

Living and Working Overseas

Helpful Hints on Moving Overseas

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1. DECIDING WHAT TO SHIP:

- Car
- Non-Temporary Storage
- Household Goods

You will receive Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders if it is determined that you are eligible for a Government-funded move. Once you've received your PCS orders, you'll need to decide what Household Goods (HHG) you want to ship, what you want to put into Non-temporary Storage (NTS), and if you want to ship a car. The maximum allowable weight of HHG to be shipped is 18,000 pounds. You are authorized NTS of HHG during your 36 month tour of duty, and can ship one vehicle.

2. FURNITURE AND APPLIANCES:

You should be eligible for loaner of major appliances (and furniture when available) from the Department of Public Works (DPW). In any event, you should be advised NOT to bring major appliances such as washers and dryers, refrigerators, stoves, or microwave ovens. Due to the difference in cycles of the electricity, US appliances that use timers of any sort do not work properly here, even if they use 220-volt electricity. (See ELECTRICITY on this page). Also, many European houses have neither adequate size to handle US washers and dryers nor the proper water hookups. In Germany, washers and dishwashers heat their own hot water so only need cold water hookups. Your sponsor can help you get the specific information from your installation's DPW. Because the houses, apartments, and the rooms themselves are often smaller here than in the US, many people coming overseas will store some of their furniture. However, think before you put items in storage. Can you do without these items for 3-5 years?

Special Note: You must complete and return the Non-temporary Storage Form included with the In-processing Forms section when you choose to store your furnishings.

It is best **NOT** to ship the following:

- Washers & dryers
- Refrigerator
- Stove/oven
- Microwave oven
- Electric clocks

It is advisable to ship the following:

- Lamps (replace bulbs with European bulbs)
- Bikes
- Car
- Favorite items/furniture
- Minor appliances that can run off a transformer (difference in cycles of electricity)

3. ELECTRICITY:

The electrical current in Germany, and all of Europe, is different than that used in the US. For one thing, it is 220 volts versus the 110 volts. In addition, the cycles are different which means devices such as clocks, washing machines, turntables, or any electrical appliance with a timer will not operate properly, even with a transformer. Finally, the plugs and wall outlets are different. Does that mean you have to leave all your electrical appliances in storage and start over? No. Major appliances should be stored, especially if you can get Government-loaned (see APPLIANCES AND FURNITURE on this page). Other appliances, such as hairdryers, blenders, etc., can be used with the aid of transformers (to step the electricity down to 110 volts) and plug adapters. You should bring your lamps. They are the easiest to convert -- all they require are different light bulbs and plug adapters, both readily available in the Post Exchange for nominal cost.

You can purchase new electric clocks here. Most people find it much more convenient to also replace small appliances you use every day, such as hair dryers or coffeepots, with 220-volt appliances purchased over here, either in the Post Exchange (PX), second-hand stores or on the economy. You will get better performance than with so-called dual voltage versions and with much more convenience than if you have to use a transformer all the time. In addition, transformers are not cheap and use lots of electricity when plugged in, even if the appliance connected to it is not in use.

Many electronics (TV sets, VCRs, stereo equipment, etc.) are now made to switch voltage automatically. That makes life easier but be sure to check the setting before you plug it in. However, you will need plug adapters.

Just to make life a little more interesting, the European nations have not agreed on what electrical outlets should look like, so you will need a universal plug adapter or assortment of adapters for your travels. These adapters may be purchased in the US or over here, usually in luggage departments of large stores and the Post Exchange (PX).

4. SHIPMENT OF A CAR:

The rules have just recently changed to allow a civilian employee who is authorized, to ship a car back to the Continental United States (CONUS) even if one was not shipped to the overseas area. The old situation, where you lost your entitlement to ship a POV to the CONUS if you didn't ship one to the overseas area, is now gone. Check with your local Transportation Office for details.

There are restrictions on shipment of autos to some overseas areas. Military and civilian personnel who want to ship vehicles overseas must now present an original certificate of title or a certified copy of the title, according to U.S. Customs Service regulations. If the vehicle is leased or has a lien, the shipper must also present a letter from the lien-holder authorizing shipment. Vehicle Processing Centers (VPCs) will no longer ship POVs to locations outside the continental U.S. without the title and a lien-holder release letter. Center personnel have been instructed to hold POVs for no more than 30 days while the employee (military or civilian) secures the release from the lien-holder. These procedures will remain in effect until 31 Dec 00. After that date, VPCs will reject all POVs without the required letter of authorization from the lien-holder. Shippers are encouraged to review the MTMC pamphlet "[Shipping Your POV](#)". For general questions, telephone the MTMC at 1-800-756-MTMC or DSN 328-3333.

The car will have to pass a safety inspection to be registered in the overseas area. You may ship only one car at Government expense. It is important to note that repairs for cars, even from the military Post Exchange (PX) garages, are expensive overseas. Parts and tires, especially for American cars, may not be readily available. Anything can be ordered, but if you need tires or brakes or whatever, get it done in the states before you ship the car. This will make life a little easier for yourself as you are trying to settle in.

You see many full-sized vans and cars over here these days, some even owned by Europeans. Operating a large vehicle in Europe can be somewhat of a challenge when parking and maneuvering in the many small areas. Unleaded gas is the rule in Europe these days, to the point that you cannot find leaded gas anymore in many European countries. Therefore it is no longer a requirement to remove your catalytic converter before shipment. You may be shocked by what overseas car insurance will cost for your car especially for some specialty automobiles or sports utility vehicles with large engines. See if you can get an insurance quote before you ship a car so you know what to expect once you get here.

You can start studying for your overseas driver's license while in the states. Your sponsor can get you a copy of the Driver's Handbook and Examination Manual. If you will be stationed in Germany, you can get the Driver's Handbook and Examination Manual for Germany, USAREUR Pamphlet 190-34 by going to the USAREUR Web Site for publications at www.aeaim.hqusareur.army.mil/library.

So you've decided to ship your car - when should you do that? It can take six weeks or longer for the car to arrive at your overseas destination. Because there is no authorization for reimbursement of a rental car, you should put some thought into when it is best to ship your car. It is usually cheaper to rent a car in the US than overseas, or you may have a second car to drive in the US that

you can't ship but can use until you leave. Many people try to plan on splitting the difference, to be without a car for a little while on either end. Your sponsor and others in the overseas location are usually good about giving you a ride for a while, at least until you get your overseas driver's license and your bearings in your new country. They aren't looking for second jobs as chauffeurs, however. When you finally pick up your car overseas, it must be inspected, and registered. You will be required to have proof of insurance, a warning triangle and a first aid kit (both may be purchased in the PX) to pick up your vehicle. If you ship your car, keep and bring with you your stateside vehicle registration. Also, **KEEP** your shipping documents for the duration of your overseas tour, even if you replace the vehicle.

If you do not ship a car, you should be able to arrange for purchase of a new or used vehicle pretty easily, once overseas. A change in Nov 98 allows shipment of foreign-made autos at government expense, even if purchased overseas. For details, contact your Transportation Office. Remember that any car you purchase or bring overseas has to pass vehicle inspection to be registered. This inspection is a basic safety and emissions inspection.

5. PHYSICAL EXAMS ARE REQUIRED FOR CYS POSITIONS:

Your gaining Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) will inform you of a requirement for a physical examination, treatment or immunization that is required by the position or your overseas assignment, you are to immediately make arrangements with the closest Department of Defense medical treatment facility at no cost to you. (For dependent family members: only the necessary immunizations required for overseas travel will be paid by Government; employee will pay the costs of all medical treatments or examinations for dependents). Immunizations required for any "personal" foreign travel will not be at Government expense.

Under certain circumstances you can be reimbursed for authorized examination by a private physician and expenses. These are:

- 1) No medical treatment facilities are at the processing activity and no federally-designated medical examiners are available; or
- 2) Workload at federal medical facility precludes scheduling a medical examination without a serious delay in processing the selectee for movement overseas. The authorization **MUST** be provided to you in writing by the personnel office or appropriate Federal medical officer before you can go to private physician. If authorized, you must obtain an itemized receipt for the medical services. The claim for reimbursement is initiated upon arrival at the overseas duty location. Reimbursement is not authorized if you voluntarily elect to use a private physician rather than an available Federal medical officer. Under no circumstances will accompanying examinations for family members be reimbursed.

6. BRINGING PETS OVERSEAS:

RESTRICTIONS IN GERMANY FOR CERTAIN BREEDS OF DOGS: The state governments in Germany are currently debating restrictions to place on several breeds of "fighting dogs." Each of the 15 states will decide their own restrictions. Some states might require all breeds designated as fighting dogs be neutered, registered, and marked. In addition, these fighting dogs must pass a temperament test or they will be destroyed. The states have compiled a list of dangerous breeds that includes (but is not limited to): *American Pitt Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Bandogge, Bull Mastiff, Fila Brasileira, Kangal, Matiff, Argentine Dogo, Dogue De Bordeaux, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Neapolitan Mastiff, Spanish Mastiff, Caucasian Owtscharka, Tosa Inu, and Rhodesian Ridgeback*. Military and civilian personnel owning one of the above breeds are encouraged to contact their sponsor prior to shipment of the dog to Germany. Reference [Personal Property Consignment Instruction Guide, Volume II, Chapter 43](#).

For more information:

<http://www.chrma.hqusareur.army.mil>