

October 2021

**The Unofficial
MARFOREUR/AF Guide
to things you really
want to know...**



Before You Get Here...

There are many sources of information to help you plan & organize your move, learn about the local culture & Stuttgart military community, as well as enjoy your time in Germany. We highlight a few key topics & resources to get you started. Remember to pace yourself. It's easy to get inundated & overwhelmed. Allow yourself to enjoy the journey as you learn to communicate & navigate!

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*You are an American citizen coming
as a guest to a foreign land.
Hospitality, courtesy and respect will
go a long way on this journey as an
American ambassador.*

Just to get you started, here are a few of our favorite words and phrases:

Welcome	Willkommen
Hello	Hallo, Guten Tag
How are you?	Wie gehts?
I'm fine, thanks?	Mir geht es gut, danke!
What is your name?	Wie heissen Sie?
My name is...	Ich Heisse....
Good morning	Guten Morgen
Good afternoon	Guten Tag
Good evening	Guten Abend
Good night	Gute Nacht
Goodbye	Auf Wiedersehen, Tschuss, Ciao, Bis spater
Cheers/Good health	Prost!
Have a nice day	Schonen Tag noch!
Do you speak English?	Sprechen Sie Englisch?
Excuse me	Entschuldigung!
Thank you	Danke, Danke schon, Vielen Dank
You're Welcome	Bitte, Bitte schon
Where is the toilet?	Wo ist die toilette?

Willkommen in Deutschland!

If you Google it, you will probably find it, but the information you find here is directly from the Marine Spouses who are a part of MARFOREUR/AF. Experience is ~Golden~

GETTING STARTED

Getting Started...

Orders: Make sure the details are accurate (correct duty station, reporting dates, etc.). If the whole family is making the journey, make sure dependents are listed on the orders and names are spelled correctly. For more information, visit:

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/moving-housing/oconus-moves/logistics-and-family/obtaining-command-sponsorship-before-an-overseas-tour>.

Sponsor: Successful moves begin with good sponsors. Request a sponsor if you haven't been assigned one. Spouses and youth can have sponsors too.

Passports: Contact your outgoing installation travel office as soon as possible to start the process to get your official "No-Fee" passport. No-fee passports are only for official government travel, so you also need up-to-date tourist passports for personal travel.

See "Passport" section for more info.

Legal: Moves are always a good time to secure or update wills, powers of attorney, passwords, and other critical information. If you have a lien on any property you plan to bring to Stuttgart (i.e. a vehicle), this is the time for you to obtain written authority from the lien holder to ship it overseas.

Change of Address: Ask your sponsor to help you set up an Army Post Office (APO) address so you have somewhere to forward your mail. New arrivals will most likely use "General Delivery" (GD) within their assigned Community Mail Room (CMR) to receive mail for the first few weeks. See "Overseas Mail" section for more info.

Lifestyles and Culture: Learn about your new home. Be prepared to welcome the routines as different. German grocery stores are closed on Sundays. You can't mow your lawn on Sunday as Sundays are truly meant for rest, relaxation and family time. Mindset is half the battle.

- Download the U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Stuttgart Mobile App
- U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Website: <https://home.army.mil/stuttgart/>
- The Stuttgart Citizen: www.StuttgartCitizen.com
- Stuttgart Welcome Center: <https://www.stuttgart.de/en/item/show/548383>

Tip: Sign up for e-delivery & electronic bill pay for things such as mortgages, credit cards, insurance, bank statements, etc.

Panzer is the most convenient hotel location for your first two weeks of in-processing. You DO NOT need official orders to make a reservation!

Hotel Reservation Info

Hotel Reservations in Stuttgart...

Contact Army Lodging to make a reservation for 60 days (no, that's not a typo) starting the day of your arrival. You may not need the full 60 days but be prepared for the long haul. Rooms fill up fast, especially pet friendly ones.

There are two hotels located on barracks within Stuttgart:

- **Panzer Kaserne** (<https://stuttgart.armymwr.com/programs/panzer-hotel>)
- **Kelley Barracks** (<https://stuttgart.armymwr.com/programs/kelley-hotel>).

If there is no availability at either hotel, you will be given a certificate of non-availability (CNA). At that point, you can make a hotel reservation off-post that is eligible for reimbursement. A CNA offers more options for lodging, but keep in mind that transportation to/from the hotel and base can be challenging. Be prepared to pay out of pocket for a rental car or taxi if you are off-post and do not have a car. Wherever you stay, make a note of the cancellation policy so you can revise your reservation as needed.

Popular off-post hotels:

- **Marriott Sindelfingen (near Panzer-driving/biking distance)**
- **Zum Russenstein (near Panzer-walking distance)**
- **Hotel Bohler (near Panzer-walking distance)**
- **Pullman (near Patch)**
- **Si-Centrum (near Kelley)**
- **Dormero (near Kelley)**
- **Si-Suites (near Kelley)**

Tip: The duty bus is available for transportation to & from all bases. It's free and easy to use.

*German living space is not equal to
American living space.
Its all about "Expectation Management"*

Moving / Housing / Tricare

Moving & Housing...

There are plenty of "want to" brings on a new adventure but consider the "must haves." Find out your household weight limit and stick to it. Moves are always a good time for tidying up. If it doesn't spark joy, get rid of it.

Just as with any military move, make sure you have an accurate list, photos or videos of your household goods, and receipts and appraisals for your valuables in case of loss or damage.

As for housing in Stuttgart, you will not know your situation (on- or off-post) until after you arrive. However, you can complete the advance application form DD1746 for USAG Stuttgart Housing and you will be added to the inactive inbound wish list based on your rank and bedroom requirements. There are pros and cons to both living situations. Either way, it will be great wherever you end up living.

Read more in the "Housing" section.

Tricare...

Transfer your eligibility from CONUS to OCONUS. Don't wait until you are sick. Upon arrival, contact the Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC) or TSC to ensure the transition plans are in place. You may also contact the BCAC or TSC to obtain authorizations for TRICARE Extended Health Care Option (ECHO) services, if applicable.

Stuttgart BCAC contact information:
DSN: 314 430-4052 / 7408
Commercial: +49 711 680 4052 / 7408
<http://www.tricare.mil/overseas>

Tip: Work with your local TRICARE Service Center (TSC) or case manager to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

Be sure to have routine maintenance & any other fixes taken care of before you ship your vehicle! Auto Shops here aren't stocked the same.

Vehicle & Driving...

Overseas military orders include shipment of one vehicle. Ship your car as early as possible (3-4 months prior to departure) so it will be here when you arrive. You must also provide documented proof that there are no open recalls on your vehicle. For more information, go to: <https://www.pcsmypov.com/>

Diesel Ban – A new law in Stuttgart bans certain diesel vehicles in specific areas in the City of Stuttgart, including Patch Barracks, Kelley Barracks, and Robinson Barracks. To make life easier, be sure to check out the link below for details: <https://www.dw.com/en/stuttgart-to-introduce-diesel-driving-ban-in-2019/a-44634246>

U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) Driver's License: Consider preparing ahead of time and complete the online driver training and test before you get here. Make sure your stateside driver's license is up to date prior to your departure. You will need your U.S. license in order to obtain a USAREUR license. **IMPORTANT:** You cannot legally drive a rental car while you wait for your vehicle to arrive without a USAREUR driver's license.

International Driving Permit (IDP): If you plan on driving outside of Germany while stationed here, you also need an IDP. You can get one before you arrive through your local AAA office (<https://www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html>). It's also possible to get one after you arrive and obtain your USAREUR driver's license. See "Driving in Germany" for more info.

Tip: To study on your own,
go to:

<http://www.usareurpracticetest.com>

Read drivers manual, study sign
chart, watch videos, & take the
practice test multiple times!

Moving can be costly even when the government picks up the tab for travel & household goods. Have a plan.

Finances...

Here are a few considerations of added expenditures to keep in mind when budgeting for the move:

- **Costs of shipping or buying a second vehicle**
- **Car rental or taxi fare while waiting for your car to arrive (especially if you are in an off-post hotel)**
- **Unexpected car maintenance**
- **Having 2-3 months of rent available if you end up living off-post**
- **Setting up a new household**

It is a good idea to have some euro on hand when you first arrive. You will find currency exchanges at the airport, and ATMs are located both on- and off-post. Having euro in your wallet will make the transition a little easier. U.S. credit cards are accepted in a lot of places, but not everywhere in town. The German culture is generally a “cash” culture in Euros only.

U.S. currency and credit cards are accepted on all U.S. military installations.

Cellphone Scoop...

If you have a cellphone and want to use it in Germany, check to make sure it is unlocked and that your specific model can work on a GSM network. Before you PCS, work out specifics of contract suspensions, terminations, and/or using an international travel plan with your U.S. carrier for the first week or two in Germany. Give yourself time to research what will work best once you arrive and know where you will live (i.e. on base or off base) for best service options. We discuss this topic more in depth.

See the “Communications” section for more info.

Tip: Consider obtaining a no-fee credit card before arrival. International transaction fees can add up fast when you use your credit card on the economy.

*A lot of paperwork & planning is involved
in moving overseas with a pet. Do your
homework and follow up.*

~Did we mention "Follow Up"~

Kids / Schools / Pets

Child & Youth Services (CYS)...

If you have children and want to sign them up for sports, camps, before- and after-school care, hourly, part, or full time childcare, preschool/pre-k or other CYS activities, they must be enrolled in Parent Central Services. Go to the CYS "Register - Parent Central Services" webpage, <https://stuttgart.armymwr.com/programs/parentcentral>, to learn about required documentation and to download forms.

There are long wait lists for childcare. If you are interested in full-day or part-day childcare, including preschool or pre-k, register for an account on www.militarychildcare.com and submit a request for care. You need to log into your account every 30 days to renew each request or you will be dropped from the waitlist. For more information, go to <https://stuttgart.armymwr.com/programs/school-age-and-child-development-centers>

Schools...

Visit the school liaison web page to start gathering required registration documents and get answers to frequently asked questions.

<https://stuttgart.armymwr.com/programs/school-liaison-officer-slo>.

See the "Schools" section for more info on DoDEA schools, on-post preschool/pre-k programs, German school options and Homeschooling.

Pets...

Foremost, you need to educate yourself on flying with your pet(s). Not all airlines allow pets to fly into Stuttgart, but there are other options if you don't mind making additional arrangements. Embargo dates are usually enforced from May-September, but weather is a factor and can change your plan from day-to-day. Check with your airline **regularly** when the time is close. Know the number of pets allowed and start early with veterinary preparation stateside.

Tip: Complete your children's sports physical before you arrive. It's valid for 12 months. If possible, the best time to get it is in July.

This is it! You are ready to travel...or are you? Be sure to check the list of important papers! You will be glad you carried them.

Departing for Stuttgart

Departing for Stuttgart...

The most important items to keep with you during a PCS are your vital documents. Several USAG Stuttgart offices will require a physical copy of your orders before you can receive assistance. For all other records you are strongly encouraged to make physical copies and only rely on a flash or external hard drive as a backup. ****Confirm that all names are spelled correctly on all documents****

Documents you may want to hand carry during your travels:

- **Orders (multiple copies)**
- **Military ID and Driver's License**
- **Birth, marriage, naturalization certificates, Social Security cards, adoptions or custody papers**
- **Official Government ("No Fee") Passport and Tourist Passport**
- **Wills, active power of attorney documents, check books, credit cards**
- **Medical & dental records, including vaccination records & medications**
- **School records**
- **Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) paperwork**
- **Household goods shipping documents**
- **Pet information**
- **Car title or lease, shipping documents, proof of insurance & registration, extra set of car keys**
- **USAREUR certificates of completion for drivers training & test**
- **International Driving Permit (IDP)**
- **Employment records**
- **Adapters / chargers for cell phones & other electronics**

Tip: Make multiple copies of your Orders & other important documents in case you misplace one. Have extra copies on hand during in-processing activities.

Don't be surprised if you spend your first two weeks in Stuttgart drinking coffee to fight the jetlag and familiarizing yourself with USAG Stuttgart!

~You Are Not Alone~

The First Two Weeks

The First Two Weeks...

- The virtual in-processing experience begins with a completed Needs Assessment. Contact Central Processing Facility (CPF) with your completed Needs Assessment either by phone or email. In return, CPF will send newcomers a personalized checklist of the most relevant in-processing agencies for your in-processing experience.
- **Joint In-Processing Needs Assessment**
- Call: +49 (0) 9641-70-596-2599
- Email: usarmy.stuttgart.id-europe.mbx.cpf-in-processing@mail.mil
- Webpage: <https://home.army.mil/stuttgart/index.php/my-garrison/all-services/central-processing-facility>

Cultural Awareness Orientation: Learn the culture, norms, living tips and some of the basics of the German language. These free classes are held in person at Army Community Service (ACS) on Panzer Kaserne. Registration is required prior to the start of class. For more information or to register, call +49 (0) 9641-70-596-3362.

Tip: When calling from within Germany, you drop the +49 and add a zero to the beginning of the telephone number.

Utilize the first two weeks to explore the bases, surrounding villages, and towns. Getting out of the hotel will help you acclimate to being in a different time zone.

The First 2 Weeks...

Living in the Hotel...

There are many opportunities you can take advantage of to pass the time from the hotel room with research and practice using the tools that are available:

- **Get some great USAG Stuttgart information from the following sites and apps:**
 - Download the USAG Stuttgart mobile app
 - Request access to the private Stuttgart Marines Family Readiness Facebook group early
 - Visit the official website: www.stuttgart.army.mil
 - The Citizen Online News: Subscribe to the weekday email news recap at www.stuttgartcitizen.com
 - Facebook: Follow USAG Stuttgart. Find local groups, communities, festivals, activities, etc.
 - Double check your security settings, make sure your profile is private, remember OPSEC!
 - Twitter: Follow USAG Stuttgart
 - Flickr: Follow USAG Stuttgart
 - Listen to AFN radio: 102.3 FM
 - Search USAJobs.gov and start sending out resumes

- **Looking to get out and about? Check out these travel apps and websites to help your planning:**
 - Rome to Rio
 - Skyscanner
 - Weekend.com
 - Lastminutetravel.com

Tip: Geocaching is the world's largest treasure hunt and lots of fun for the young and young-at-heart. Download the Geocaching app to see what geocaches are near you, wherever you are!

The wooded areas around all the bases have extensive trail networks, including paved & unpaved sections. Explore new areas, you'll be glad you did.

The First 2 Weeks...

Getting Out & About...

Germany is built for pedestrian, bike, and train travel. If you do not have a car available, do not fear! You can easily walk, bike, cab, train, or bus almost anywhere. Do not let the lack of familiar mode of transportation discourage you from exploring, especially if you arrive during the warmer months. Enjoy your time outdoors; once the cold kicks in, it becomes a little more challenging to go out and about.

Before you head out, ensure that you are carrying Euro currency. ATMs are located on-post and out in town. A daily conversion for the value of your dollar can make a difference if you want to withdraw cash. Check the rate and fees to save when you can.

Things to do on Panzer Kaserne:

- Visit the USO, Army Community Services (ACS), and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) offices located in building 2915. This is a great place to gather information on USAG community programs like language courses, volunteering, career assistance, family programs, lending closet, etc.. MWR offers a large selection of tours, and if this is your first time abroad, you might want to go through them for your first travel experience.
- Familiarize yourself with the Exchange and what services they provide. The Exchange keeps a schedule of rotating guest vendors who sell local or regional products in “pop-up”-style booths. The Exchange is also where you go for dry cleaning services, the hair/nail salon and barber shop, car rental services, and of course, food court dining.
- Visit the Panzer Commissary for your essential grocery items. There are several commissaries within the USAG Stuttgart community: the main commissary is located on Patch Barracks, with smaller ones on Panzer, Robinson, and Kelly Barracks.

Tip: Europeans use a comma where we use a period & a period where we use a comma when writing amounts.

(i.e. €35,00)

You will find most of what you need on Panzer Kaserne through these transition weeks.

~Visit the USO for a cold soda and hot popcorn~

The First 2 Weeks...

Panzer Kaserne (cont'd)...

- Find the gym and see what it has to offer! Most USAG Stuttgart gyms offer a rotating schedule of fitness classes. Working out is a great way to get back in the rhythm of things and meet people. The fitness class schedules for each gym can be found on the Stuttgart app.
- Go for a walk or run in the woods! This is a great activity especially if you have kids or a dog and need them to get tired...and quiet. The wooded areas around all the bases have extensive trail networks, including paved and unpaved sections. Make sure to bring water, Google maps, and keep your dog on a leash. Some areas even have playgrounds for the kids.

Explore Nearby Böblingen:

Böblingen is a pleasant walk down the hill from Panzer. It is worth getting to know, not just for the shopping, but also for the delicious restaurants, beautiful town center, movie theater, museums, amusement park, weekend markets, and train station. Check out the grocery stores and familiarize yourself with the products they do and do not have. Dogs can go almost everywhere, just make sure you keep them on a leash.

Explore Nearby Sindelfingen:

Downtown Sindelfingen is filled with great shops, restaurants, and a beautiful old town area. Sindelfingen also hosts a huge Schwimmbad (public pools/baths) that is ideal for escaping the heat during summer.

- Take a trip to Patch Barracks: Patch is where you will find the larger commissary as well as the movie theater, medical clinic, and gas station.

Tip: If a larger gym with more space and equipment is on your mind, take the trip to Patch & enjoy a class or workout at the Patch Gym.

Passport Detail...

There are three types of passports and it is important to understand the difference. The active duty personnel are eligible to apply for an **Official Passport** when given orders for overseas duty. Dependents may apply for a **No-Fee Passport** or use their **Tourist Passport** to move with the spouse but must obtain a **SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) Visa Stamp**. This can be done prior to arrival or by visiting the passport office at Panzer Kaserne: Building 2915, 3rd floor., upon arrival in Stuttgart. If orders arrive in a timely manner it is beneficial to get passports and visa stamps prior to arrival. Please note that whichever passport you decide to use during your PCS, it must be valid for at least 90 days upon arrival in Germany.

Once you arrive, you may under no circumstances use an official passport for tourist travel. You can incur fees in Europe of up to €400 depending on the country you are visiting. Once you arrive, if you're using an official or no-fee passport to PCS, you must switch over to a tourist passport while traveling as a tourist. If you do not have a tourist passport, you must obtain one before leisure travel.

The best option is to already have a tourist passport before arriving along with your no-fee, official passport. This way you don't have to wait for this process to be completed after you arrive at your new duty station. Visa regulations change periodically so make sure to visit a Passport Office near you before your PCS, to ensure all of your official travel documents are in order. Visit www.travel.state.gov for more information on official and non-official passports. Additional information can be found here:

<https://home.army.mil/stuttgart/index.php/my-garrison/all-services/passport-sofa-services>

Overseas Mail Detail...

Receiving – U.S. Mail <https://home.army.mil/stuttgart/index.php/my-garrison/all-services/mail>

While living and working in the USAG Stuttgart community, you will be assigned a mailbox within a Community Mail Room (CMR). Marines assigned to MARFOREUR/AF will typically be provided a mailbox at the CMR on Panzer Kaserne. The CMR is where you pick up your mail and packages. Though you are able to access your mailbox at any time, packages and general delivery items may only be picked up during "mail room hours" (approximately 4 hours per week). Mailroom staff require you to present identification in order to pick up mail or packages. Visit the USAG Stuttgart website or app for current operating hours.

Shipping – U.S. Mail

To mail a package or purchase postage, you can visit any one of the four U.S. Post Offices located in the USAG Stuttgart community. Opening days and times vary for each location. Visit the USAG Stuttgart website or app for current operating hours.

Shipping on the Economy

You may, on occasion, need to visit Deutsche Post DHL (aka the German Post Office) to pick-up a package or to mail something using the German postal system. Visit the Deutsche Post DHL website for office locations, hours of operations, and postage pricing. Be sure to take your passport with you if you are picking up a package. If mailing a package, bring euro as they do not accept credit cards. <https://www.deutschepost.de/en/home.html>

****If you must mail a letter to a German address (i.e. pay a speeding ticket, contract cancellation), mail it from base in any US Post Office mailbox and use a US First Class stamp if your return address is your CMR address.***

USAG Stuttgart Housing Detail...

Upon arrival in Stuttgart, please visit the Housing office after your initial in-processing with the Central Processing Facility (CPF), Panzer Kaserne, Building 2913. The Housing Office is located on the second floor of the Welcome Center. All personnel on PCS orders to Stuttgart (both Military and Civilians) must in-process with housing office no later than 2 business days from date of arrival.

Advance Application for USAG Stuttgart Housing

Assignment to on-post housing is mandatory for military personnel. In order to apply for Government Housing, complete the housing application form DD 1746, attach a copy of your incoming orders, and email the completed housing packet using encryption to usarmy.stuttgart.id-europe.mbx.dpw-hsg-on-post@mail.mil. Upon receipt of the application, you will be added to the inactive inbound waitlist based on your rank and bedroom requirements.

Once you arrive in Stuttgart and in-process with housing, your assigned housing counselor will determine your position on the active wait list based on the date you departed your last duty station. Once assigned to a specific wait list, if adequate government housing is not projected to be available for assignment within 60 days of your arrival in Stuttgart, housing may issue a Certificate of Non-Availability (CNA). The CNA authorizes off-post housing.

NOTE: E-4 and below are required to live on post and will not receive a CNA.

On-Post Housing

There are four housing areas in the Stuttgart area: Patch, Kelley, Robinson Barracks, and Panzer Kaserne. Patch Barracks and Robinson Barracks are the two largest areas with approximately 60% of the total housing assets. Quarters include two, three, and four-bedroom units. For large families, there are a very limited number of five-bedroom units. Field grade, company grade, senior and junior enlisted housing is in multi-family apartment buildings locally known as "the stairwells". Each unit comes with assigned storage within the building. Storage units vary in size. Some single-family homes are available for 06/CSM personnel.

On-Post. Just the Facts:

- **Voltage:** On-post housing has 110 voltage as well as 220 voltage outlets. Small 110v appliances and vacuum cleaners work fine but be aware that expensive cycle appliances may not work to full capacity. Plan to check out the Thrift Shop on Patch Barracks and social media "yard sale" pages for items for sale before purchasing all new 220v products.
- **German Fans:** These are your friend if you can't stand the heat! You won't find air conditioning in many places here, and certainly not the housing. Window AC units are not permitted. Plan to invest in free-standing 220v fans, which are not very expensive...especially if you find them at the Thrift Shop or at the Exchange.
- **Building Responsibility:** Residents work together to keep the inside common areas clean like the stairwell. Contractors cover grass cutting, snow removal, tree/bush trimming.

USAG Stuttgart Housing Detail cont'd...

On-Post

- **Closets and Pantries:** Built-ins are common but can be smaller than expected. Additional armoires are available through housing.
- **Windows coverings:** Mini blinds are on all windows. Ceiling-mounted curtain tracks are installed but American curtains may need to be altered.
- **Parking:** Residents are assigned spaces and additional/guest parking is very limited.
- **Recycling:** Bins are located around the housing areas on all bases. Residents must follow a strict recycle protocol while living in Stuttgart. It's a great idea to separate items in your house prior to disposal.
- **Outdoor items:** Grills and patio furniture are allowed but must be kept in an outdoor communal area.

Off-Post Housing

German housing can be all that character and more! Be informed and educated about your responsibilities, your entitlements, and your expectations! Tips for during & after your move-in:

- **Move-In:** While sending movers to particular rooms as goods come off the truck is a common process, keep in mind that some of the movers may not understand or speak English. Consider taping a number to each room and as the boxes come off the truck just direct the item to a number with marker or tape to ensure much of your household items are in the general area you desire.
- **Water:** One word - Hard. Calcium deposits build up quick and it is a good idea to use an additive to a dishwasher. Calgon in laundry helps prevent fabric fade. Culligan Water is available on base and for delivery for drinking.
- **Rules, Rules, and More Rules:** Check the restrictions for the town you live in. You may find it is forbidden on Sundays to wash cars in front of your home, mow or weed whack your lawn, or perform other loud activity during posted quiet times or holidays. Warming up the car longer than a minute idle is also a "no-no!"
- **Practice good "Luftung":** Opening windows 15 mins a day is important to avoid mold/mildew issues.
- **Allowances:** Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), utilities, Miscellaneous Move in Housing Allowances (MIHA) will all be covered in your housing in-brief, but you can check out this link for details: www.defensetravel.dod.mil
- **Important Housing considerations:** OHA is different from BAH and there is no "excess" for unused costs to the service member. Rent to landlords (Vermieter in German) is paid direct from you the rentee (Mieter in German), and the housing office will review and approve any contract before you sign.

USAG Stuttgart Housing Detail cont'd...

- **Hidden Fees:** Remember to use every tool provided to ensure you are not caught in the “extras” without knowing! Heating systems could need inspected, chimney sweeps cleaned, and chores to keep the integrity of the place could be added into contracts. THAT is why you want to work through the housing professionals so you aren't paying what you may not need to. *Heating oil can be a shock if not properly understood!
- **Life-size Appliances:** A German home is not often equipped with American style/size refrigerator or washer and dryer. The housing office can provide these items to be delivered to the off-post location based on water exchange and venting capabilities.
- **Windows and Doors:** Most homes have “Roladons” which are lowered and raised as needed for privacy as much as temperature control. Remember, no air conditioning in most of the German homes, but the concrete walls and privacy blinds can help with controlling the indoor comfort level. *Note that the concrete wall statement may be a relevant discussion with your landlord (Vemieter) if you plan to hang shelves or pictures.
- **Insurance:** Don't forget to discuss renters insurance with the housing office as well as the Vemieter. *Consider inviting the Vemieter for a quarterly or annual signed review that all is well to assist with PCS and deposit return.

Medical & Dental Services Details...

The Stuttgart Health Clinic is located on Patch Barracks. There also is a Health Annex on Kelley Barracks. Fundamental services include primary care, pediatric care, laboratory services, and physical therapy, as well as behavioral health services such as social work, psychology and family advocacy programs. The Tricare office is located inside the Stuttgart Health Clinic.

The Clinic is a minimal treatment facility with your primary care doctors. Utilizing the RelayHealth Online Program is a quick and easy way to stay in touch via email for non-emergency requests. Because it is a minimal treatment facility, the Clinic has a strong partnership with our Host Nation counterparts. If you or a member of your family can't be treated in one of the Army clinics, you will be referred to a German provider. Together, military and German providers ensure you and your family members have access to world-class healthcare.

There is no military hospital in Stuttgart. Emergency and complex medical issues are handled by German providers on the local economy. Each local hospital in Germany “specializes” in care, differing from American hospitals that provide treatment for a range of medical issues. Take the hospital tour upon arrival. During the tour, guides will explain how hospitals in the Stuttgart-area “specialize” in certain patients (i.e. children) or medical needs (i.e. maternity). What's important to note is that not all hospitals have emergency rooms.

In the event of a medical emergency, dial 112. If you live on base, contact the Military Police (MP) desk to help ensure an appropriate response. Their number is +49 7031153102.

The Dental Clinic is located on Panzer Kaserne. They are focused on oral health care for you and your family members. They may also provide limited services to Reserve Service members on active duty orders and retirees. DSN: 314-590-2800 * Commercial: +49-6371-94642800.

Vehicles & Driving in Germany Details...

Obtaining a USAREUR Driver's License

First things first: Everyone arriving on PCS orders falls under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and must have a USAREUR driver's license in order to operate a vehicle in Germany.

To get a USAREUR license, you must have a valid stateside driver's license, take a training class, and pass a multiple-choice exam. This exam is one of the biggest challenges for newcomers in Germany.

To take the online training and exam, register for an account on Joint Knowledge Online at <https://jko.iten.mil/>. Service members and DoD civilians can use their common access card. Family members and non-CAC holders should follow the steps on the JKO site to request a sponsored account and will need their DoD identification number on their military ID to log on. If you take and pass the exam online, your certification is valid for sixty days.

After two business days, bring your printed certificates, valid stateside driver's license, a copy of your orders, and payment (\$20) to the Driver Testing Office located on Panzer Kaserne, Building 2913, Rm 301. The staff will issue your temporary USAREUR license. You should receive your permanent license through the mail in 2-3 weeks.

The driver training class and exam can also be taken in person after your arrival in Building 2913, Rm 301 on Panzer Kaserne. An appointment is necessary. More on the in-person orientation can be found here:

<https://home.army.mil/stuttgart/index.php/my-garrison/all-services/drivers-testing>

International Driving Permit (IDP)

If you plan on driving outside of Germany, you also need an IDP. An IDP can be obtained before you arrive through your local AAA office (\$20, valid for 1 year). After you arrive and obtain your permanent USAREUR license, you can obtain an IDP through the local German driver's registration office (Führerscheinstelle) for €16 and it will be valid for 3 years. An IDP alone does not give you authority to operate a USAREUR-plated vehicle. More on obtaining an IDP:

<https://www.stuttgartcitizen.com/featured-stories/how-to-get-an-international-driver-license-in-stuttgart/>

Vehicles & Driving in Germany Details cont'd...

Vehicle Registration

Vehicles can be registered for up to two years. You can also renew your vehicle registration up to 75 days before it expires and keep your original registration date.

Vehicle registration appointments fill up fast during the summer PCS season. You can schedule, cancel, and reschedule appointments on the USAG Stuttgart app or garrison website, <https://www.stuttgartcitizen.com/appointments/>. You can also try to get appointments on a walk-in basis. You might get lucky with a short wait or you may have to wait several hours only to be told to come back the next day.

Go to the USAG Stuttgart app or garrison website to download the vehicle registration checklist most appropriate for your situation and follow the steps to get your vehicle registered:

<https://home.army.mil/stuttgart/index.php/my-garrison/all-services/vehicle-registration>

****Pass inspection the first time****

Avoid these common pitfalls and prepare your vehicle for inspection:

- **Incorrectly mounted/license plate not installed.**
- **Buy German license plate holders for the front and back of your car. Bring your own screwdriver to put on/take off license plates.**
- **Missing or expired first aid kit or missing warning triangle.**
- **Purchase a German first aid kit, warning triangle and reflective vest*.** Place items under or on the front passenger seat for the inspection, not in the trunk.
- ***Although not required for inspection and registration, German law requires one reflective vest per vehicle.**
- **Engine/transmission/power steering fluid Leaks.**
- **Lights/turn signals not working properly or broken/missing lenses.**
- **Brakes not working properly.**
- **Driver and front passenger door window tint**
- **U.S. decals on vehicle**
- **Exhaust leaks/excessive noise level**
- **Body/frame corrosion/ride height clearance**
- **Chips & cracks in windshield**
- **Windshield wipers/washer system not operating properly or defective**
- **ABS warning device malfunctioning/airbag lights**
- **Worn tires**

Vehicles & Driving in Germany Details cont'd...

Fuel Ration Card

The fuel ration card lets you purchase gas at prices comparable to the states. You can get a fuel card with your temporary registration and temp plates, but you must re-register or get a new card when you convert to a permanent registration and plates. The fuel ration card is directly associated with the individual vehicle it is assigned to and cannot be shared with a second vehicle. Two vehicles = two fuel ration cards! Obtain your card at the Express gas stations located on either Patch or Kelley Barracks, or stop by customer service at the main Exchange on Panzer Kaserne. The card can be preloaded with money at almost any Exchange store and acts essentially as a prepaid cash card at off-post Esso stations. Most German Esso stations participate in the program, but it is usually a good idea to check with the attendant before fueling up.

On-post, the card can be used as a prepaid card, or drivers can opt to pay with cash or credit card and keep the card's balance for off-post use. In either case, the card is needed every time the vehicle is fueled in order to avoid paying high European fuel prices.

Top FACTS about German Traffic Laws

Traffic circles, priority roads, right-of-way rules, the autobahn and an abundance of speed cameras are just a few things that make driving in Germany a unique experience.

Speed Limits

Speed limits are 30 or 50 kph per hour in cities and towns and 100 kph on the highway unless otherwise marked. There are certain stretches where there is no speed limit on the Autobahn, except where marked (but a top speed of 130 kph is recommended by the German authorities).

Stay out of the left lane on the Autobahn unless you are passing. In Germany, the left lane is strictly for passing only. Be careful to always check your left mirror before merging left for fast approaching traffic.

You can be fined for running out of gas on the Autobahn.

Contrary to what you may have heard, it is possible to get a speeding ticket in Germany, and quite common. Speed cameras are prevalent on the autobahn, highways, and in cities and towns.

- **It can take several months to receive a ticket in the mail. It is not uncommon to be assessed a late fee due to the delay caused by mail being routed to your CMR address or unit. Update your address with vehicle registration if you received a permanent mailbox number after you registered your vehicle.**

Vehicles & Driving in Germany Details cont'd...

Top FACTS about German Traffic Laws (cont'd)

Alcohol

Germany has strict laws when it comes to alcohol and driving. All European countries will charge you with a DUI for a blood alcohol level (BAC) of more than 0.058. In Germany, your license will be suspended for 90 days for a BAC of .050-.079, and if higher than that, your license can be suspending indefinitely. The fines can be upwards of 4,500 euros. Don't drink and drive! Public transportation in Germany is very useful and reliable to get to/from places without risking driving.

Winter tires

German law requires winter rated tires during snow and icy conditions. The general rule of thumb is to put winter tires on from October to Easter. Historically, winter tires have had 2 different types of markings: a snowflake for a snow tire or M+S indicating the tire works in mud and snow. However, a new law goes into effect October 1, 2024 that requires winter tires to have the new Alpine 3-peak mountain symbol, which meets the highest standards. Existing winter tires with only the old M+S mark will be allowed until 30 September 2024, but it is recommended to get new tires with the Alpine 3-peak-mountain mark as soon as possible. You can be ticketed for not having the right tires. If you get into an accident during poor weather without snow tires it will be your fault automatically.

Cell Phones

German law prohibits the use of hand-held cell phones when operating a vehicle (or riding bicycles). You can be fined even if the car is stopped, but the engine is running. If you need to take or make a call, pull off the road and turn off your engine. Only "hands-free" phones that allow the driver to keep his or her hands on the steering wheel and eyes on the road may be used.

Car Seats

Your child will likely need a booster or car seat here until 12 years of age. If your child is under 12 and shorter than 150 centimeters (about 59 inches), he or she must be in a car seat or booster seat. If they are under 12 and 150 centimeters or taller, they must use a seat belt; no booster seats are allowed. If they are 12 or older, regardless of height, they must use a seat belt (no boosters).

German law states that children under 12 years old may sit in the front seat of vehicles only when children in that age group are already occupying the rear seats or the vehicle does not have a rear seat. If children sit in the front seat, they must be secured with officially approved safety equipment suitable for them and permitted for use in front seats.

Vehicles & Driving in Germany Details cont'd...

Top FACTS about German Traffic Laws (cont'd)

Parking

The blue parking disc showing how long you have been parked in a parking space is not only for use in town. You are required to use it for many on-post parking areas including the Post Office and Commissary on Patch. When in doubt, put it out! Fines can be as much as €30 – depending on how long over the time you are.

When parking in a pay German parking lot or garage, you must take your ticket to a “Kasse” (cash machine) and pay for parking before driving out. If a store or restaurant validates parking, you must still bring it to the Kasse to be stamped before you go to your car. The gate will not open unless you have already paid or had the validation stamp scanned in the machine.

On-street parking usually requires payment as well. Look for the “Parkscheinlosen,” a nearby metal box where you can purchase your ticket. You must buy a ticket and place it in the window of your vehicle before you go to dine, shop, etc. If you don't have one, or if it expires, you can be ticketed. “Frei” in a parking garage does not mean free of charge; it means there are spaces available.

Roadside Emergencies

- **USAG Stuttgart Military Police: DSN: 431-3102/3095 or civilian 07031-15-3102/3095.**
- **German Police: 110**
- **Ambulance: 112**
- **Always carry your stateside and USAREUR licenses, insurance card, & vehicle registration in your car at all times.**

Having roadside assistance is strongly encouraged. USAA offers roadside assistance in Germany as part of their auto insurance package. ADAC is the German equivalent of AAA and is authorized to assist on U.S. Installations. There are other local companies that offer roadside assistance plans in Germany and throughout Europe such as BAVC and AvD.

**You will need to use your official German address if you ever need to obtain a rental car through ADAC. Keep a document or piece of mail with the address in your vehicle at all times. If you live on-post, ask ADAC to mail you your membership cards to your on-post German address. If you live off-post, you can use any piece of mail bearing your German address.

**Make sure you can dial ADAC's emergency number (22 22 22) from your cell phone. Some cellular providers block this number and other similar 3rd party numbers. If you can't call the number, go to your cellular provider and ask them to unblock it. For additional information, check out the links below:

- **Download this informational Accident Cheat Sheet to keep a copy in your vehicle(s):** <https://www.stuttgartcitizen.com/newcomers/vehicle-traffic-accident/>
- **What to know if you get pulled over:** <https://www.stuttgartcitizen.com/featured-stories/know-get-pulled-germany/>
- <https://www.stuttgartcitizen.com/newcomers/welcome-stuttgart-getting-vehicle-registered-fueled-usareur/>
- <https://www.bavariannews.com/blog/2018/12/26/top-10-reasons-vehicles-fail-inspection/>
- <https://www.bavariannews.com/blog/2018/09/28/everything-you-need-to-know-about-winter-tires-in-germany/>

Banking in Germany...

How you handle finances is a personal choice. Ultimately, we want to make sure that you make an educated decision when it comes to setting up your banking and credit card accounts while overseas. This section is intended to be a starting point in your research of banking solutions while living in the USAG Stuttgart community.

On-Post Banking

There are two banks that operate on USAG Stuttgart: Community Bank and the Service Credit Union. Both banks offer options to open free checking accounts and free cash withdrawals at their respective ATMs. There are fees associated with using Community Bank and Service Credit Union ATM cards at non-Community Bank and non-Service Credit Union ATMs. There are also fees for international bill payment and wire transfers. Additionally, the Department of Defense establishes the daily exchange rates for these banks, and they will differ from off-post exchange rates.

Rate Example (please note that exchange rates change daily):

To complete a withdrawal of €20 the following will apply:

At Service Credit Union will cost you \$23.30 (if you're a SCU customer*)

At Community Bank will cost you \$23.30 (if you're a Community Bank customer)

At German ATM (with a no fee U.S. or German issued ATM card) will cost you \$22.72

*SCU charges a \$2 fee for all non-member withdrawals from its ATMs.

On-Post Banking Pros vs. Cons

Advantages:

- * Convenient Location
- * English Speaking Staff
- * Free transfers to & from CONUS institutions
- * Ability to pay bills to German individuals & merchants
- * Staff familiarity with service members circumstances
- * Ability to deposit/withdrawal USD & EURO
- * Direct deposit from DFAS
- * Provides IBAN number with your account

Disadvantages:

- * No locations off-post
- * No ATMS off-post
- * Limited options
- * Exchange rate

Banking in Germany cont'd...

Off-Post Banking

Many members of the military who live off-post elect to open a German banking account. There are many banking options in the Stuttgart area. Some local options include: Baden-Württemberische (BW) Bank, Commerzbank, Deutsche Bank, Kreissparkasse, N26 (online bank), Santander, and Volksbank. To open a German bank account, you will need a physical address in Germany, your passport, and a deposit. Providing a cash deposit will make the process simpler. Keep in mind, some banks may have additional requirements. Banking fees will vary. For example, Kreissparkasse charges €3,75 for a monthly maintenance fee, however there is no charge to pay monthly rent and utilities online.

Off-Post Banking Pros vs. Cons

Advantages:

- *Favorable exchange rates
- *ATMs throughout Germany & Europe
- *Locations throughout Germany & Europe
- *Ease of payments for bills & expenses
- *Direct deposit from DFAS
- *Provides IBAN number with your account

Disadvantages:

- * At times, limited English speakers
- * No on-post presence
- * Fees for transfers to-and-from CONUS banks
- * Inability to withdrawal USD

Money Transfers & Bill Paying

There are several options for transferring money from a U.S. bank account to a German bank account. Service Credit Union charges \$1 for online international bill paying (\$2 in-branch), while Community Bank charges \$1 and \$2 respectively as well. Don't forget that the exchange rate at the on base banks are higher as well.

Some people elect to use transfer services such as Transferwise and CurrencyFair. They charge fees, however their exchange rates are often more favorable than on base banks. Another option is using an online bank such as Capital One 360, which has no account fees, ATM fees, or foreign transaction fees. Selecting an online or off-post bank could save you thousands of dollars over the course of your tour. You may also elect to have a portion of your pay directly deposited into your German bank account. This is called a "Foreign Allotment".

Example: If your rent costs €2,000, using the example conversion rate from April 5, 2019, the below differences are illustrated in paying your rent.

On Base: \$2,330

Over the course of 1 year = \$27,960

Over the course of 3 years = \$83,880

Off Base: \$2,272

Over the course of 1 year = \$27,264

Over the course of 3 years = \$81,792

This is a savings of \$2,088 over the course of 3 years on rent alone.

Banking in Germany cont'd...

Cash Cards

Though many establishments in Europe accept credit cards (especially in tourist areas), you will most likely visit restaurants and shops that do not. If you opt to open a German bank account, you will be issued an "EC-Karte" or "EC Card". The EC Card is like an ATM card and is accepted for payments at supermarkets, gas stations, restaurants, and other outlets. Payment is made with either a signature or with the four-digit PIN number assigned to your card. Tips from fellow Marines, Sailors, Civilians, and Family Members:

- **You DO NOT need to have a local bank account to withdraw money from an ATM off-post, you just need an ATM card with the MasterCard or Maestro logo.**
- **Be aware of how much your ATM fees are. Some machines charge you each time you withdraw money. The withdrawal fee varies from machine to machine, as it does in the U.S. If you bank with USAA, you do not have to worry about this hassle because USAA will reimburse your ATM withdrawals up to \$10.00 each month.**
****Please double check your fees & number of withdrawals with your bank.**
- **When traveling to other countries in Europe (or around the world), do not exchange your money at the "money exchange shops" available in airports & in shopping districts.**
- **Be aware of the exchange rates connected to your credit cards.**

Shopping in Germany...

Germany is essentially a cash economy. You will often find that a debit or credit card will not be accepted or will require a minimum purchase amount prior to use. German EC (electronic cash) cards can be used on the economy, but you will need to open a local bank in Germany to get one. It is always good practice to carry euro.

Reusable bags and euro coins are a staple when you walk out of the house and into German culture. You will use coins to pay for parking, to borrow a shopping cart, and occasionally to use public restrooms. Most, if not all, German stores will charge you for bags regardless if they are paper, plastic, or cloth. A great tip is to keep a few shopping bags or totes in your car for unexpected purchases.

Prices of goods and services in Europe, either online or in stores, includes what is known as Value-Added Tax (VAT). In Germany, the typical VAT is 19%. VAT is similar to sales tax in the U.S. but is generally already included in the price. U.S. Forces personnel may participate in the VAT Relief Program by purchasing the appropriate forms from the VAT Tax Relief Office located on Panzer Kaserne, Building 2915, 3rd floor. Keep in mind the program is voluntary for German vendors; they are not required to accept VAT forms. For a more in-depth information, go to: <https://stuttgart.armymwr.com/programs/vat>.

"Pfand" makes recycling fun and can save you a few euro. Most grocery stores on the economy have automated machines that accept glass and plastic bottle returns. After you feed your bottles into the machine, it generates a voucher to be used in the store toward your purchase. Look for the word "PFAND" on the label of the bottle. It means cash for you when you turn them in to the machines!

Shopping in Germany cont'd...

In Germany, store hours vary. You will not find the 24/7 American shopping experience, and you will rarely find many local stores that keep evening hours. Typically, German stores open between 8 a.m. - 9 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. It isn't at all unusual to see smaller stores close for a few hours for lunch. On Saturdays, many stores close between 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. (or sooner if it's a bakery and they are sold out!) Remember, a majority of stores are not open on Sunday, however, you may find quite a few "Brauhaus" restaurants and beer gardens open. Google search the hours or call before heading out.

Flea markets and farmers markets can be found during the week and most weekends all year-round. They are a great way to pick up special little memories or fresh fruits and vegetables. Check the town's webpage for market schedules and remember, keep plenty of euros on hand.

Grocery Shopping

When it comes to grocery shopping, you have the wonderful option of shopping on-post or on the economy.

For on-post shopping, Panzer, Patch and Kelly all have commissaries. The main commissary is on Patch and has pretty much everything you would want and is open 7 days a week. The two smaller commissaries are only open Monday-Friday. Panzer has a 7-day store or shoppette that closes at 7 p.m. (6 p.m. Sundays). The one on Patch is open 24/7.

Grocery stores on the economy, called Lebensmittelläden or Lebensmittelmarkt, are everywhere and contain some of the best local and organic foods. There are several major chain stores on the economy and each has varying product offerings and prices.

The tables below give some examples of options in the Stuttgart area:

Good quality, with economical "knock-off" brands	Good to higher quality products	Large Stores with both grocery and household goods	Organic grocery/markets
ALDI LIDL NETTO PENNY NORMA	EDEKA REWE KAISER'S TENGELMANN	REAL KAUFLAND GLOBUS	ALNATURA TEGUT DENNS

Drugstores	Pet Stores	Electronics	Shopping Malls
DM ROSSMANN	FRESSNAPF DEHNER ZOO	MEDIA MARKT SATURN CONRAD	BREUNINGERLAND MILANEO DAS GERBER

Communications...

Cellphone

There are several options for cellphone service in Germany. Finding the right plan depends on several factors including if you already own your phone, how you use it, where you plan to use it, if you will also have a landline or a work cellphone, etc. This overview provides basic information to get you started, but you will need to do additional research to find the right plan/service for your individual needs.

If you have a cellphone from the U.S. and want to use it in Germany, check to make sure that it is: (1) unlocked and (2) that your specific model can work on a GSM network. An unlocked device means you can pop out your current SIM card, purchase a German SIM card from a local carrier, put it in your phone, and have immediate service with a new local German number.

Most U.S. cellphone providers will allow active duty military to suspend their cellphone contracts free of charge with proof of overseas orders. This will allow you to keep your U.S. phone number and reactivate it when you return to the U.S. (non-active duty usually have to pay for this service). Before you PCS, work out specifics of contract suspensions, terminations and/or temporarily using your U.S. carrier's international travel plan when you first arrive. For example, you can purchase your carrier's international travel plan for the first 1-2 weeks and then select a suspension date effective after that period. This will allow you to make calls in Germany, back to the U.S., and provide sufficient time to research and purchase a local pay-as-you-go plan or contract.

**Popular calling apps that are free with wi-fi such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger (Audio/Video) and Facetime are good options for personal use, but are not useful if you need to call a bank, insurance company, credit card company, or medical providers in the States.

Landline

A lot of people forego landline numbers and only use cell phones but there are still benefits and peace of mind to getting a home phone. In medical emergencies, your address is visible to the emergency operator on a landline. Also, it might be easier to teach a young child how to dial the local emergency number (112) from a landline rather than a cell phone. If you work from home, a landline phone is a legitimate business expense for tax purposes and can offer better connections for important calls. Some companies offer bundled services that include a landline number with unlimited calls to the U.S. at a reasonable price.

Off-Post Landline

If you want a German landline, you will need to sign a contract with a provider. Many companies offer bundled services that include Internet, cable and/or a landline number. If you opt for something like this, purchase your landline phone on the economy and be sure to check your phone, modem, and wall outlets for compatibility.

The biggest disadvantage to only having a German landline or only German cell phone is not being able to provide a U.S. call back number for businesses (or Grandma who doesn't use WhatsApp, Messenger, Facetime, etc). Luckily, there are options for obtaining an inexpensive U.S. "landline" phone number. Some need to be set up in the US, some do not. Skype, MagicJack, Vonage, Google Voice and Hangouts, Viber, and Talkatone are just a few.

Communications (cont'd)...

Internet Off-Post

Ask your landlord what provider the previous tenant used. Some providers only service certain geographic locations so you may have limited choice. Providers require online or electronic bill pay and you can only do this with an IBAN number. It is easiest to set up an account in-person.

As with all contracts in Germany, you must cancel it in writing 90 days prior to the end of your contract or it will be automatically renewed. Army Community Services (ACS) can help with translating letters for cancellation.

Cable

TKS (inside PX on Panzer) offers several cable packages that only require an internet connection and a tv. If you live off-post, you need a dual voltage or 220 voltage television. On-post housing includes both 110 and 220 outlets so any type of tv will work. The basic TKS plan includes the major American broadcast networks like ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, The CW, PBS, and more – along with all AFN HD channels.

<https://www.tkscable.com/>

School details...

Just how many schools are there anyhow? You will find three elementary, one middle, and one high school DoDEA schools in Stuttgart. Elementary placement is based on the zone where you live. Check out the DoDEA schools page on the USAG Stuttgart App for detailed information for the school registration process, paperwork requirements, orientations, and even a printable PCS checklist for inbound students.

Other possible options for school enrollment are German schools, International schools, or homeschooling. Do your homework and contact the School Liaison Officer (SLO) to be best informed. Every family strives to make the best choice for their individual situations. There is no right or wrong; it is all dependent upon what experience a family chooses. Do your homework!

www.stuttgart.armymwr.com/Europe/Stuttgart/programs/school-liason-officer-slo/

Pet details...

Dogs are generally welcomed everywhere in Germany, to include most hotels, stores, restaurants and bars (you cannot, however, take a dog into a German grocery store). It is always best to call in advance if you are not sure of the policy.

Pet passports are not difficult to obtain and are a must if you intend to take your pet to European Union countries other than Germany. You can get the passports through any German veterinary office. The passport is not valid, however, for taking your pet back to the United States; guidelines for stateside travel can be obtained from the Vet Clinic on Panzer Kaserne.

Summer months are always difficult for traveling with pets. The current embargo dates are usually enforced from May through September but that can always change depending on location and weather. Today you may get a flight out with your pet, but it could change due to weather and aircraft limitations. The pet owner is responsible for always following up with the airlines. Additional information can be found through these links:

<https://www.howtogermany.com/pages/pets.html>

<https://www.expatica.com/de/living/pets/bringing-your-pet-to-germany-100907/>

<https://www.german-way.com/for-expats/taking-dogs-or-cats-to-germany/>

<https://www.pettravel.com/immigration/Germany.cfm>

Financial Assistance & Grants

SPCA International Operation Military Pets Program helps provide financial assistance for pet relocation costs. You will have to fill out an application where they will review whether you meet their qualifications. Applications are open from the 1st to the 7th of each month. Double check the requirements to be sure you are eligible to receive the grants.

<http://www.spcai.org/get-involved/military-support/operation-military-pets>

Dogs on Deployment is a nonprofit which helps board animals during a service member's tour, or they can help provide financial assistance through their pet chit program. You will have to fill out an application. Double check the requirements to be sure you are eligible to receive the grant.

http://www.dogsondeployment.org/petchit_register

Be sure to put your application in as soon as possible as grants are likely to run low during peak PCS seasons.

Public Transportation in Germany...

Always purchase a ticket to ride. Do not try to use public transportation without a ticket. The ticket checkers are hard to spot, and if you don't have a ticket, you will be charged an immediate fine. Remember that all tickets need to be punched before you ride, both going and returning. Look for the orange boxes near the escalators or on the platform to punch your ticket.

- Country Flags (American or British) are found on the ticket machines when purchasing a U-Bahn or S-Bahn ticket & will walk you through the process in English.
- It is legal to bring your dog or cat on German trains, but make sure that your pet doesn't get nervous in crowds. The trains are generally very full during morning and evening rush hours.
- The website for the German train system (within and outside of Germany) is www.dbahn.de. The one for the Stuttgart regional train and bus is www.vvs.de. Both have English pages and you can book tickets online or check schedules.
- Apps for SSB Move, VVS, and DB Navigator are just a few of the available applications that can be downloaded to phones. Train schedules, ticket purchases, and other important information are found for local and extended travel on these and other apps.
- Taxi cabs can be an inexpensive way to travel when traveling in groups.
- Not all taxis are authorized to enter USAG Stuttgart installations, though being dropped off or picked up at a front gate is an option. Currently, the only taxi service contracted to access Stuttgart installations is Taxi Schwarzenberg for Panzer Kaserne, based in Böblingen and reachable at (0)7031-80-1031.
- When calling either company:
 - Give them your full name
 - Give them your phone number (Cell phone preferred)
 - Specify the time of pick-up (Preferably in advance, especially if you need to go or come from the airport)
 - Specify number of passengers (**see note)
 - Specify destination
- You can also use the Free Now (formerly known as MyTaxi) app to request any size vehicle, keep in mind wait times can sometimes be long.
- ** NOTE: If you are traveling to the airport, report the total number of luggage, or if you have a child stroller - this will determine the vehicle size. If you have infants, you will need to bring your own child's car "carrier" safety seat.
- Administrative notes - All taxis (100%) will be searched upon arrival at the installation Access Control Point (ACP) at any installation, even with US ID cardholders as passengers. - Taxi drivers without installation passes CANNOT be signed in to any USAG Stuttgart installation.

****PLEASE PLAN TO PAY YOUR TAXI DRIVER IN EURO'S.
NOT ALL TAXIS CAN ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS****

Working in Germany...

So You Want to Work? A Guide to Working in Germany

A Resource of the Hiring Our Heroes - Military Spouse Professional Network - Stuttgart

******PLEASE NOTE** - This document is intended to be used as a guide for SOFA Status spouses looking to work on the German economy. It has been written using the accumulated experiences of its authors and is being continually updated and edited. We strongly encourage anyone considering working on the economy to consult a German attorney at Kelley Barracks Legal Center and to seek tax advice from a qualified accountant to make sure the following information pertains to your particular circumstance.

Despite rumors to the contrary, it is possible for military spouses to work in Germany. However, you need to gather as much information as possible, related to your particular situation, to make sure that a job on the economy is the right choice for you and your family.

Because the paperwork required to make working in Germany possible is substantial, it might be advisable to secure an offer of full-time, part-time, or freelance employment before you begin.

If you are offered full or part time employment, much of the paperwork can be done by or in cooperation with your employer. You may require a German tax number ("Steueridentifikationsnummer") or German ID number.

These are two different things. A German ID number is similar to an American Social Security number and is attached to you for life. A German tax number is assigned by a specific jurisdiction (i.e. Stuttgart) and is used by employers in that jurisdiction. Unlike the ID number, if you moved elsewhere in Germany and wanted to work you may need a new tax number.

Your employer may need documentation from your local Rathaus or Finanzamt in order to assign you the correct tax class so that your employer can appropriately file on your behalf. Because SOFA status individuals are not "registered" with the German state (under the SOFA agreement you are not required to have a residence permit or "Aufenthaltserlaubnis"), any attempt to plug your German identifying numbers into a computer system will not work. This would be akin to an American employer looking up your SSN and not finding it. Therefore, you should give your employer's information to the Rathaus or Finanzamt. They can then generate a letter for your employer identifying the appropriate tax class for you as a SOFA individual. This is usually Class 1, the lowest on a scale of 1-6 for taxation. SOFA status individuals are entitled to "limited taxpayer status" (beschränktsteuerpflicht). This means they are not liable for all taxes as a German citizen or other resident.

If you will be working in a freelance capacity (this includes starting a business - see supplemental information) and receiving payment from multiple sources, you will need to include a German tax number on all your invoices to clients. You will also need to carefully record all payments and expenses. In this circumstance, it is all the more important to have an accountant who can file taxes for you at the year's end. You can arrange a power of attorney document so that the Rathaus or Finanzamt can communicate directly with your accountant. It is also possible that you will need to show all freelance contracting agreements to the Rathaus or Finanzamt so that they have a record of who you are working for. They will likely also need to see proof of residence from a landlord ("Wohnungsgeberbestätigung").

Working in Germany cont'd...

Be advised - in these or any other employment situations, it is highly recommended that you seek the advice of a qualified German tax accountant with knowledge of SOFA. The amount of your projected income will be important to discuss so that you can determine your net earnings after paying required taxes and accountant fees. As a basic rule, any earnings under 9000 Euros are non-taxable. You may also need to share your American tax filings with this accountant.

It is also recommended that you consult with a German tax attorney before embarking on employment. You can make an appointment with the German attorney at the Kelley law center (contact information below).

This attorney will make you aware of important restrictions on working on the economy. For example, you may not use tax free VAT forms for purchases related to your businesses or use your APO mailbox for business purposes. Activities such as these can endanger your SOFA status.

Also be aware that having a German ID number can seriously impact your chances of on-base employment. It has been reported that individuals with this number have been taken out of consideration for any USAJobs, DOD position, GS position etc. We are not currently aware of why this is, but it's worthy of consideration if you plan to try for one of these roles while in Stuttgart.

Stuttgart Finanzamt:
Paulinenstr.44-46
70178 Stuttgart
Tel : 0711/6673-6638
Fax: 0711/6673-6525
Mail: poststelle-99@finanzamt.bwl.de
www.fa-stuttgart-koerperschaften.de

*For additional information or questions regarding working in Germany check out the Facebook page for HOH Military Spouse Professional Network-Stuttgart.

The Unofficial MARFOREUR/AF Guide Conclusion

We sincerely hope you found this unofficial guide helpful during your transition and settling into Stuttgart, Germany. There are many opinions out there, but our hope is that knowing this information came directly from other military and their spouses will reassure you in the days ahead. There are official documents and apps which can provide specific information in more detail for matters like schools and healthcare. You may want to research additional resources for the personal subjects that help you settle in such as fitness options, religious support, and volunteer opportunities. We encourage you to download the Stuttgart Garrison App to find this information and more. Look for the United States Army Garrison Stuttgart App in your app store:

Official app of U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart, U.S. military installation in Stuttgart, Germany under the Department of Defense Installation Management Command, Europe is available on iTunes and Google Play Stores for download.



Geniesse die Reise!
Enjoy the journey!

Phone Numbers to have on hand:

German Emergency Number (all)	112
Military Police Emergency (on base)	0711 680 114 (daytime) 0711 680 114(after hours)
MP Desk (non-emergency)	07031 15 3102/3095
Medical Clinic (Patch Barraks)	06371-9464-2900
Patient Liaison	Call MP Desk
Deployment Readiness Coordinator	07031 15 3593

Additional Links & Phone Numbers:

[US Army Garrison Stuttgart School Liaison Officer](#)

0711-680-7465

[US Army Garrison Stuttgart Family Child Care Program](#)

0711-680-4100

[US Army Garrison Stuttgart ID/CAC Card Processing](#)

07031-15-2333

[US Army Garrison Stuttgart Commissary](#)

0711-680-8401