

If I Only Knew . . . Before Relocating to Germany

As of 28 Dec 2012

The most important thing to do prior to coming to Germany is to ensure that you get a sponsor that can help you with many of the topics below.

ON POST – ARMY FAMILY HOUSING (AFH)



Stairwell Family Housing

Patch Barracks



Stairwell Entrance

Kelley Barracks Family Housing

- Once you receive your orders for Stuttgart, you can be placed on a waiting list for housing. This gives us a heads up that you are in-bound. Your effective date for housing will be the date you sign out of your previous duty station.
- On post housing is mandatory for E-4 and below. Most on post family housing is multi-family and is built to the 4th floor with apartments located on each side of the stairwell or wrapped around the stairwell in the case of 5 bedroom apartments. These buildings do not have elevator service. Single family homes are for key and essential personnel in grades O-6/CSM and above. There is no garage parking for on base stairwell housing. Storage units are very small.
- Yard maintenance and beautification is a responsibility of the residents within 50 feet of the building. Cutting of grass, snow removal, tree and bush trimmings are performed by a contractor.
- All on post AFH housing has 110 voltage outlets; however, due to the electrical cycle differences, your appliances will run on a slower speed. There are also 220 voltage plugs in the house and it

may be more cost effective to purchase those small items such as hair dryers, coffee makers, alarm clocks, etc.....at your local stores.

- It is recommended not to bring BIG furniture; to include fitness and sporting equipment, due to space limitations. King size beds may not fit in all units. It is also recommended not to bring major appliances; those will be provided to you for the duration of your stay. Loaner furniture for every room can be provided up to 90 days while awaiting your household goods.
- There are built in clothing closets in each unit but they are very small. Pantries and linen storage units are also built in.
- All windows have mini-blinds. There are curtain tracks that are ceiling mounted. Your curtains may require adjustments to match the European standard.
- Each unit comes equipped with a refrigerator, washer and dryer, stove and dishwasher. No unit has a garbage disposal – not legal in Germany. Air conditioners are not provided and most times not needed in Germany due to the milder climate, however; one may purchase a floor unit locally.
- There are grill pads provided for stairwell occupants. You may bring your charcoal/gas grill with you along with your patio furniture. It will need to remain outdoors year-round; wise to bring covering for those pieces.
- Each stairwell unit has a building coordinator and that person will set up a schedule of when each occupant will be responsible for stairwell cleaning. Dumpsters are provided near each housing unit.

ON POST – UNACCOMPANIED PERSONNEL HOUSING (UPH)

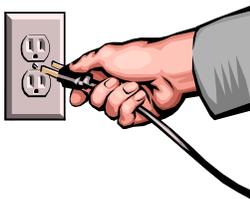
- Once you receive your orders for Stuttgart; they should be emailed to the Housing office in order to determine your eligibility for where you will reside.
Email address is: hsg.stuttgart@eur.army.mil
- None of the units; Barracks or Single Soldier Housing (SEQ/BOQ) is equipped with 110 voltage outlets.
- Each unit is fully furnished and is equipped with a central laundry facility.
- Most of the information listed in the AFH section applies to the UPH section with minor exceptions. If you have questions, email to the address mentioned above.

OFF POST HOUSING



*Off Post Single Family Home
with a Large Garden*

- German housing can't be compared to American housing standards. Units are usually much smaller in size with less or no amenities that we take for granted (such as walk-in closets, light fixtures and in some cases there are no pre-installed kitchens).
- When military personnel live off post, you could be authorized several types of allowances: Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) for rent, OHA for utilities, one-time payment for Miscellaneous Move in Housing Allowances (MIHA), and a MIHA Redecoration Fee. You will be briefed on those allowances in your housing in-brief.
- For civilians you can receive Living Quarters Allowance for your rent and utilities; but that should all be coordinated with your Civilian Personnel Office representative.
- A military person can't make money off of OHA like Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) in the states. Here you get only your rent/utilities covered. OHA calculator is at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/ohaCalc.cfm>. The code for Stuttgart is DE055. Use the drop down menu for grade and dependent status.
- I will utilize the program sponsored by the Department of Defense, Army Housing Referral Network (AHRN) to locate off post housing either for sale or for rent: <http://www.ahrn.com/>.
- One may have to pay a yearly fee to have your heating system inspected along with the chimney sweep cleaning and possible window cleaning. Those are costs that could come out of pocket. You could also be required to pay for repairs that cost less than 200 Euros per year. You could be expected to take turns at cleaning the common stairwell, entrance, and outside areas or be expected to pay for someone to do those chores.
- There are two types of rent in Germany: cold (Kaltmiete) rent – that's the base rent, and warm (Warmmiete) rent – that's rent plus utilities. Utilities included could be water, sewage, gas, taxes, heat, oil or trash. Parking may be an additional cost. Beware, many off post housing is still heated with oil which is very expensive in Germany and your utilities allowance may not cover the entire cost.
- Electricity will double in price in 2013. Your utility allowance may not cover the entire bill nor be reimbursed.



When not in use, cut the juice!

- Some off post multi-storied apartment buildings do not have elevators nor garages. Some apartments do have underground garage parking. There are rules with your automobile in front of your home. You may not let your car idle longer than one minute.
- If one rents a single family home or duplex/row house, they will be expected to remove snow/ice and salt the sidewalks and driveways. It is advisable to get "renters insurance" once your residence contract is finalized. In Germany, if someone slips and falls and is injured, you could be held liable.
- German homes with gardens – they must be maintained, either on your own or through a gardener. That service can be very expensive and will be an out of pocket fee. Permission must

always be obtained in writing between you and your landlord prior to cutting/trimming of trees and bushes and removal of plants.

- Many off post housing units have smaller kitchens than US standards. This could help in your decision on how much kitchenware you bring. Many newly built homes and apartments are larger in size – larger bedrooms, larger kitchens, and are built with an open style concept.



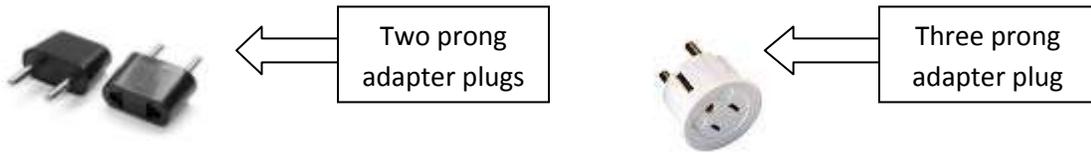
*Kitchen in a large
Single Family Home Off Post*

- Most homes have “rolladens” which is a form of blinds that covers your windows from the outside. These help your home maintain coolness and warmth. For the inside, you can install curtains/drapes.
- Your Housing Office will issue you a refrigerator, washing machine and dryer – it is not recommend for you to bring your appliances. Many German homes have only a cold water tap for the washing machine. German washers have a heating element inside the machine that heats the water for hot water loads and may take up to two hours for a load of white wash. German dryers are “condensation” dryers which removes the water from the clothing articles and you empty the reservoir after each load.
- Wardrobes are issued based on size of family. Most German housing does not have any type of built in closets and you may have to purchase locally if you do not have enough.
- Garbage disposals are prohibited in Germany. Many homes do not have air conditioners and won’t allow window systems. Most homes do have basement storage units and can vary in size.

General

- Recycling in Germany is mandatory. Plan on buying different trash cans for paper, plastic, and normal trash. Off post living will provide you with a green trash can for bio-degradable items, blue one for paper and a black one for normal trash. Glass and plastic bottles is usually brought back to the store where purchased. Large items can be put outside the apartments on announced schedules. There are large recycling facilities off post for anyone to take large items.
- It is illegal to wash your car in front of your house or apartment in Germany, whether you live on post or off. You also cannot do automotive repairs, i.e. change oil, change tires, etc... in front of your home.
- In many cases, on or off post, you will find that you don’t have enough outlets to plug in your appliances. One can obtain a remote controlled 220v power strip that will make it easier to turn off your electrical appliances when not in use.
- Should you bring your 110 volt appliances that are not dual voltage, you will have to purchase a transformer. This does not guarantee it will run on the correct speed because of the cycle differences. A transformer eats up a lot of electricity.

- Some of your appliances can work with an adapter plug if it is dual voltage. They can be plugged directly into the wall.



- Should you bring over items with the hopes that it will fit into your home and find that it does not, there are limited off-post storage units in various sizes for a monthly fee.
- Whether you live on-post or off-post, opening your windows for at least 15 minutes a day will help reduce mold and mildew issues.
- A good tip is to avoid bringing any LARGE furniture and appliances, regardless of where you live.

Online Resources

- Always look at the Stuttgart community Web-site <http://www.stuttgart.army.mil/> for updates in your Relocation Assistance Program – Arrival section.
- Become a friend on Facebook - “Stuttgart Friends”. It is an excellent forum to find answers to your questions. There are several groups of “Stuttgart Friends”, choose the one with the most members.
- Get a sneak preview on what you can obtain once you get here online at Stuttgart’s Yard Sales at <http://stuttgart.bookoo.com/>.