

# NEWCOMER'S GUIDE



**SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, GERMANY**

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# WELCOME TO SABER NATION

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# WING HISTORY

The 52nd Fighter Wing began its history at Spangdahlem on 31 December 1971. Upon activation, the 52nd possessed two tactical units—the 23rd Tactical Fighter Squadron (flying the F-4D Phantom II) and the 39th Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (Flying the EB-66 Destroyer). The 81st Tactical Fighter Squadron, equipped with the F-4C, joined the mission when it moved to Spangdahlem AB from Zweibrücken AB, Germany in 1973.

By mid-1982, the wing upgraded its aging aircraft with more advanced F-4E and F-4G jets. Each of the wing's three fighter squadrons flew a mixture of E and G model F-4 fighters. The airplanes were paired into "Wild Weasel" hunter/killer teams capable of locating and destroying enemy radar-guided, surface-to-air threats in any weather.

In April 1987, the wing began changing with the times and replaced its aging F-4E jets with brand new F-16C/D Fighting Falcons just off the production line. Together, the F-4G and F-16C airplanes were capable of delivering almost any munitions in the Air Force inventory with pinpoint accuracy.

The 52nd TFW earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor for its accomplishments during the Persian Gulf conflict with Iraq. In 40 days of combat, aircraft from Spangdahlem AB logged 2,061 sorties and 7,200 flying hours over Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Due to their continuous effort, 142 separate radar sites were destroyed. In cooperation with coalition aircraft, flights from Spangdahlem AB were credited with destroying the entire Iraqi Air Defense System within the first few days of combat.

Under Air Force-wide reorganization the 52nd TFW became the 52nd Fighter Wing in October 1991. In January 1993, the wing gained its fourth tactical unit with the activation of the 510th Fighter Squadron. By October 1994, the 52 FW was the only remaining fighter wing in Germany.

In 1995, the 52nd Fighter Wing's mission shifted from "fight in place" to "deployment/employment." The mission shift brought the wing four new geographically-separated squadrons, assigning the 52nd, 752nd, 852nd Munitions Support Squadrons and 470th Air Base Squadron to the 52nd Fighter Wing.

The 52nd Fighter Wing continued making history in 1997 with its first-ever deployment to a former Warsaw Pact nation. In September 1997, the 52nd participated in EAGLE'S TALON-97, the first bilateral exercise involving US and Polish Air Forces. To this day, the 52nd Operations Group maintains an operational presence in Łask, Poland, where it collaborates with and trains US and NATO forces alike.

While maintaining operations from Spangdahlem AB, the 52nd Fighter Wing deployed personnel and equipment to Aviano AB and Lecce, Italy, in March of 1999 to support Operation ALLIED FORCE. OAF proved to be the largest military endeavor undertaken by the 52nd Fighter Wing since Operation DESERT STORM.

In the aftermath of September 11th 2001, the 52nd Fighter Wing began preparing for combat taskings. Personnel and equipment deployed from Spangdahlem AB in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM activities over Afghanistan.

As part of further re-structuring in 2010, the wing's aircraft fleet was cut from five squadrons to two, leaving the 480th Fighter Squadron's F-16s and the 81st Fighter Squadron's A-10s, with the latter leaving Spangdahlem AB in June of 2013. The latest departure from Spangdahlem AB was the 606th Air Control Squadron, who relocated in early 2017 to Aviano AB, Italy.

The 52nd Fighter Wing exists today as a key asset in the security of US and NATO interests in the region and continues to deploy in support of both contingency operations in Southeast Asia as well as numerous Theater Security Packages throughout Europe.

# ABOUT SPANGDAHLEM

Germany is a beautiful country with a historically rich culture and interesting people. Germany is smaller than the State of Montana, and borders nine other countries including The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, and Poland. An assignment to Spangdahlem AB presents a wonderful opportunity to travel and experience Europe.

The more information you have about your new assignment and host country before arrival, the smoother your transition may be. Every move has challenges and moving to a foreign country can be daunting. Despite having to navigating a language barrier, getting settled takes a bit longer and requires patience. A sense of humor, and a willingness to use the experience as an opportunity to learn and understand a different culture and way of doing things will ease your experience. Do not expect appointments or services to be scheduled immediately, convenience is not a common German standard. The more you can prepare before you arrive, the easier things will fall into place. Here are a few tips worth knowing before you arrive. Enjoy your assignment and Willkommen to Deutschland!

## *BASE OVERVIEW & LOCAL AREA*

### **SPANGDAHLEM AB**

Spangdahlem Air Base is located near the small town of Spangdahlem. Larger cities nearby include Bitburg and Wittlich. Spangdahlem AB currently includes about 1,282 acres of land (two square miles) and is home to approximately 5,000 US active-duty military members and 7,000 dependents. To learn more visit [www.spangdahlem.af.mil](http://www.spangdahlem.af.mil).

### **REGION**

Spangdahlem lies in the southwestern portion of the Germany in the Rhineland-Palatinate state (Rhineland-Pfalz in German) close to the borders of Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. While Rhineland-Pfalz is one of the smaller German states, the region it does contain more than two-thirds of all the vineyards in the Federal Republic of Germany. This region, home to Spangdahlem AB, is commonly referred to as “The Eifel”.

### **CLIMATE**

The Eifel’s climate is comparable to western Washington State. The climate is generally cool and wet. The Eifel region averages 100 days of sunshine per year. Temperature in winter stays close to freezing, while summer temperatures hover between the 60s and upper 70s with an average annual precipitation of 27 inches.

## *LANGUAGE & CULTURE*

### **LANGUAGE**

Learning some German before arrival can ease the transition. Similar to Americans, Germans appreciate it when you try to speak their language. It is always a good idea to have a translation app on your phone or keep a German-American dictionary in your car. You never know when you might be in a pinch and need to communicate with someone who does not speak English. Check out the list of commonly used translation resources on page 22.

If you live off-base, get to know your German neighbors. Making local connections is a great way to learn more about the culture, plus they might be able to help you if you have any questions about your village, local laws, or German holidays.

# ABOUT SPANGDAHLEM

## VALUES

Punctuality, cleanliness, and orderliness are very important traits in the German culture. If you live on the economy, pay attention to the outside appearance of your home and do your part to keep your community clean and tidy.

Recycling in Germany is not only a way of life, it is the law. You can be fined should someone notice that you are not following the recycling laws. The base recycling center and housing office can provide guidance. Visit [www.ART-trier.de](http://www.ART-trier.de) for more information and village specific refuse collection schedule.

Germany imposes regulated quiet hours in the evenings between 2200 and 0600, and for the entire day on Sundays. Some villages have additional quiet hours, confirm with your landlord or neighbors to avoid any confusion. Violating quiet hours can result in fines up to €500.

Sundays are usually reserved for time with family. While restaurants are typically open, most shops will be closed and it is considered rude to do things like mow your lawn, wash your car, work outside in the garden etc. Stores and restaurants are almost always closed on holidays.

## LOCAL DINING

Most Europeans consider the act of dining out as an enjoyable social event that should not be rushed. It is not unusual for people to sit at a table in a restaurant for hours enjoying a meal and conversation. As a result, most restaurants require a reservation even if space appears to be available. Expect the service to be slower than what you are accustomed. Beverages will be smaller and are typically not served with ice. There are no free refills. When ordering water, expect mineral water (carbonated) unless you state "still" (without gas).

The restaurant staff will wait for your signal that you are ready to leave after your meal. Do not expect your waiter to come to your table when you are finished, as it is considered rude to rush their guest.

Tipping in Europe is not the standard 15-20% as in America; rather it is common to round up to the next whole Dollar/Euro, or two. Example: On a meal that cost €28.20, it would be acceptable and appreciated to leave €30.00.

## PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Germans follow European fashion trends and take care to be well dressed in public. When out on the economy or traveling abroad, strive to blend in to avoid drawing unnecessary attention to yourself through your attire or actions.



# BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

## *SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS*

If dependent spouses/children plan to move to Germany prior to the Active Duty member, certain benefits may be limited, including access to on-base medical care and on-base housing. If this is something you are considering, please contact your gaining squadron's First Sergeant.

## *HOUSEHOLD GOODS SHIPMENT*

### **RECOMMENDED PURCHASES**

- A GPS (with European maps): Navigating European roads is difficult and cell phone coverage can be poor in rural areas. Personnel from Spangdahlem live in a relatively spread out area and finding someone's home can be a challenge. The GPS selection on base is limited and better deals can often be found state side.
- Items not commonly found in basic stores: While there are plenty of shopping opportunities on and off-base, certain brand names you may be accustomed to may not be available. Ask your sponsor to help research any items you cannot live without (i.e. certain make-up brands or seasoning). Do your research to make sure your favorite stores ship APO. If they do not, APO forwarding services are available.
- Area rugs: German homes typically have all hard floors and can be drafty/cold. You may find better deals and more options in the US.

### **DO NOT INCLUDE**

- Major Appliances (i.e. washer, dryer, refrigerator, or oven): These items are provided in base housing. Furniture Managing Office (FMO) provides German-spec appliances for personnel who live off base.
- Firearms: Headquarters USAREUR has directed that service members are not allowed to ship, transport, or hand-carry privately owned firearms to Germany. This is necessary to avoid the possibility of German criminal prosecution for unauthorized possession of weapons or the possibility of punishment under the UCMJ.
- While waterbeds are authorized in government housing units, they must be approved by a housing inspector to ensure the bed(s) meets approved weight standards. Should your waterbed cause any damage to the government housing unit (even if use was approved by an inspector), you will be held responsible for repair costs.

### **CONSIDER CARRYING OR MAILING**

- Linens: Sheets, towel, blankets, pillows for all members of a household
- Kitchen Supplies: Measuring cups/spoons, favorite travel mug, frequently used gadgets, children's cups/plates/utensils
- Entertainment: Streaming device, tablet/laptop, DVDs, card games, toys for children
- Power adapter/converter
- Basic/Frequently Used Spices (i.e. salt/pepper/garlic)
- Clothes Hangers
- Tape/Scissors/Stapler/Sharpie
- Coffee (Check customs guidelines for details on the weight limits. DO NOT MAIL!)

# BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

## *MAIL FORWARDING & ON BASE POSTAL SERVICE*

The Spangdahlem AB Post Office operates as an extension of the United States Postal Service in order to provide effective and responsive postal services to authorized personnel. Mail services can be established at Spangdahlem AB up to 90 days prior to your arrival. Your sponsor can help set up your PSC Box, with a copy of your PCS orders.

The Military Postal System provides many of the same services as the United States Postal System. Keep in mind delivery may take a bit longer due to the extra distance mail must travel. Priority packages and letter-class mail take approximately 8 days. Magazines and surface mail may take 30-35 days. Express mail service may be purchased for delivery to CONUS in 3 days.

Ensure all shipments are packaged in sturdy boxes and secured with packing tape. Customs forms must list everything contained in the package and cannot include generic terms like "gift" or "snacks."

### **52D FSS POST OFFICE TIPS**

- Check-in with the post office upon arrival. Update contact information to ensure receipt of package notifications via email.
- Check mail on a regular basis (every two to three days), or more if expecting packages. Packages are held 15 days before being returned to sender.
- To prevent your package from being "returned to sender" while TDY or on leave, contact customer service to put your box on hold. You may request someone to check your mail by completing the required paperwork at customer service.

### **MAILING RESTRICTIONS**

DoD Personnel with an APO address in Germany are subject to International Customs regulations and are prohibited from mailing or receiving the following items:

- ALL prescription and/or over-the-counter medications
- ALL synthetic supplements/diet pills
- ALL herbal supplements (including vitamins)
- Drugs and drug paraphernalia
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Coffee and coffee products
- Cigarettes and other tobacco products
- Firearms and explosives
- Meat, dairy and plant products
- Pornography

Customs frequently conducts inspections of the postal system; unauthorized items will be confiscated and further actions will be taken if deemed necessary (i.e. investigation, loss of MPO privileges, etc.) Find out what you can and cannot send by checking the guidance posted at the Post Office before shipping.

For more information visit [www.52fss.com/post-office](http://www.52fss.com/post-office) or DSN 314-452-7195/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7195.

# BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

## *FINANCIAL MATTERS*

Moving to Europe can be significantly more expensive than you may think. Arriving with a substantial amount of money saved away to defray these initial costs can ease the stress of your PCS. Some expenses you will need to prepare for include:

- If you plan to live off-base, the required rental deposit can vary between one to three months' rent. Note that exchange rates fluctuate and can make your local bill amounts vary monthly. Depending on the home, you may have up-front costs such as oil for heating or fees to establish other required services.
  - Pay advances are available through the Housing and Finance Offices. Contact the Housing Office at DSN 314-452-7133/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7133 or the Finance Office at DSN 314-452-6763/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6763.
  - The AFAS Housing Assistance Loan Overseas is available. For more information contact the Airman and Family Readiness Center at DSN 314-452-6422/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6422.
- Cell phones and service. US-spec cell phones will work with German carriers; the phone must be unlocked by the US service provider prior to activation by a German carrier.
- Purchasing a car.
- Rental cars are available while you wait for your shipped vehicle or while shopping for one. Rentals are typically much more expensive than stateside.
  - On-Base rental cars contact Sixt Rental Car Comm +49 (0) 6565-4388.
  - For Off-Base rental cars contact Europcar Bitburg at +49 (0) 656194-6445 or Europcar Wittlich +49 (0)6571-3337 or visit [www.europcar.de](http://www.europcar.de).
- Winter or all-season tires are required by German law, on all vehicles, during the months of October to April.
- Verify any modifications you may need to make to your car to ensure it passes the German safety inspection.
- Buying 220V appliances. Check all your appliances and electronics before leaving them in the US. Many are dual-voltage and compatible with 220V. Most TVs, PCs, tablets, and smart phones are now easily convertible.

## *BANKING*

In order to pay your bills on the economy, you will need to open an account at one of the banks on base or at an off base German bank. While you can certainly keep your stateside bank account, it is highly unlikely that your bank will provide the required IBAN (wire transfer number) to support a Euro payment service.

On base banks are incorporated into both the US and German banking systems. The two banks available on base are: Service Credit Union and Community Bank. The rates and services offered change from time to time, so it is best to research them when you arrive on station.

## *PASSPORT INFORMATION*

Any non-active duty member should have a no-fee government passport with a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) Stamp. A SOFA Stamp exempts dependents from being required to obtain a visa and allows unrestricted access to and from Germany. Active Duty members will not receive a SOFA stamp. Active Duty members must present their military ID and a copy of PCS orders upon arrival. If you wish to speak directly with the Spangdahlem AB Passport Office call DSN 314-452-4448/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-4448.

If you plan to engage in leisure travel while assigned in Europe, you and your family will need to acquire tourist passports at your expense. A tourist passport will ensure you can travel freely to ALL European countries. A no-fee passport or

# BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

military ID will not allow entry into some European countries. Check the following link for additional information pertaining to country-specific passport requirements: [www.fcg.pentagon.mil](http://www.fcg.pentagon.mil). For information on tourist passports visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>.

## *AIRPORT SHUTTLE & TRANSPORTATION*

Transportation from the airport to base should be arranged prior to arrival. Money spent for the shuttle, taxi, or by your sponsor to purchase gas, can be claimed on your travel voucher. The 52nd Force Support Squadron Eifel Arms Inn provides shuttle transportation to and from Spangdahlem AB, Ramstein Passenger Terminal, Frankfurt-Hahn Airport, and Frankfurt International Airport.

NOTE: Be sure your sponsor/shuttle knows if you are traveling with children that require booster or car seats, pets, or a large amount of luggage that may require a larger vehicle.

## **SHUTTLE INFORMATION**

For reservations or more information visit [www.52fss.com/airport-shuttle](http://www.52fss.com/airport-shuttle) or contact the Lodging Shuttle Office via email: [52fss.fsvllodgingshuttle@us.af.mil](mailto:52fss.fsvllodgingshuttle@us.af.mil) or DSN 314-452-7684/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7684,

In case of an emergency, contact the Spangdahlem Command Post: DSN 314-452-6100/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6100.

## *LODGING & TEMPORARY LIVING FACILITY (TLF)*

Reserve a room at Eifel Arms Inn as soon as possible once confirmed travel dates are received. Reservations can be made by visiting [www.52fss.com/lodging](http://www.52fss.com/lodging) or by calling the Eifel Arms Inn at DSN 314-452-0500/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-0500. Provide the following information to reserve lodging/TLF: full name, rank, organization, and date of arrival. Reservations can be made by your sponsor.

Pet-friendly TLF facilities are available on a limited basis. If you are planning on bringing a pet(s), please let your sponsor/Eifel Arms Inn know as soon as possible in order to reserve a pet friendly room.

## **SABER PET LODGE**

Additional kenneling arrangements can be made at the 52 FSS Saber Pet Lodge. The 52 FSS Saber Pet Lodge provides transportation services to and from Ramstein AB and Frankfurt International Airport.

Visit [www.52fss.com/saber-pet-lodge](http://www.52fss.com/saber-pet-lodge) to ensure your pet has the required vaccinations for lodging and boarding or contact them at DSN 314-452-5004/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-5004.

# UPON ARRIVAL

## *ARRIVAL REQUIREMENTS*

Upon arrival in country, contact your sponsor as soon as possible.

Within the first 30 days on station, you must register your Common Access Card (CAC) and Dependent ID Card(s) with the Installation Access Control System located at the Visitor's Control Center (Bldg 505), outside of the main gate. Upon registration of your CAC, you will be authorized access to one or more local military installations and establish escort privileges. Call DSN 314-452-7414/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7414 for more information.

## *NEWCOMER ORIENTATION*

The 52nd FW Base Newcomer Orientation is an introduction to base resources and agencies. Call the Airman and Family Readiness Center at DSN 314-452-6422/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6422 for more information or to reserve your seat. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

Newcomer Orientation briefers include:

- 52nd FW Command Team
- 52nd Medical Group Agencies
- Tricare Office
- A&FRC
- Equal Opportunity
- Communications Squadron
- Sexual Assault Prevention & Response
- Family Advocacy
- Customs Office
- Antiterrorism & Office of Special Investigations

## *RATION CARD*

A ration card is required to purchase: coffee, hard alcohol, and tobacco at the Commissary, Base Exchange, and Shoppette. Take a copy of your orders to your squadron's orderly room to be issued a ration card.



# DRIVING IN GERMANY

## *USAREUR DRIVER'S LICENSE INFORMATION*

All members of the Spangdahlem community must have a USAREUR driver's license to drive in Germany. This is in addition to a valid stateside license. Ensure that you and your dependents over the age of 16 have a valid stateside driver's license that will not expire during your tour. Acquiring a driver's license while in Germany is an expensive process and you must be at least 18 years of age.

### **USAREUR LICENSE ONLINE TEST INFORMATION**

- Current CAC holders must go to the JKO website to take two required courses: [jkodirect.jten.mil](http://jkodirect.jten.mil).
- Log in as a CAC card user, then search for the following courses to enroll and complete:
  - 1st course: USA-007 U.S. Forces Driver's Training Program for Europe (2 hrs)
  - 2nd course: USA-007-B U.S. Forces Driver's Training Program for Europe - Final Course Exam (2 hrs, actual test)
  - Study guides and practice tests can be found at [www.usareurpracticetest.com](http://www.usareurpracticetest.com)
- Print your certificate and hand carry it with you. The certificate is only valid for 60 days from the time of completion.

A spouse and/or dependent(s) can also take the course online prior to arriving. The CAC holder can sponsor dependents by following the directions below:

1. Go to [jkodirect.jten.mil](http://jkodirect.jten.mil)
2. Select the "Non-Government Personnel or Sponsored Account Registration" link
3. Fill out the mandatory fields to include your sponsor's information. **\*\*Your sponsor MUST be a Government or Military Member. Contractors are not authorized to sponsor accounts.\*\***
4. After submitting the form, an email will be sent to your sponsor requesting they validate the request.
5. Once your sponsor has validated the request, the JKO Help Desk will be notified and your account will be created within 24 hours of the Help Desk receiving the account request, and the account holder will be notified with his/her username and sign-in token.

### **52FW SAFETY BRIEF**

This is a mandatory requirement before driving at Spangdahlem AB. If you are coming from another base within USAFE, this is still a requirement. Contact the 52 FW Safety Office at DSN 314-452-7233/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7233 for more information. This briefing can also be accomplished at Newcomer Orientation, call the A&FRC at DSN 314-452-6422/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6422 for information.

### **USAREUR DRIVER'S LICENSE REQUIREMENTS**

Call 52nd SFS Driver's Testing & Licensing Office to set up an appointment at DSN 314-452-6620/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6620. Take the following documents to your appointment at Bldg 317:

- Completed online JKO Driver's Exam
- Valid stateside or country driver's license (CANNOT expire while overseas)
- Proof of completed 52 FW Safety Brief (attendance slip will be provided at briefing)
- Completed AE Form 190-1T (DL application, can be obtained at the Licensing Office)
- Check, money order, or debit/credit card for the \$20 licensing fee (cash not accepted)

# DRIVING IN GERMANY

## INTERNATIONAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

An International Driver's License is required to drive outside of Germany. In order to obtain your International Driver's License you must have received your hard copy USAREUR Driver's License in the mail. Next, call the 52nd SFS Vehicle Registration Office (Bldg 317), for required application and directions to the licensing office in Bitburg. For more information, contact the 52nd SFS Vehicle Registration Office at DSN 314-452-6620/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6620.

## PERSONAL VEHICLE PICK-UP

- Visit [www.pcsmypov.com](http://www.pcsmypov.com) to check the status of your car shipment.
- If your spouse is picking up your POV and getting the license plates, they will need a Special Power of Attorney. Call the Legal Office (Bldg 125) at DSN 314-452-6769/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6769 for more information.
- Call Vehicle Registration at DSN 314-452-6620/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6620 to schedule an appointment for temporary plates. Temporary plates are issued for 30 days.
- Once temporary plates are obtained, proceed to Vehicle Processing Center (Bldg 222) for a free walk-in mechanical inspection. You must have the following documents to pick up your vehicle:
  - A valid USAREUR driver's license (temporary is OK)
  - Proof of insurance
  - Vehicle Registration
  - DD Form 788 shipping document
- If your vehicle does not pass inspection, you will have an additional 5 business days to correct the problem. Common inspection failures include:
  - Incorrect First Aid kit
  - Front and driver door window tint
  - Chips and cracks in windshield
  - Brake inspection
  - Incorrect/ non-functioning turn signals
  - Worn tires
  - Engine/Transmission/Power Steering fluid leaks
  - Vehicle height
  - Headlight alignment
  - Exhaust leaks/Noise level
- For more information, contact the VPC at DSN 314-452-7265/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7265 or visit [www.spangdahlem.af.mil](http://www.spangdahlem.af.mil).

# DRIVING IN GERMANY

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION

A single sponsor may register one vehicle; a married/accompanied sponsor may register two vehicles. Sponsors may also register a motorcycle or trailer. In order to obtain USAREUR license plates from Vehicle Registration, you need to provide the following documents:

- Shipping document, DD Form 788 (or proof of ownership for a second or replacement car)
- Insurance Card (USAA information will automatically transmit to the Vehicle Registration office within 24 hours)
- Vehicle registration application form AE FM 190-1AA (obtained at the Vehicle Registration Office)
- A valid military ID card
- A valid USAREUR driver's license (temporary is OK)
- A German approved emergency kit (must contain a foil blanket and 2 pairs of latex gloves) and reflective warning triangle (German law requires these to always be in your vehicle). Items can be purchased at the Shoppette.
- Stateside registration and/or title
- Check, money order, or debit/credit card for \$35 (cash not accepted)
- E Form 1598 and inspection stamp (provided to you after inspection is complete)

## *GASOLINE AND ESSO GAS CARD*

Gas is sold in liters instead of gallons. Discounted gas is rationed (either 400 or 600L per month depending on vehicle size). To buy fuel at a discounted rate both on and off base (at Esso Stations within Germany), you must have a gas ration card. You can obtain this card by bringing your vehicle registration to Register 4 in the Shoppette PRIOR to getting gas on base.

\*Temporary ESSO cards can be issued for rental vehicles. Visit the Customs Office (Bldg 139, 1<sup>st</sup> floor) for more information or call DSN 314-452-4500/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-4500.

## *RENTING A VEHICLE*

After obtaining your USAREUR Driver's License you are able to rent a vehicle from an on or off-base location. Local German vehicle insurance is required along with your military ID. Contact the vehicle rental location for more information.

## *PARKING METER CARD*

Many parking areas in Germany are marked with a blue sign with a "P". Some of these parking areas are "metered" for a specific time limit (even though you may not have to pay a meter machine). For these parking areas, you need a blue parking card, sold on and off base. Set the card to the time you leave the car, place the card on the dash, and return before the specified time limit expires.

## *DRIVING WITH PETS*

German law dictates that pets must be restrained while riding in a vehicle. Kennels, barriers, and pet seat belts are all acceptable methods to safely secure your pet while traveling, and can be purchased on and off base.

## *VEHICLE CHECKS*

All vehicles are subject to safety inspections at any time. According to German law you must always have a warning triangle and a first-aid kit in your vehicle. Occasionally, USAREUR or the local commands will conduct force protection exercises. Drivers must open hood, trunk, and glove compartments. Mirrors are also used to check underneath the vehicle. The driver must be prepared to present his/her ID card, USAREUR driver's license, vehicle registration, and

# DRIVING IN GERMANY

proof of insurance. All vehicle passengers and pedestrians coming onto the base must also present an ID card or Installation Pass (needed for non-US Forces personnel).

## *CAR SEATS*

- Infants 2-19 pounds or up to 9 months old are required to ride rear-facing, in the back seat, in an approved infant carrier.
- Children 19-38 pounds or 9 months to 3 years old are required to ride in the back seat in an approved car seat.
- Children 33-79 pounds or 3-11 years old are required to ride in the back seat in an approved booster/car seat.
- Children under 12 years of age and under 4' 11" are required to be in a car/booster seat.
- Children must be over 12 years old to ride in the front seat.
- Car seats must match car specifications (i.e. U.S. spec car needs U.S. car seat, Euro spec car needs Euro car seat).
- Contact Fire Prevention to schedule a car seat inspection at DSN 314-452-5292/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-5292

## *ACCIDENTS*

Seat belts are mandatory for all passengers while operating any vehicle on/off-base.

- On-base accidents: Notify Security Forces immediately.
- Off-base accidents: Notify the German Police (Polizei Dial 112) immediately. Security Forces must be notified within 72 hours of the accident.
- For all accidents: 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.

For more information or assistance, contact the Law Enforcement Desk (Bldg 127) at DSN 314-452-6666/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6422. If you need legal assistance or have questions, contact the Legal Office at DSN 314-452-6796 or Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6796.

## *RELATIVES WHO WISH TO DRIVE*

Visiting friends and relatives from the United States may drive your USAREUR registered vehicle if they have an international driver's license. You need to register them as a driver and get a special authorization form from the Customs Office. The vehicle owner must be present and provide proof of their USAREUR driver's license and vehicle registration, as well as the visitor's passport and international license. The process for visiting relatives can take several weeks, so be sure to plan ahead.

NOTE: If your friend/relative gets in an accident and does not have an international driver's license, your insurance provider may not cover the damage. Contact the Spangdahlem Customs Office (Bldg 139) DSN 314-452-4500/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-4500.

# FINDING A HOME

## *FIRST STOP: HOUSING OFFICE*

**All accompanied personnel must report to the 52d Housing Management Office within two days of arrival. Failure to report may affect Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA) payment.**

52nd Housing Management Office (Bldg 545), DSN 314-452-7133/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7133

- Unaccompanied personnel must contact their leadership and/or Dorm Manager to ensure they meet the criteria to live off-base or in the dorms.
- On-base housing options: Stairwell housing (apartment style), townhomes or dorms for single Airmen.
- Upon your visit to the housing office, if you are NOT offered on-base housing, you are authorized 20 days in TLF. If you ARE offered on-base housing, you will be authorized 15 days in TLF.

## *FINDING AN OFF-BASE HOUSE*

- Do not start house hunting prior to visiting the Housing Office. The Housing Office will provide critical information and a brief on your Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA). They will also provide the most accurate information on your rent cap, as it differs based upon dependents and rank.
- Visit [www.homes.mil](http://www.homes.mil) for houses listed under the Housing Office. Other online search options include Spangdahlem Bookoo and various Facebook groups.
- After completing the Housing brief, you will be given a Promissory Note. If you find a house you are interested in, the promissory note will secure your house until you can bring the landlord the rental agreement from the Housing Office.
- The Housing Office will draft the rental agreement for you and assist with translation if your landlord does not speak English. Utilities are generally not included in the monthly rent.
- Similar to renting in the US, pets may limit the choices of available houses. Depending on how long a house has been on the market and how eager the landlord is to rent, they may consider a pet even if the listing explicitly states, "NO PETS". Visit the listed house and if you like it, inquire if the landlord will accept your pet(s).
- When searching for your perfect German residence, keep your furniture in mind. Many German houses have small rooms and narrow stairwells that might not fit your king size mattress.

## *FURNISHING MANAGEMENT OFFICE*

Once you move to your house, on- or off-base, the Furnishing Management Office (FMO) will provide you with temporary furniture (beds, couch, lamps, table/chairs) while you await your Household Goods. If you have a house off-base, FMO will provide you with appliances (washer, dryer, refrigerator, transformers, fire extinguisher, and standing wardrobes (2 per adult, 1 per child) that you can keep for the duration of your tour. For more information contact FMO (Bldg 454) at DSN 314-452-6802/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6802.

# UTILITIES AND SERVICES

## *VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT) AND UTILITY TAX AVOIDANCE PROGRAM (UTAP)*

VAT and UTAP office (Bldg 126, 1<sup>st</sup> floor), DSN 314-452-7801/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7801. Visit [www.52fss.com/vat-utap-office](http://www.52fss.com/vat-utap-office) for additional information.

### **VAT**

Germany has a 19% sales tax. Military members and their dependents can purchase items on the economy up to €2,500, without paying sales tax, by using a VAT form. VAT forms are available for purchase at the VAT office for \$5.00 a form and you may purchase up to ten forms at a time. First time buyers can do a one-time purchase of 10 for \$40.00. The VAT Office has an application for an additional VAT form for purchases over €2,500. Bring a copy of your orders, military ID, and a Form 5 (located on the 52 FSS link above or available at the VAT office) to set up your VAT account.

### **UTAP**

If you live off-base, avoid paying 19% tax on electric and gas bills by signing up for the UTAP program. You cannot enroll in UTAP until you receive your first month's bill. It costs \$99 to enroll in UTAP and the following must be presented at the UTAP office:

- Military ID
- Copy of orders
- Housing Contract
- \$99.00 Registration Fee (cash, credit, debit, check accepted)
- Forms 1, 2, and 3 (located on the 52 FSS website, link above)
- First month's bill. Utility bills can be tax-exempt only if the bill is in the sponsor's name.

## *STAY CONNECTED*

### **Service Providers**

For cell phone, landline phones, cable, and internet services, there are service providers both on- and off-base. There are two cell phone service providers located on-base at the Base Exchange: TKS and Telekom. Prices and services differ, especially from the States. Stop by to learn of their ongoing promotions and plans.

### **Off-Base Internet**

Setting up your home internet can take a few months but is generally faster if initiated at an off-base service provider located in Bitburg or Wittlich. Service providers can check the internet speeds for the area in which your home is located. If internet speed is important to you, this is something to consider while house hunting.

### **Television**

Armed Forces Network (AFN) is available. A decoder can be purchased from the BX. Additional resources include streaming devices. A VPN may be necessary to utilize services. German/American cable television plans are available through a local internet provider.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## *APPLIANCES AND ELECTRONICS*

### **Transformers & Converters**

Germany uses a higher voltage current than the United States – the US uses 110v, while Germany (and the rest of Europe) uses 220v. German outlets use the 2-prong, round plugs, however be aware that other European countries may use varying plug designs.

- 110v appliances: Items will need to be run through transformers, which are electrical boxes that step down European voltage to 110 volts. Transformers “step down” the voltage of electricity, but do not change the frequency (hertz). As a result, electronics using timing systems (such as clocks) will not be able to keep accurate time.
- Dual Voltage appliances: Some items are dual voltage and this will be stated on the tag or on the plug. These will simply need a converter to be plugged into the outlet. Plug converters can be purchased at on and off-base locations.
- 110/220V switch: Set the switch or change the setting to 220v before plugging the device in.

Transformers use a considerable amount of energy (even when nothing is plugged into them) and may reduce the life expectancy of your items. It might be more cost-effective to purchase 220v versions of frequently used items such as irons, vacuums, coffee pots, etc.

FMO will provide two transformers for the entirety of your tour.

### **Lighting**

110v lamps can be used with a plug converter. Simply swap out the 110v bulb for a European-spec 220v bulb.



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## *SCHOOLS*

### **Spangdahlem Community Schools**

The three on-base schools are part of the Department of Defense (DoDEA) Europe West District. For more information visit [www.dodea.edu/Europe/west/index.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/Europe/west/index.cfm).

The Spangdahlem Elementary Main Office is located in Bldg 439. The Spangdahlem Middle School and High School are co-located in Bldg 590. Visit the links below for more information on each school or contact the Spangdahlem School Liaison Officer at [52msg.dodds@us.af.mil](mailto:52msg.dodds@us.af.mil). For enrollment information contact each school directly or visit the links provided.

- Spangdahlem Elementary School - [www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemES](http://www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemES)
- Spangdahlem Middle School - [www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemMS](http://www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemMS)
- Spangdahlem High School - [www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemHS](http://www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemHS)

### **German Schools**

Germany has a public school system. You have the option of enrolling your child in the German school system, if space is available, at no cost. This is a great opportunity for children to learn the language and culture. Every child is different, but in general, a child with no knowledge of German upon entering school will understand it in 4-6 months and be fluent at their age level in 6-8 months. The school day is shorter (half-day for elementary), but students can be enrolled for the whole day for a small fee. Note: Not all US holidays will coincide with German holidays.

### **German Kindergarten**

German Kindergartens are local off-base daycares for children 3 to 5 years of age. Most villages have a Kindergarten and the opportunity to enroll will be based on space available, as Germans have priority. Contact the local Kindergarten you are interested in for more information.

## *SCHOOL BUS ROUTES*

If your child will be attending one of the Department of Defense Schools on-base, transportation will be provided to and from your village at one designated bus stop. Contact the Student Transportation Office (Bldg 433) at [eifel.sbo@dodea.edu](mailto:eifel.sbo@dodea.edu) for the most current list of villages with a DoDEA bus stop. There is no bus transportation for students living on-base. For more information contact the School Transportation Office at DSN 314-452-5340/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-5340 or visit [www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemES/transportation.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/SpangdahlemES/transportation.cfm).

## *CHILDCARE*

### **Child Development Center (CDC)**

The Child Development Center (Bldg 443), offers on-base daycare services for children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. The CDC is closed on Family Days and Federal Holidays. Visit [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com) to get information on enrollment or call the CDC at DSN 314-452-6697/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6697.

### **School Age Program (SAP)**

The School Age Program (Bldg 457), provides on-base child care for children 6-12 years old and offers before and after school care. During summer months, SAP offers full-day enrichment programs. Visit [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com) to get information on enrollment or call SAP at DSN 314-452-7545/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-7545.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## **Family Child Care (FCC)**

Family Child Care Providers are individuals certified to provide childcare in their home. An FCC Provider undergoes a background check, training, inspections and is monitored by the Community Child Care Coordinator. Contact the Family Child Care Office for a list of current providers or more information at DSN 314-452-9022/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-9022. Types of care offered by FCC providers include: Full time, Part-time, Drop-in, PCS Care, Deployment Care, Extended Duty Care, and Military Spouse Appointment Care.

## *EMPLOYMENT & VOLUNTEERING*

### **Employment Opportunities**

There are several on-base employment opportunities at Spangdahlem AB. Spouses and dependents seeking employment while stationed at Spangdahlem AB are strongly encouraged to contact the Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC, Bldg 307) for more information. The A&FRC can provide resume assistance, mock interviews and help with understanding the spouse employment process. Contact the A&FRC at DSN 314-452-6422/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6422 for more information. For current federal employment opportunities visit [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

### **Volunteering**

Volunteers are a vital part of the Spangdahlem Community. Many opportunities are available with the following organizations: USO, A&FRC, Outdoor Recreation, Youth Sports Program, and the American Red Cross. Contact each agency for more information.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## *MEDICAL SERVICES*

### **On Base**

There is no emergency medical service on Spangdahlem AB. The 52nd Medical Group has a clinic located in Bldg 550 for basic and routine medical needs. While the clinic can accommodate most medical needs, you may be referred off base or to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for specialized care.

It is recommended to maintain your dental insurance until you arrive at Spangdahlem AB and can assess the availability of dental services for dependents. The additional insurance would also provide coverage for special procedures that may have to be performed through an off-base provider.

To schedule an appointment or for more information contact the Medical Appointment Line at DSN 314-452-8333/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-8333.

### **Off Base**

Emergency care is provided off-base at local German hospitals. For non-emergencies, a referral will be required to see an off-base provider. Without a proper referral, an off-base medical provider can be costly. For more information, visit the TRICARE Office located inside the clinic (Bldg 550) or call DSN 314-452-3524/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-3524.

If you require assistance with translation, help is available through a Patient Liaison Officer (PLO). A PLO is available Mon-Fri 0800-1700 and Sat & Sun 0900-1500. The PLO is not available on German and American Holidays.

Local Hospitals include:

- Bitburg Krankenhaus (Adults Only)/PLO Contact +49 (0)6561-6455-2460
- Wittlich St. Elisabeth Krankenhaus (Adults & children)/PLO Contact +49 (0)6571-152-8821
- Trier Mutterhaus (Adults & Children)/PLO Contact +49(0) 6519-748-3355
- Trier Brueder Krankenhaus (Adults Only)/No PLO

### **Veterinary Care**

The Spangdahlem Veterinary Treatment Facility (VTF) is located on-base (Bldg 559). They offer routine care, health certificates for international travel, and perform minor surgeries. All pets must be registered with the VTF upon arrival. The VTF is not equipped to handle medical emergencies but can provide a list of off-base veterinarians and emergency clinics. For more information contact the VTF at DSN 314-452-9388/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-9388.

If you wish to travel throughout Europe with your pet, you will need an EU Pet Passport from a German veterinarian. Even with a pet passport, some countries restrict travel, so you will want to confirm entry requirements prior to traveling with your pet.

# HELPFUL REFERENCES

## USEFUL WEBSITES

Download the Air Force Connect App: Set 52<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing as your favorite

Spangdahlem Air Base official website: [spangdahlem.af.mil](http://spangdahlem.af.mil)

52d Force Support Squadron: [52fss.com](http://52fss.com)

MilitaryOneSource: [militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil)

Plan My Move: [planmymove.militaryonesource.mil](http://planmymove.militaryonesource.mil)

Military Installations website: [installations.militaryonesource.mil](http://installations.militaryonesource.mil)

Housing approved for house searching: [homes.mil](http://homes.mil)

Military Kids Connect: [militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mil](http://militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mil)

On-base child care: [militarychildcare.com](http://militarychildcare.com)

COLA Calculator: [defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaCalc.cfm](http://defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaCalc.cfm)

## TRANSLATION RESOURCES

### WEBSITES

[www.german.about.com](http://www.german.about.com)

[www.deutsch-lernen.com](http://www.deutsch-lernen.com)

[www.babbel.com](http://www.babbel.com)

[www.transparent.com](http://www.transparent.com)

[www.rosettastone.com](http://www.rosettastone.com)

### APPS

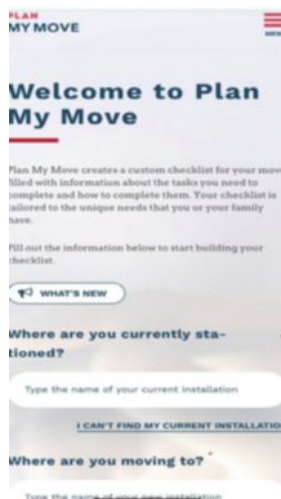
My Language

Collins Talk and Translate Translator

Duo Lingo (Language Learning)

Google Translate

Spangdahlem AB library has audio CDs and books available. Contact the library (Bldg 148) to set up your free Mango Language program account at DSN 314-452-6208/Comm +49 (0)6565-61-6203.



# HELPFUL REFERENCES

## Check Yourself Checklist

- Download the 52 FW App. Available from any App Store.
- Send your sponsor your needs assessment and a copy of your orders.
- Set up a PSC box. Your sponsor can assist.
- Mail excess personal items. Refer to page 6 for mailing restrictions.
- Ensure everyone has appropriate/required passports. Refer to page 7.
- Reserve Billeting/TLF room. Refer to page 8.
  - Arrange for pet care if applicable.
- Arrange for airport pickup. Refer to page 8.
- Schedule Newcomer's Orientation with the A&FRC at DSN 452-6422. Refer to page 9.
- Obtain your USAREUR License. Refer to page 10.
  - Ensure Stateside Driver License is current and will not expire while overseas.
  - Get any endorsements you need (motorcycle, etc.) while in US.
  - Take the JKO Driver's Test. Refer to page 10.
  - Attend 52 Wing Safety Brief (with dependents eligible to drive). Refer to page 10.
  - DO NOT DRIVE WITHOUT A USAREUR LICENSE!
- Ensure POV is ready to ship:
  - Oil changed, tires with tread life (and approved tires for winter driving), repair windshield cracks, remove window tint on front-half of vehicle, check all exterior lights, turn signals, etc.
  - Failing the safety inspection will delay your ability to be able to drive once at Spangdahlem.
- Register your CAC and your dependent's military IDs in IACS. Refer to page 9.
- Visit the Housing Office. Refer to page 14.
- Register at the VAT/UTAP Office. Refer to page 15.
- Set up a bank account with an IBAN. Refer to page 7.
- Set up your cell phone service plan. Your cell phone will need to be unlocked. Refer to page 15.
- Enroll children in school/establish necessary child care. Refer to page 17.
- Obtain International Driver's License. Refer to page 11.
- Refer to this guide or your sponsor for additional questions and information.
- Give your sponsor a high five for all their help!