Building 454
- Eifel Arms Inn has limited pet rooms
- Leases use the USAFE 291A form — German contracts aren't allowed
- Many local landlords refuse pets

HOUSING OFFICE | LODGING | CLINIC | VET CLINIC

BASE NOTES · SOUTH AND HESSE

Stuttgart, Bavaria, Wiesbaden and Ansbach

USAG Stuttgart JOINT · FOUR POSTS

- Housing office: Panzer Kaserne, Building 2913
- The city diesel ban limits which cars you can bring
- A free shuttle runs between all four posts
- A non-availability letter is possible if housing is over 60 days out

USAG Bavaria GRAFENWÖHR · VILSECK · HOHENFELS · GARMISCH

- No ER on any Bavaria installation
- In-processing takes about seven days
- Hohenfels requires government housing; waits average 6–8 weeks
- Garmisch has no military medical care and no high school

USAG Wiesbaden ARMY HQ

- Housing office: Building 1023W, Clay Kaserne
- Up to two pets, dogs and cats only
- On-post family housing wait is about 0–8 weeks

USAG Ansbach ARMY AVIATION

- Housing office: Building 6510, Storck Barracks
- Car seats must meet ECE 44/03 or 44/04
- Fighting dogs are banned in government housing

KEEP THIS HANDY

Contacts and links

Base numbers change often and use DSN or local formats. Write in your own from your sponsor and welcome packet.

OFFICE	DSN	FROM A CELL
Sponsor		
Housing office		
Lodging		
Family readiness center		
Clinic or hospital		
Vet clinic		

NUMBER	USE
112	Ambulance and fire (EU-wide)
DSN 314-590-6321	LRMC emergency room
DSN 314-590-5762	LRMC appointments
0800-181-8505	International SOS

Links

Public Health Command Europe · DoDEA Europe · PCSmyPOV · OHA Rate Lookup · Overseas COLA Rate Lookup · Plan My Move

Sources: Military OneSource Germany installation pages; Ramstein and Spangdahlem fact sheets; Stars and Stripes Germany PCS guides (2025–26); Landstuhl RMC; Army.mil.

READY FOR THE FULL PLAYBOOK?

Go step by step with the kits.

Worksheets, trackers and a complete binder setup for every stage of your move.

pcslikeapro.org
hello@pcslikeapro.org

WORKSHEET

Pet tracker and budget

Pet import tracker

STEP	DATE DONE	PET 1	PET 2
Microchip number			
Rabies vaccine			
21 days ends			
Health certificate			
USDA endorsement			
Flight booked			
Base vet registration			
Town dog registration			

Monthly budget

ITEM	AMOUNT
OHA + utility allowance + COLA	$
Rent (if off base)	$
Utilities	$
Car insurance, fuel card and registration	$
Left over	$