

## Welcome to Ulm and the Joint Support Enabling Command (JSEC)

### Joint Support Enabling Command (JSEC)



First of all, you will be working within the JSEC that is an amalgamation of the original JSEC and the Standing Joint Logistics Support Group (SJLSG). The following description is taken from the JSEC internet website:

The Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) is a static operational headquarters with multinational personnel directly subordinate to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and his Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium.

In peacetime, JSEC's mission is to contribute to Enablement and help the Alliance set the theatre for reinforcement by forces, if and when required. During crisis and conflict, JSEC will coordinate reinforcement by forces, and the subsequent sustainment.

In effect, JSEC is to operationalize a multi-domain network in SACEUR's Area of Responsibility (AOR) to facilitate the enablement of the Alliance in order to reinforce and sustain military forces in the Euro-Atlantic area with a 360 degree approach. This requires an efficient network of contacts integrating all relevant authorities, civilian, governmental, and non-governmental institutions of NATO and EU member states.

JSEC has a coordinating role and it will bring sovereign nations together in order to create a comprehensive network of stakeholders, transcending national borders within the Alliance's boundaries.

JSEC is also the logistic domain advisor to SACEUR. As such, JSEC will need to provide SACEUR with all relevant information in this functional area to support strategic-level decision-making. This will be done through the establishment of an AOR-wide logistical operational picture with a 360 degree approach, in order to contribute to the overall situational awareness and the common operational picture.

Established in 2018, JSEC reached its Full Operational Capability in September 2021, which entails the headquarters' full readiness. Nearly three hundred Allied soldiers and civilians work in the headquarters, all under the command of German Lieutenant General Alexander Sollfrank.

They come from Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Here is the link to the official website: <https://jsec.nato.int/>

For your GPS purposes, the civilian street address is:

Stuttgarter Strasse 199  
89081 Ulm

*Fun Fact:* German addresses read a little differently than Canadian addresses. As you will notice above, the street number comes after the street name. The numbers 89081 are the postal code and are put before the name of the town and on the same line as the town name. Sometimes you will see a town name that is hyphenated, like 'Erbach-Bach'. That means the person lives in the town/village of Bach but it is so small that it is a part of the municipal region of the larger town of Erbach. There are many towns with the same name in Germany so it is important to have the postal code, especially when you are plugging it into your GPS.

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**Wilhelmsburg Kaserne (Wilhelmsburg Barracks) Local Community Office:** Stop by and visit the Community Office on the Base right here in Ulm. They are a liaison office with links to the local community, offering direct help with issues and general advice. They support both JSEC personnel as well as the EU HQ on the Barracks, Multi-National Joint HQ.

They can help you with all sorts of problems, from dealing with doctors, to understanding your garbage system (which can actually be quite confusing) to help explain VAT forms to local businesses (more about these forms later). They also arrange activities on the Base, such as free German classes once-per-week that is open to serving members and their partners. Please contact them (even before arriving in Ulm) as they have a package of information that they can send to you via your pers email address. The email for the office is:

[mnjihqsptfamilysupport@bundeswehr.org](mailto:mnjihqsptfamilysupport@bundeswehr.org) Honestly, they will help you with just about anything!

### **Basic German Information**

Germany has 82 million inhabitants. Family remains the most important social reference unit and young people have very close bonds with their parents. At first, you may find the local German population very formal and, at times, almost cold. However, they are quite sociable and this can be seen at any festival or local Gasthof. Family and friendship bonds are long lasting and sincere. Germans greet each other politely on the street, at the doctor's office and when entering or leaving a shop, ensuring to look into each other's eyes. When visiting German friends, some mixed flowers or a bottle of wine is the best gift and being punctual is a must! When they request you show up at 19:00, they actually mean 19:00. Not the Canadian 1900ish.

### **Time Zone**

German time is within the Central European Time zone. Germany is generally 6 hours ahead of Ontario and European Union clocks go forward at midnight on the last Sunday in March and backward at midnight on the last Sunday of October. Note that North America changes its clocks earlier in March and in November instead of October, so there are a few weeks each year where the time change between the continents is different.

### **Ulm and Neu-Ulm – Your Two Major City Centres**



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Ulm, itself, is a very beautiful city with a long history. Its sister city is called Neu-Ulm (which means New Ulm). Ulm is located in the state of Baden-Württemberg, while Neu-Ulm is in the state of Bavaria. They are separated by the Danube River ('Donau' in German) but often function much as one city.

Here is a link to the Ulm city official website (in English): <https://english.ulm.de/en>

And another one that covers both Ulm and Neu-Ulm (in English): <https://tourismus.ulm.de/en/>

Take a look at the other documents under the Ulm tab on the MFS(E) website for more tourist information on the local area as well as some cultural do's and don'ts. This is a very vibrant region and also places you close to other cool areas, such as Munich, the wine region of the Alsace in France, Switzerland, and Austria.

### **Important Phone Numbers for Whole of Germany**

Emergency (Police): 110

Fire – Ambulance: 112

International Operator 11834 (within Germany)

ADAC (similar to CAA): 0180 2 22 22 22

CFSU(E) Duty Officer: (+49) 0172-5345900

Canadian Social Worker: (+49)02451-717309

Contingent Chaplain (24 hrs): (+49)02451-632229



### **Mail**

All Canadian mail is handled through the CFSU (E) Postmaster. Personal mail arriving from Canada via the CFSU (E) Postmaster can take 3 to 6 weeks to arrive.

Your mailing address from Canada:

<your or your spouses name here>

RP Ulm

PO Box 5053

Belleville, ON

K8N 5W6

Note: **RP** stands for **Remote Post**.

It is important to note that Canadian banks can deny you RRSP contributions and investment services if you provide a German mailing address, therefore, for any circumstances where a company needs a physical address, use the following:

CFPO 5053

15 Westwin Ave,

Astra, ON K0K 3W0

If mailing parcels back to Canada via the CFSU (E) post office, please follow the instructions below.

All parcels must be double-wrapped and include the following return address:

Name

RP and Location

PO Box 5053 Stn Forces

Belleville, ON K8N 5W6

Attach a customs declaration, including an itemized list of the contents and the value of each item. If mailing used items, you may put NCV (no commercial value) on the form. On the outer wrapper use your German civilian address for the return address.

The destination address will be:

Postmaster

CFSU(E)

Selfkant Kaserne

Quimperlestr 100

52511 Geilenkirchen, DE

Once the CFSU (E) post office receives the parcel, they will remove the outer wrapper and process your outgoing package. You will be sent an email with the postage amount and your pay will be debited. The yearly free parcel service from Canada Post at Christmas does not apply to sending parcels from OUTCAN to Canada, only from Canada to OUTCAN.

**German Post Office:** Mail can, of course, also be sent through Deutsche Post. Although it is more expensive, it is much quicker than sending mail via GK.



**Residency Status in Germany:**

Germans and other residents must register at the local City Hall (called the Rathaus). However, as a Canadian living here under the NATO SOFA agreement, you and your family are NOT required to register. You are exempt from it and you should not register unless there is a compelling reason to do so. For example, some personnel have found it necessary to

register before opening a bank account but that is not required by all banks. There is a Community Office on Wilhelmsburg Barracks, that serves both the EU HQ on the Barracks, as well as JSEC. This Office has a document proving that Canadians and a few other countries are not required to register – please see them if you require any help with this. They can also help you with local businesses that ask to see a city registration.

In certain circumstances, one or more of your dependents may need a Declaratory Residence Permit. A Declaratory Residence Permit (German: “*deklaratorische Aufenthaltserlaubnis*”) is a permit issued by German authorities that states that the permit holder is subject to the NATO SOFA and can live in Germany. This permit provides EU border control officials with immediate and conclusive proof of authority to live in Germany and demonstrates that the time limits imposed on ordinary tourists do not apply. However, the permit is purely declaratory and does **not** create a current or future right to legally stay in Germany.

The permit is completely optional, but in some cases, such as for dependant students attending university outside of Germany, a Declaratory Residence Permit may quickly and easily satisfy border control officials that the Schengen Area time limits for ordinary tourists do not apply.

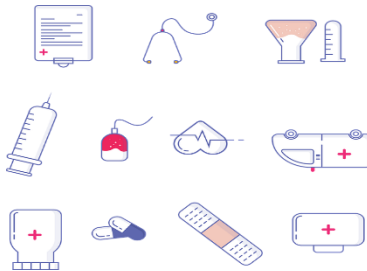
For more information on residency status, see **Annex A** at the end of this document.



#### **Banking:**

- a. **Bank Account:** You will require a German/European bank account for your pay to be deposited here in Euros. There are many choices of German banks, each with different banking plans and costs for those plans, including withdrawals. Again, the Community Office on the Barracks can help you with that, including making a trip to the bank with you to open your account. You will likely require your passport to open the account, so take it with you.
- b. **How to pay:** Cash is still widely used and in some family-owned restaurants or other businesses, it is the only option. However, in the last few years, the use of electronic payment has increased substantially. You can pay with direct debit using your debit card, supplied by your bank. Note that in a very few instances, some restaurants only allow payment with a local bank card.
- c. **Credit Cards:** They function more like debit cards in that the money comes immediately out of your account. There is no end-month bill to pay. So you must maintain sufficient funds in your account to pay-as-you-go. Banks charge different amounts for including a credit card with your account, just as they do in Canada so you may want to shop around. See point below for a free option.

- d. Travel outside of Germany. To avoid transaction fees when you pay, an option is to get a credit/debit card from a virtual bank (e.g. N26). With some companies, basic plans are cost-free, and allow you a couple of free cash withdrawals from any bank in the EU, as well as free payment at vendors accepting a card. These cards are also good for regular day-to-day banking in Germany itself.
- e. Amazon.de. This is where a credit card comes in handy. Paying with a debit card is difficult to impossible to set-up but adding a credit card, such as the virtual bank one mentioned above, is easy and efficient.
- f. Transfers to and from your Canadian accounts. Companies, such as Wise.com or Xe.com, are used by many people to quickly and easily transfer money to and from German accounts. The fees are generally much cheaper than through your bank. There is also an app available for even greater convenience. You can also arrange this directly with your bank in Germany.



**Health Care:** The German health care system is fast and effective. You may see any doctor (Arzt/Arztin) you'd like, however, when you arrive, you can ask fellow Canadian members for the names of those that speak English. Most doctors' offices are open at 8:30 am, then close for lunch and the afternoon and reopen between 15 – 1600 hours until 18 -1900 hours.

- a. **Medical Billing:** Military members may request to have the doctor's office bill directly to Niederheid; however, many doctors prefer to send the bill to you and then you either pay it at the bank or online or forward the bill to Niederheid for them to pay it. Family members will also receive a bill in the mail, which you pay at the bank or online. You will be sent two copies of the medical bill; keep one to send to MSH, which takes care of out of country claims on behalf of Canada Life. Ensure you use the correct form for MSH as it is different than the one used for submitting claims when you are posted in Canada.

For plan numbers, use one of the following:

Month in which you were born:	Plan numbers:
January, February, March	52111
April, May, June	52112
July, August, September	52113

- b. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Military Members must sign all medical forms before being submitted for reimbursement, as spousal signatures will not be accepted. Expect that claims containing even obvious typos will be delayed or denied, so check all paperwork over carefully.
- c. **Important Medical Contacts:** CFSU(E) Medical Contact Information, email to: [gkmedicalclinic@forces.gc.ca](mailto:gkmedicalclinic@forces.gc.ca)  
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/GKMedicalClinic/>
- d. **Dentist (Zahnarzt):** Military personnel may receive services from the Dental unit in Niederheid. This was suspended during Covid and members were given permission to visit a local, civilian dentist. If this becomes a requirement, speak to the dental clinic in Niederheid before obtaining medical support (such as a cleaning). Family members receive services from local German dental clinics and utilize the Canadian Forces Dependents Dental Care Plan to recover expenditures. Billing for family members should be sent to your home address, or you may be able to pay on the day of treatment. The insurance company may request you provide a letter from the dentist indicating the duration of your dependent's treatment in hours. For cleanings, you normally do not need to obtain prior approval from Canada Life. However, for anything beyond that, you should communicate with them before the treatment and obtain prior approval to ensure they will cover it. Due to Covid, as of 2023, it was possible to file all paperwork through their website. While this was supposed to only be a temporary solution, they continue to accept claims via their website. The website for logging into your Canada Life dental plan account is: <https://www.welcome.canadalife.com/psdcp>

**Income Tax:** Canadian Military members are deemed residents for Income Tax purposes, which



means that you are exempt from provincial taxes while OUTCAN but you will be assessed a Federal surtax. The website with this info is:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/international-non-residents/individuals-leaving-entering-canada-non-residents/government-employees-outside-canada.html>

In general, spouses should file as “factual” and CAF members as

“deemed”. Contact the international tax office to determine your residency status before filing



your taxes. Be sure to provide the CRA the Belleville address and not your local DEU address. As tax laws are continually changing, please refer to the following website for your tax information: [www.cra.gc.ca/international](http://www.cra.gc.ca/international) or you may call 613-952-3741 (English), 613-954-1368 (French).

Deemed Residents cannot e-file their tax return, a hardcopy must be mailed to:  
**Canada Revenue Agency**  
**Winnipeg Tax Centre**  
**International Tax & Non-Resident Program**  
**Post Office Box 14001 Station Main**  
**Winnipeg, MB R3C 3M3**  
**Canada**

You will normally receive a series of files from CFMWS when you arrive and within them, there are several that discuss the peculiarities of doing your taxes as a military family while OUTCAN. One of the other Canadian members in JSEC will also have a copy of a cover letter that can be supplied with your taxes, that explains our particular situation (both member and spouse).



#### **Telephone and Internet:**

Phoning in and from Germany differs from North America.

#### Long Distance Examples

Germany to Canada: 001 xxx xxx xxxx

Germany to other European Countries: 00 + country code + phone number (without the first 0 when it is written as a local number but there are exceptions)

Canada to Germany: 011 49 xxxx xxxxxx (do not use a 0 after the 49) (length of last section of digits can vary)

Germany to Germany: 0 xxxx xxxxxx (length of last section of digits can vary)

For example, if your cell phone number, as provided by your cell company, is: 0123 456 7890

Another German number calling you dials: 0123 456 7890

Your family in Canada dials: 011 49 123 456 7890

Someone from Belgium dials: 00 49 123 456 7890

You quite often see people write their numbers as +49 (0)123 456 7890. That tells people that, when calling from another country, the country code is 49. When calling within Germany, they need to drop the 49 and add a '0' instead. The plus before 49 simply indicates that they need to add the access code when calling from another country (such as 011 from Canada).

### Telephone Books

Telephone books are available free from the Deutsch Post Office.

### Computer and Internet and Cell Phone

As in North America, it is illegal to download music, movies, etc. from certain websites (i.e. Torrents). Violating these laws can result in a fine or prosecution.

Virtual Private Network (VPN) apps are a great option and easy to download and install. They may allow you to access certain geographically restricted websites, such as CBC so that you can watch Murdoch Mysteries, for example.

Internet service is comparable in price and speed to services in Canada. Your sponsor will be able to provide you with service provider recommendations.

You will find cell phone plans to be less expensive than in Canada. There are also a wide range of companies from which to choose. You can find different packages with different companies and they can also be bundled with your internet with some companies.

VOIP. There are inexpensive options for calling home to Canada (and the US). These options involve using Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). You purchase a yearly subscription and some basic hardware with a company, such as MagicJack, which can include obtaining a Canadian phone number. Some families will port their Canadian number to the VOIP service so that when they return to Canada, they can port it back to a regular Canadian phone company so avoid losing it. When you make your calls using VOIP, you need an internet connection as the call is going over the internet to the phone on the other end. That phone can be either a cell phone or a regular landline. The only cost is your normal costs for internet.



### **Language Lessons:**

There are often once-per-week lessons offered right on Wilhelmsburg Barracks. They have different levels and it is recommended to speak to the Community Office, if you wish to sign up. Please note that the instructors are fellow military personnel and not professional instructors. Their enthusiasm

makes up for that, though and lessons can be quite helpful in a fun and safe environment.

Online options:

#### Rosetta Stone

This is a computer assisted language learning program that uses a combination of images, sound and text in order to teach vocabulary terms and grammatical functions intuitively. Military Family Services have licenses available for use by remote families. If you are interested in obtaining a license, please contact [mfse.employmenteducationtraining@cfmws.com](mailto:mfse.employmenteducationtraining@cfmws.com). The licenses are issued on a first come first served basis. Account users must remain active in order to keep their license.

Duolingo. Free and paid versions. Interactive app that really starts with the basics and teaches useful words and sentences, to include ordering in restaurants, basic greetings and progresses to more complex sentences, grammar and vocabulary.

#### BBC Online Language Courses

BBC is offering free enrolment in a 12-week foreign language course. There are four languages offered: French, Spanish, German and Italian. The program uses videos, audio instruction and quizzes to help you learn. It also has a “quick fix” series for survival phrases in 40 languages. You can check this learning option out at: [www.bbc.co.uk/languages](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages).

#### Word2Word Free Online Language Courses

This site provides links to free online language courses (approximately 120 languages), which vary in quality and quantity of the material provided. Check it out at: [www.word2word.com](http://www.word2word.com) and click on “Free Online Language Courses” then “Take Me To” the German language.

#### German with Jenny

There are several YouTube videos and a paid app.

<https://www.germanwithjenny.com>



#### **Insurance in Germany**

It is recommended to obtain insurance immediately upon arrival in Germany. There are several different types of insurance coverage available and you must be aware of the differences before you sign any documents:

- a. Personal Liability. Insurance against damage to goods and persons caused by the insured and family members, including your pet.
- b. Pet Insurance. German law requires dog owners to purchase pet insurance. There is also insurance available for cats. This type of insurance is not covered with your home insurance.
- c. Legal Insurance. This insurance will provide you and your family with legal assistance and protection against various costs arising from legal proceedings. There are policies for traffic legal insurance (available in Germany only – highly recommended) or general legal insurance.
- d. Household Insurance. This insurance will cover the contents of your home against loss or damage. Some household policies do not cover loss or theft of bicycles. You should verify this point with your agent. Also ask about the level of glass coverage that you get with a policy, which covers windows and (the very expensive) glass top stoves found in most homes. Arrange for insurance to take effect when taking possession of your household goods.
- e. Automobile Insurance. You will want to get the standard automobile insurance that you are accustomed to; however, premiums are higher than at home. To obtain a reduction in premiums, you will need to provide a letter (or letters) from your previous insurance companies attesting to at least one year of accident-free driving to get the minimum deduction and ten (10) years to get the maximum deduction. Letters must have original signatures since photocopies will NOT be accepted. Some companies, such as MIRASCON, give a substantial NATO discount.
- f. Many of us have dealt with and had great service from Culpeck Insurance – Agent: Astrid Rombey. She can assist you with all of the above types of insurance. Transport in GK can send you a fuller list of agents, if you wish.  
Her email – [ar@culpeck.com](mailto:ar@culpeck.com)  
Office email – [gk@culpeck.com](mailto:gk@culpeck.com)

## **Annex A – Declaratory Residence Permit – Proof of Authority to Reside in Germany**

This was last updated: 6 May 2022 – Office of the AJAG (Europe). When in doubt, speak to your chain of command and the AJAG office in GK.

### **Proof of Authority to Reside in Germany**

#### **1. Do I require proof of authority to reside in Germany?**

**No.** CAF members, civilian component members, and dependants will enter the Schengen Area / Germany in accordance with CFSU(E) Standing Order 5002-1. In these circumstances, there is very rarely any official scrutiny of documents, beyond a quick review of the NATO Travel Order and military ID or the Special (Green) Passport and a NATO SOFA stamp.

It is important to understand that the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) does **not** require CAF members, civilian component members, and their dependants who are posted to Germany to obtain a visa or apply for a residence permit.

In circumstances where a person with NATO SOFA status frequently travels outside the Schengen Area and expects to encounter questioning at border controls, it may be possible to obtain a “Declaratory Residence Permit” from Germany. See Question 4 below for more information.

#### **2. Why do EU border control authorities care about whether or not I live in Germany?**

Ordinary tourists are only allowed in the Schengen Area for a limited amount of time (up to 90 days in any 180-day period for Canadians). However, this time limit does not apply to CAF members, civilian component members, and their dependants who are posted to Germany with NATO SOFA status.

#### **3. How can I avoid issues with border control authorities regarding my status in Germany?**

CAF members with NATO Travel Orders and military ID normally will not encounter any difficulties at the German border or entering the Schengen Area. However, it should be noted that CAF members will no longer receive a NATO SOFA stamp in their Special Passports (see CFSU(E) Standing Order 5002-1), so all personal travel will require the use of Special Passports that do not demonstrate any specific NATO SOFA status.

Dependants and civilian component members still receive a NATO SOFA stamp in their passport, in accordance CFSU(E) Standing Order 5002-1. The stamp shows their NATO SOFA status and clarifies why they are exempt from Schengen Area time limits for ordinary tourists. In rare circumstances where a border agent is not familiar with NATO SOFA status, particularly for civilians and dependants, they might ask questions to determine whether a traveller is entitled to enter the Schengen Area or Germany.

When travelling outside of Germany, you should be prepared to explain your NATO SOFA status if asked by border agents. For personal travel, you may also want to consider carrying with you additional evidence of your residence in Germany, such as a CFSU(E) Certificate of Licence, NATO airbase ID card, a utility bill, etc., to help clarify your status. For frequent travellers who have encountered questioning at borders, it may be worthwhile to get a Declaratory Residence Permit as well (see Question 4 below).

If you encounter any issues at border controls, please report them to the CFSU(E) Administration Officer in accordance with Standing Order 5002-1.

#### **4. What is a Declaratory Residence Permit?**

A Declaratory Residence Permit (German: “*deklaratorische Aufenthaltserlaubnis*”) is a permit issued by German authorities that states that the permit holder is subject to the NATO SOFA and can live in Germany. This permit provides EU border control officials with immediate and conclusive proof of authority to live in Germany and demonstrates that the time limits imposed on ordinary tourists do not apply. However, the permit is purely declaratory and does **not** create a current or future right to legally stay in Germany.

The permit is completely **optional**, but in some cases, such as for dependant students attending university outside of Germany, a Declaratory Residence Permit may quickly and easily satisfy border control officials that the Schengen Area time limits for ordinary tourists do not apply.

#### **5. Who can apply for a Declaratory Residence Permit?**

Any person who has NATO SOFA status in Germany and is a Third-Country National (*i.e.*, not a citizen of an EU Member State) can apply for a Declaratory Residence Permit.

#### **6. How to apply:**

To apply, please contact the Immigration or Foreigners Office (German: *Ausländerbehörde* or *Ausländeramt*) responsible for your area. You can search for your local office by entering your German residential address or place of residence via the following websites:

1. BAMF-NAvi - Behörden : <https://bamf-navi.bamf.de/de/Themen/Behoerden/>
2. Übersicht der Ausländerämter sortiert nach Anfangsbuchstabe A ([auslaenderaemter.de](https://www.auslaenderaemter.de)) : [https://www.auslaenderaemter.de/buchstabe\\_a.php](https://www.auslaenderaemter.de/buchstabe_a.php)

Please confirm in advance what the fees and procedures for a Declaratory Residence Permit in your area are, as these may vary. You will **not** be entitled to be reimbursed by the CAF for any costs associated with the permit application (e.g., application fee, photo costs, etc.).

**Please note that it may take some time to get an appointment at a Foreigners Office.**

When you apply, you will need:

1. Your special (**green**) Canadian passport

**NPF employees** with SOFA stamps in blue Canadian passports should bring their **blue** passport!

2. A NATO SOFA Status Certificate (**please contact AJAG(Europe) to request it**)

3. Application fee

4. Any additional documents required by the Foreigners Office (*e.g.*, passport photo)

**7. If you live in the Heinsberg District (including Geilenkirchen, Gangelt, and Selfkant):**

Please contact the Foreigners Office below to apply for a Declaratory Residence Permit. The application fees are regulated in chapter 3 of the Residence Ordinance (AufenthV). A NATO SOFA Status Certificate and a biometric passport photo are required.

**Office:** *Ordnungsamt (32)* (Office for Public Order (32))

*Heinsberg Kreisverwaltung* (Heinsberg District Administration)

**Address:** Valkenburger Straße 45, 52525 Heinsberg

**Hours:** Monday through Friday 0830 – 1200, Tuesday & Thursday 1400 – 1700

**E-mail:** [abh@kreis-heinsberg.de](mailto:abh@kreis-heinsberg.de)

**Website:** <https://service.kreis-heinsberg.de/dienstleistungen-a-z/-/egov-bis-detail/dienstleistung/14301/show>



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## **Some key tips for in-clearance and settling into Ulm**

### **Canadian Military Support:**

1. Canadian Support: There are nine Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) positions currently in Oberammergau, Ingolstadt, and Ulm. There is a Major in Ingolstadt and in Ulm, a Lieutenant-Colonel and Colonel in Ulm and, in Oberammergau, there is a Lieutenant-Colonel, a Major, two Chief Warrant Officer positions, and a Warrant Officer. The Canadians in Oberammergau, Ingolstadt, and Ulm have two levels of support: command support locally and administrative support from Geilenkirchen (also known as GK and sometimes referred to as Niederheid).
2. Canadian military personnel and their families in Ulm are supported by the command team of the CO and Unit CWO. The command team must be made aware when any Canadian is admitted to the hospital, and they should be made aware of any assistance required by Canadian families. They must also be informed if you plan on leaving the local geographical area, through TD paperwork or a leave pass, as appropriate. More importantly, as you transition to Europe, they will be responsible for assigning a sponsor to assist you and your family to settle in Germany.
3. Canadians in Ulm are considered Remote Personnel (RP), supported by the Canadian Forces Support Unit Europe [CFSU (E)], in Geilenkirchen (GK), Germany, approximately 550 km from Ulm. As they are responsible for nearly 2,000 military personnel, their services differ radically from what one would expect from a unit or base/wing back in Canada.



4. CFSU(E): CFSU(E) provides detailed information upon arrival. However, some of the differences from a unit or wing orderly room are that this unit provides military family support services, medical and dental support to military personnel, claims processing for family members, and many functions crucial to your initial arrival and subsequent support. It is recommended that you ask your sponsor, during your HHT, for a list of all the points of contact at GK so you can figure out who to call if you encounter any support issues as you transition to your rental property. These are some of GK's areas of responsibility:

- Coordinating and communicating your arrival in Europe;
- Coordinating your furniture and effects arrival;
- Gas subsidies through the use of the Aral Card;
- SOFA stamps for green passports;
- Car registration and de-registration;
- Providing admin instructions to personnel after an OUTCAN posting message;
- Driver's permits, licensing, license plates, and driving exams;
- Orderly Room services, including the holding of personnel files and updating administrative documentation;
- Mail to and from Canada;
- Processing members clearing in/out, over the phone;
- Processing individual travel authorizations and claims;
- Process post-specific, vacation travel assistance, and foreign-service premium allowances;
- STEP program (Student Term Employment Program for dependant children of military members) and other OUTCAN benefits;
- Brookfield Global Relocation Services (BGRS);
- Medical/Dental claims for military personnel; and
- PSP trips/chalet rentals.

Address:

CFSU(E), Niederheid Base  
Building B14, 2nd Floor (Above the Post Office)  
Offices 207 & 210

Things to ask when you clear-in with your clerk in Geilenkirchen (GK). Please note they will likely send you a virtual 'in-clearance' sheet and you will do it all from here in Ulm over the phone and internet. Ensure you do contact everyone on that list as some give special support for you here that they don't do in Canada (like administer the Vacation Travel Allowance and help defray costs of purchases for your home here, such as wardrobes and power transformers):

- a. Ration card for you and your partner, which can be used at any CANEX in Europe, as well as the JSEC Tax Free Shop;

- b. SOFA stamp in your passport for you and your family; and
  - c. SOFA cards for you and your family.
  
- 5. VAT Forms: In Germany, the sales tax, on average, is 19% and is included in the price you see listed on the item or shelves (sticker price). As Canadians, we are entitled to make purchases without paying the sales tax, as Canada (and a few other countries, such as the US) has a tax exemption agreement on certain items. Importantly, using the form is not a right, it is a *privilege*. A vendor can refuse to accept the form and it is not applicable to all items. There are also strict rules on what can and cannot be purchased and the forms cost money. For more information, please email the AMSTO office, responsible for our Canadian forms, at [amsto@natex.de](mailto:amsto@natex.de). JSEC is implementing its own system that will mirror the AMSTO process.
  
- 6. Online Support. The Canadian Armed Forces application, available on your smart phone and tablets, is essential to finding support that you require that may not be immediately available from the chain of command or CFSU(E). It is highly recommended for CAF personnel and it provides access, under the Resources tab, to 24/7 member assistance, family support, the member assistance program, CANFORGENs, family services, and many other resources. In addition, the CFMWS website, [cfmws.ca/europe](http://cfmws.ca/europe), has information on all PSP and MFS(E) programs.



**JSEC-Specific In-Clearance:** There is, of course, some specific unit in-clearance that you will do when you arrive at JSEC and this will be facilitated by a member from your section. However, two of the privileges support your family:

- a. AMIS card – A type of NATO ID that is used for Base access here in Ulm, as well as other NATO bases;
- b. US Base privileges – this involves both PX (retail store) and Commissary (grocery store) privileges here in Germany. The closest base is Stuttgart, which allows you to find some of the comforts of home, such as peanut butter and Charmin toilet paper. You will also be allowed to request a military PO Box in Stuttgart in case you wish to have products delivered direct from the US. Note that US facilities are in three different locations in Stuttgart – Patch Barracks, Panzer Barracks and Kelly Barracks. You will be primarily concerned with Patch (Commissary and Arts&Crafts store) and Panzer (PX).

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**Wilhelmsburg Kaserne Local Community Office:** Stop by and visit the Community Office on the Base right here in Ulm. They are a liaison office with links to the local community, offering direct help with issues and general advice. They support both JSEC personnel as well as the EU HQ

on the Barracks, Multi-National Joint HQ.

They can help you with all sorts of problems, from dealing with doctors, to understanding your garbage system (which can actually be quite confusing) to help explain VAT forms to local businesses (more about these forms later). They also arrange activities on the Base, such as free German classes once-per-week that is open to serving members and their partners. Please contact them (even before arriving in Ulm) as they have a package of information that they can send to you via your pers email address. The email for them is:

[mnjihqsptfamilysupport@bundeswehr.org](mailto:mnjihqsptfamilysupport@bundeswehr.org) Honestly, they will help you with just about anything!



**The Fisherman's Quarter and Tanner's Quarter**  
© Stadt Ulm

## **Day-to-Day Life in Germany**

### Rolladens

These roll-down shades serve as protection from the cold and sun, give privacy, and offer more security. Most Germans put their rolladens down in the evening and when they are away from their homes for an extended period. Rolladens are easy to use. Just pull or release the strap inside the house. For more modern rolladens, there is often a switch on the wall that you must push. On older windows, you can lock the rolladens in place for extra security by releasing a small lever found on the window frame or doorframe.

### Water

The tap-water in Germany is safe to drink. Water in this area is considered hard water with a grade of 3. This accounts for a considerable amount of calk (lime) that cakes shower stalls and kettles. Care needs to be taken with dishwashers and washing machines. Also, note that there is no fluoride added to German water.

### Dishwashers

Due to the high concentration of calk, you should use the "5 in 1" dishwasher tablets, powder or "anti-kalk" tablets. In addition, it is very important to add dishwasher salt to the compartment in the base of the dishwasher every one to two months. Do not use regular table salt. You may purchase a box of dishwasher salt crystals (eg: Somat Spezial Salz) in German grocery stores. Use a readily available dishwasher cleaner on an empty cycle every 2/3 months

to clear away hard water deposits. There is also a filter in the bottom of the dishwasher that needs to be cleaned periodically.

### Stove

Many German ovens often work like a convection oven because there is always a fan blowing. Food seems to cook faster in these ovens. You may have to shorten the cooking time and/or turn down the temperature. Also, the temperature is in Celsius. Some suggest it is better to use glass or dark baking dishes in German ovens.

### Washing Machine

Again, due to the high concentration of calk, you must add water softening salt/tablets to your washing machine. This is sold in German grocery stores (for example: Calgon in tablet, powder, or liquid form). German washing machines are different from North American machines in that their cycle is very long. This is because hot water does not enter the machine directly. Instead, cold water enters and is heated in the washing machine, therefore extending the cycle. Another difference is that you must clean out the filter a few times a year. It is usually located in the front panel of the machine at the bottom. Refer to the owner's manual for instructions, or Google the make of your machine and download the instructions. Use a washing machine cleaner on an empty cycle every 2/3 months to clear away hard water deposits.

### Dryers

German dryers are smaller than North American dryers and seem to take much longer. They do not often have an exhaust hose and, therefore, you must attach the water outlet hose to your main water outlet pipe, or you must empty the "water drawer." You must clean out the lint filter after every load. In addition, you should clean out the main dryer filter every 2-3 months or when you notice that your clothes are not getting dry enough. It is located on the lower panel of your dryer. Refer to the owner's manual or download the manual from the internet.

### Irons

You will need to use distilled water in your iron due to hard water build up. Distilled water can be bought at most grocery stores.

### Transformers

Transformers convert voltage from 220 volts to 110 volts, which allows for the use of appliances purchased in North America to be used in Europe. They can be purchased on Amazon and these units will allow you to use electrical appliances from home. The transformer must be rated greater than the wattage of the appliance it services. In cases where more than one appliance can be plugged into a transformer, the total wattage must not exceed the wattage for which the transformer was designed.

Note the difference between transformers and converters:

Transformer – more heavy duty and can be used with any electrical appliance, provided it does not exceed wattage capability.

Converter – for more lightweight use; should not be used for more than 15 minutes or with items such as computers.

Always ensure that the transformer is turned OFF or unplugged when not in use and precautions should be taken to ensure the safe use of transformers:

- Never use a transformer in a damp or wet place;
- Do not handle a transformer with wet hands or feet;
- Always disconnect a transformer before moving it; and
- Always ensure that the appliance is in the OFF position before plugging it in.

Note that some of your items, like your computer and televisions, may accept up to 250 volts with simply a plug adapter on the end of the cord or a change of cord. European power cords can be purchased online through Amazon.de, from stores such as MediaMarkt and Saturn, or through the manufacturer.

### Coffee Makers and Kettles

Again, you can use Culligan water or tap water. Due to hard water, you can clean out coffee makers with a specialist citrus cleaner such as “BIO – ENTKALKER” made by Heidrun. Kettles clean well with vinegar. Be sure to rinse very well.

### Airing out your house

Since German houses do not have forced air furnaces, there is very little air exchange, and your house can become stale smelling very quickly. You should fully open several windows for at least 10 minutes to create new airflow. You will notice many open windows with bedding hanging out to air.

### Radiators

Most German houses use hot water radiators, located in each room. The average temperature to keep these on is “3” in the winter, but they can be turned down at night or controlled centrally from a box on the wall. In the summer, the dial may be turned to the snowflake symbol indicating the rad is off. If you hear a lot of excess water “tinkling,” if the radiator seems to only be heating on one-half or not at all, it is time to let some air out of the radiator. Ask your property owner or a neighbour to show you how to do this the first time with a special radiator key which you can buy at a hardware store. If you find it dry in the room, you can hang some of these low-tech Humidifier Water Evaporators made out of ceramic on the radiators. Amazon is a good place to order them:



### Window Washing

Try using Tiptop Fenster Wasche for your windows. You are responsible for cleaning windows, not your landlord.

### Door Latch

German houses have a different lock system in their doors. Beware of a small metal lever inside the doorframe where the door latches shut. This small lever goes up and down. When it is up, the door is locked. When it is in the down position, it is unlocked. When you are inside your house, and want to lock it or to avoid the wind blowing it open, you can either put this latch in the up position, or use the keys from the inside to lock the door. However, if you go outside and the door shuts behind you, you will be locked out if the lever is in the up position. Make sure to keep an extra key hidden outside or with a neighbour.

The biggest mistake to make is if the keys are still on the inside of the door, and the latch is in the up position, and the door shuts. You will NOT be able to use an extra key to get back in. The keys in the inside lock prevent keys from working from the outside lock. The only way to get back in is through an open window or by calling a locksmith. It has happened to several Canadians already! So as a word of caution, do not leave keys in the inside door lock!! Most main entrance doors have a dead-bolt locking mechanism. You will need to turn the key several times to activate and securely lock the door.

### Sundays

Sundays are considered a day of rest. Do not mow your lawn, wash your car, do gardening, hang washing out or make excessive noise on Sundays.

### Stores, post office closures

Many family-owned stores may close for a two to three hour lunch break every day. They may also only be open until 13:00 on Saturdays (especially in small towns), and are closed on Sundays. Grocery stores do not close at lunchtime and many are open as early as 7am or 8am and as late as 8pm or 10pm, Monday to Saturday. There is usually a bakery that is open on Sunday mornings as Germany is a bread nation. One need never eat day old bread, if they don't wish to. They take their fresh baked good very seriously.



© Südwest Presse

In general, all stores are closed on Sundays so plan ahead, especially for grocery shopping. They also close on many holidays, so ask around at work or your neighbours so that you don't get a nasty surprise when you are out of food on a Monday, or even Thursday or Friday. These closures can also apply to restaurants, particularly family-owned ones.

#### Car Wash

It is not permitted to wash your car on a street or in your driveway in most areas. There are many car washes in the area that you can use.

#### Festivals

When at a German festival, you will be served your beverage in a glass or mug. You will have to pay a deposit of € 1 to € 5 for this, but you will get it back when you return your glass and the associated token they give to you when you purchase the drink. Some people like to take home the mugs as a souvenir, especially at the Christmas markets. This is allowed as you simply forego the return of your deposit.