

U.S. Army Europe

PCS Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 Edition

Congratulations on your assignment to Europe! To facilitate the most efficient flow of Soldiers, Civilians, and Families into Europe while minimizing the risk of spreading COVID-19, U.S. Army Europe developed a comprehensive newcomer integration plan that maintains the health and safety of our force—the key to our mission readiness.

Under normal circumstances, transitioning to an overseas assignment is challenging. The current COVID-19 environment has, unfortunately, made this change of duty station transition just that much more challenging.

We understand this is a difficult and stressful transition, and recognize you have questions and concerns. We want to reassure all incoming personnel that we care deeply about you and your families and are committed to providing an abundance of resources and support systems to you and your family.

U.S. Army Europe is taking appropriate measures to prevent the spread of the virus to our team as well as our host nation communities as we deliberately and systematically adjust restrictions to keep pace with the changing environment. These changes will result in uncertainty at times, as policies may differ from one installation or garrison to another depending on the local conditions and host nation policies in that community.

This document is intended to help you understand what to expect along your arrival and in-processing journey and will help direct you to resources where you can get more information pertaining to your unique PCS situation. Flexibility, patience, and—most importantly—constant contact with your sponsor will be the keys to a successful move this year.

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of our military and host nation communities all in-bound Soldiers, DA Civilians, and their families will enter into a 14-day Restriction of Movement (ROM) upon arrival in theater.

Regrettably this necessary requirement may feel like a poor welcome to U.S. Army Europe, however, please know that the USAREUR leadership, units and garrisons are working very hard to provide all incoming personnel and families the most comfortable reception possible in this restricted environment.

One of the best ways to ease the transition is through communication with your sponsor. We recommend logging into the Total Army Sponsorship Program (TASP) as soon as possible. TASP is accessible in Army Career Tracker (ACT) to assist Soldiers, Officers, and DA Civilians during the transition to your new installations for assignment. The Total Army Sponsorship Program (TASP) ensures that Incoming Soldiers are assigned Sponsors prior to reporting to their new installations. <https://actnow.army.mil/wps/myportal/act/track/leadersmentors>

Additional help and information can be found in the [Sponsorship Simulations & Quick Start Guides](#) folder in ACT's Knowledge Base. It is of utmost importance that ALL incoming personnel maintain constant communications with their assigned sponsors throughout the process. Sponsorship has never been more important to our PCS process and our overall readiness.

If you don't know who your sponsor is or are having trouble making contact, please also go to the USAREUR Sponsorship and Newcomers' website at: www.eur.army.mil/newcomers. Here you will find details, comprehensive FAQs, and a link to send an email directly to the sponsorship office here at USAREUR (look under 'Request a Sponsor' for the link).

The newcomers' page on the official U.S. Army Europe website, www.eur.army.mil/newcomers is a valuable resource in thinking through your PCS preparation plan. This should be the launch point for all kinds of important information you'll need for your move to Europe.

There are seven major Army garrisons across Europe and you can link to your assigned garrison information source directly from the newcomers' page.

As previously mentioned, every person PCSing into the European theater will ROM for 14-days or more in some manner upon arrival. Some will ROM in their permanent on-post housing, some in temporary housing, and others in military lodging. How and where your ROM is conducted will depend on several factors, to include: what unit and garrison you are assigned to, whether you are a Soldier or Civilian, if you have dependents with you, if you will be staying in the barracks, and if this is your first duty station.

Determining what your quarantine plan is starts with communicating with your sponsor. As the circumstances are a little different at each location, you can find out specific information related to your status at your garrison website, <https://www.eur.army.mil/Garrisons/>.

Once you arrive in Europe, expect to receive a COVID-19 screening multiple times and possibly testing, especially for Soldiers who will be residing in barracks. If you are arriving into a commercial airport, you are subject to current host nation screening procedures at the airport as well.

While most can assume about 14 days in ROM, more time may be required depending on test results and contact tracing. Your restrictions while in ROM are individual to each garrison, so it's important to check your community website for the details specific to your assigned location.

And finally, while your sponsor will help you out if you need anything, it's best to make sure you have at least 21 days of critical self-care items in your luggage to support your needs during ROM.

Once again, we cannot stress this enough—it is so very important that all incoming Soldiers and Civilians maintain contact and open communication with their assigned sponsor at the gaining unit.

The following video is a great source of U.S. Army Europe PCS information before you read through the frequently asked questions and answers available on the following pages. We look forward to welcoming you to Europe; we're glad you're on our team!

The USAREUR Summer PCS Season video and infographic can now be found on our newcomers page: <https://www.eur.army.mil/Newcomers/>

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1. How can we PCS during a Stop-Move order?

Stop movement measures were initially taken to aid in preventing the spread of COVID-19, to protect U.S. and host nation personnel, and to preserve and maintain the operational readiness of the force.

While the situation is improving, the COVID-19 pandemic still presents risk to Soldiers, Civilians, and their Families that necessitates PCSs take place on a case-by-case basis, and only if:

- a) They meet one of the 11 exemption criteria outlined in the SECDEF memorandum dated 22 May, *Transition to Conditions-based Phased Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions*
- b) They receive a waiver (also known as an exception to policy or ETP) for hardship, humanitarian reasons or mission essential grounds OR
- c) Their destination and origin are "unrestricted" per the list published by The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)).

The USD P&R office will continuously assess each U.S. state, district, or territory and nations that host greater than 1,000 permanently assigned DoD personnel. Once a U.S. state/territory or host nation country meets the factors described in the SECDEF memorandum, indicating criteria have been met to resume unrestricted travel, the Office of the USD(P&R) will publish the change in status. The installations' status is also factored. More information on the travel status for installations is forthcoming. Note: travel status' are subject to change! So, for planning purposes, check published lists early and often (see links below).

Please refer to the SECDEF memo for details:

<https://media.defense.gov/2020/May/26/2002305766/-1/-1/1/TRANSITION-TO-CONDITIONS-BASED-PHASED-APPROACH-TO-%20COVID-19-PERSONNEL-MOVEMENT-AND-TRAVEL-RESTRICTIONS.PDF>

For even more information please go to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) website:

<https://prhome.defense.gov/Documents/Covid-19-Updates/>

The U.S. Dept. of Defense website, Travel Restrictions: Green Locations, June 8, 2020:

<https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2211257/>

And the European Command (EUCOM) website, Coronavirus News Updates:

<https://www.eucom.mil/current-focus-areas/coronavirus-news-updates>

2. What is Sponsorship?

Sponsorship is a program designed to assist Soldiers, Civilians and Family Members as they move between installations. An effective sponsorship program will promote readiness for individuals, families and units. Moving is stressful, but communication with someone already in-place can ease the stress.

Contact your sponsor at least four months prior to your planned departure – or as soon as possible if you have less notice. Your sponsor will assist you in getting the resources and links necessary to help you plan for your unique requirements. Include all Family Members in the planning to ensure reduced stress for all. Knowledge is power and flexibility is key to a smooth PCS.

The Total Army Sponsorship Program (TASP) ensures that Incoming Soldiers are assigned Sponsors prior to reporting to their new installations. Log in here to sign up:

<https://actnow.army.mil/wps/myportal/act/track/leadersmentors>

Sponsorship & Newcomers FAQs:

<https://www.eur.army.mil/Portals/19/documents/USArmyEuropeSponsorshipFAQs.pdf?ver=2018-06-28-035529-940>

3. Why do I need a Sponsor?

PCSing to Europe is a little different than PCSing within CONUS. Language barriers, driving rules, passport requirements, and more can present additional challenges to your PCS. Your sponsor is a vital resource to answer questions and guide you during your PCS planning, travel and integration. Sponsorship should be tailored to support your specific needs.

Your sponsor will be essential to your support during your ROM period and help integrate you into U.S. Army Europe, permanent housing and your job as quickly and as hassle-free as possible.

4. What are the roles & responsibilities of Sponsors?

Sponsors play a key role in the reception and integration of personnel into the USAREUR family. It is critical that sponsors, unit leaders, and garrison commands advise Service Members, Civilians and Family Members (especially those traveling with dependents) prior to their arrival in theater about the restrictions they will face upon arrival in Europe. Unit sponsors will notify Soldiers, Civilians and Family Members of all host nation restrictions early in the PCS planning process.

Early and frequent communication between travelers and their sponsors will ensure that conditions and expectations are met to receive personnel and families under the best possible conditions.

The sponsor will serve as the primary point of contact for sustainment requirements and as the conduit for integration into communities. Therefore, it is particularly important this summer to take care when assigning sponsors to incoming personnel, and to ensure sponsors are resourced adequately.

Sponsors will execute duties in accordance with garrison and command guidelines.

For more information on sponsorship/Sponsorship Checklist, visit:

<https://www.eur.army.mil/Newcomers/>
<https://www.eur.army.mil/coronavirus/>

5. What exactly does ROM mean?

The acronym ROM stands for ‘Restriction of Movement.’ ROM will be executed in designated quarters designed to minimize or avoid close contact with non-household members. The type of designated quarters you will be assigned to for your ROM depends on your location and your family status. You may be assigned ROM in your permanent housing, temporary housing, Army or civilian lodging/hotel, or, for those going into barracks, at a temporary Life Support Area (LSA).

Limited interaction with your sponsor may be required during ROM. Individuals will be screened daily, and any medical treatment required will be made available. All sustainment requirements assistance (e.g., meals and necessities) are a unit/sponsor responsibility to facilitate (please note, sponsors are not responsible to bear the costs of shopping for families).

In some situations, if required and with proper coordination, Service Members and DACs on ROM may be permitted to assist in securing these items for themselves and their families provided mitigation measures are observed. This ROM will include use of face coverings,

physical distancing, heightened sanitation standards and other transmission mitigation measures/prudent controls.

Essentially, for the incoming PCS population conducting ROM, it means that personnel should remain in their designated quarters unless directed otherwise for the duration of the 14-day ROM period.

Each garrison location will have differences depending on the environment and local rules at that location. In some instances, sponsors will shop for families (at the family's expense) and in others, the garrison may provide food delivery or have food collection points. To find out the specifics at your assigned location, please visit: <https://www.eur.army.mil/Garrisons/>.

IMCOM-Europe homepage: <http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/webs/index.html> (link to all Europe garrisons) – see the “Newcomers” pages in your new location for helpful information that is specific to your new community. “Living in Europe” also has tips and hints for ensuring your tour in Europe is full and rewarding. The “Directory” will assist you for numbers to reach service providers at your new location if you have specific questions.

6. What is Patriot Express?

The Patriot Express, also known as the “Rotator” or “Cat B flight,” is a Department of Defense (DoD)-contracted commercial charter flight which provides international support to travelers on official duty and their families. The Patriot Express also provides Space Available travel opportunities. The 618th Air Operations Center at Scott AFB, IL, schedules these flights on a recurring basis both to and from Air Mobility Command (AMC) commercial airports and military passenger terminals. These flights offer inflight amenities and operate similar to commercial airlines.

For more information, visit the AMC Travel Website <http://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/> and <https://www.amc.af.mil/Portals/12/AMC%20Tvl%20Pg/AMC%20Tvl%20Pg%20Docs/PE%20Brochure%20May%202019.pdf?ver=2019-10-10-103040-080>.

Note: Move.mil is the Official DoD customer moving portal, <https://move.mil/> and provides a plethora of valuable information to assist in planning your military move.

7. Will all incoming personnel be required to fly on the Patriot Express?

Individual orders will outline the authorization for transportation. Most orders currently being published include a requirement to utilize military transportation for PCS moves. That includes the Patriot Express. HQDA EXORD 144-20, paragraph 3.C.28.A.3. requires the

transition to military- or DoD-contracted aircraft for DoD-sponsored travelers coming from or going to CDC level 3- or level 2-designated areas to the greatest extent possible.

USAREUR's forthcoming Patriot Express exception to policy will specify exception authorities for use of COMAIR.

8. Will everyone be tested for COVID-19 upon arrival in Europe?

You should prepare to receive COVID-19 screening multiple times throughout your first two weeks, and if necessary, testing. If you're arriving into a commercial airport, you are subject to current host nation screening procedures at the airport. Soldiers moving into barracks will all be tested.

The testing practices are individual to each garrison, so it's important to check your community website for the details, <https://www.eur.army.mil/Garrisons/>

9. Will dependents be allowed to travel at the same time as the SM?

Yes. In order to facilitate a smooth transition for all incoming Service Members, DACs, and dependents, while also abiding by the host nation rules and mandatory ROM, Service Members, Civilians and their Family Members may arrive in theater together and ROM together in designated quarters.

10. How long will it take to secure permanent quarters or off-post housing?

Unfortunately, no two situations will be the same and it is difficult to accurately predict in the current environment. On average, it takes approximately 37 days, but this is influenced by many factors, including availability of off-post housing, and may take longer to apply for and secure housing. It is of the utmost importance to apply for housing as soon as the application is made available to you. Remember, it is ultimately the member's responsibility to engage with housing in advance of arrival.

Please visit The Defense Travel Management Office COVID-19 Travel and Transportation Allowances Questions and Answers page at: https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/COVID-19_Travel_QAs-Civilian_and_Military.pdf (this document provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding Travel and Transportation Allowances during the COVID-19 pandemic. Section I applies to civilian employees and their dependents. Section II applies to Service members and their dependents).

11. What items will I need to pack in order to be prepared to ROM when I arrive in theater?

While most people can assume about 14 days in quarantine, more time may be required based on test results and contact tracing.

While your sponsor will help you out if you need anything, it's best to make sure you have about 21 days of critical self-care items in your luggage to support your needs during ROM (e.g., prescription medications; contact lenses; masks for every member of the family; soaps and shampoo; entertainment items like books, tablets, paper and crayons; and—for those with school-age kids—school supplies, computers, headphones).

Service Members at their first duty station and others destined to be housed in the barracks will likely be sleeping in bays, or multiperson rooms in hardened, tent-like structures and should bring basic field survival items like shower shoes, towels, bed linens and of course, toiletries to support your comfort and needs during the ROM. There will be opportunities to restock, but it's best to be thoroughly prepared upon arrival. Rest assured, whichever area you stay in is designed to accommodate incoming personnel while abiding by the strictest force protection and physical distancing standards.

12. What will the living conditions be like at the designated quarters for families conducting ROM?

Each garrison location will be slightly different. The type of designated quarters you will be assigned to for your ROM depends on your location and your family status. You may be able to ROM in your permanent housing, temporary housing, Army or civilian lodging/hotel, or for those going into barracks, at a temporary Life Support Area (LSA) – (families will NOT be housed in tents).

While staying there, the unit-assigned sponsor will be communicating with you and your family regularly to ensure you have all items and incidentals you require to be as comfortable as possible. The sponsor and gaining garrison will provide information on laundry services, groceries, internet, and other services that are available to you and specific to each location.

To find out the specifics of your location, please go to: <https://www.eur.army.mil/Garrisons/>

IMCOM-Europe homepage: <http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/webs/index.html> (link to all Europe garrisons) – see the “Newcomers” pages in your new location for helpful information that is specific to your new community. “Living in Europe” also has tips and hints for ensuring your tour in Europe is full and rewarding. The “Directory” will assist you for numbers to reach service providers at your new location if you have specific questions.

13. What measures have been implemented to protect the health of U.S. military personnel in theater against COVID-19?

Force health protection is one of our top priorities. U.S. Army Europe joins the rest of the world in fighting the spread of the coronavirus and implementing health protection measures following Department of Defense and U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention guidance. As an Army command located outside the United States we have unique geographical constraints and operational considerations for force health protection. We have increased our force health posture at all of our installations. That said, we must also act in accordance with relevant host nation and allied force standards as applicable. Leadership at installations are hosting virtual town halls to keep our local populations informed. Please visit your specific Garrison website to find more details, <https://home.army.mil/imcom-europe/index.php/garrisons>.

Protecting the force includes mitigating the spread of the virus by following recommended preventive measures such as: social distancing; frequent hand washing; avoiding close contact with sick individuals; covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning frequently touched objects and surfaces; staying home when feeling ill; and, avoiding touching the eyes, nose, and mouth. We have also implemented the use of cloth face coverings. Soldiers, Family Members, Army Civilian employees and contractors should follow CDC guidelines on the use of cloth face coverings in public settings or where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

For more information about the DOD directives and supplemental “Force Health Protection Guidance for the Novel Coronavirus Outbreak” (<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>), and with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for this virus (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>).

14. What are the living conditions like at the Deployment Processing Center (DPC) site where most personnel destined for barracks will conduct ROM? Will the living conditions at the ROM site ensure all appropriate preventative measures and social distancing guidelines are followed?

The Deployment Processing Center (DPC) is located on U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz, at the Rhein Ordnance Barracks in Kaiserslautern Germany. Visit their Newcomers page at: <https://actnow.army.mil/wps/myportal/act/track/leadersmentors>

The ROM areas have been designed to accommodate all incoming personnel while abiding to the strictest force health protection and social distancing standards. It is our responsibility to ensure we provide the safest conditions and operate in accordance with the guidance provided by DOD, CDC and by the host nations where U.S. Army Europe personnel are located. We have integrated COVID-19 prevention and protection measures into every aspect

of our operations across the theater. There is ample room in the ROM facilities to safely accommodate the incoming personnel and ensure proper distancing and sanitation standards are enforced.

15. What will service members do while in ROM?

After initial screenings and testing, service members will conduct basic in-processing tasks and classes, many will be available online. Some in-processing tasks include completing housing applications and finance. There will be virtual learning classes available.

16. What would an “ideal” ROM look like?

Provided below is a description of the optimal scenario for a move to Germany – procedures may be differ slightly at other locations. Reception plans need not use exactly the measures or roles specified below. This is intended to serve as a guide.

The incoming USAREUR Soldier and Family has updated orders that have pin-pointed a 14-day arrival window for their move to Germany. They have been in constant contact with their gaining unit and their assigned sponsor. Through their sponsor, they have received a welcome packet that, at a minimum, details local conditions and requirements they will face upon arrival, a housing application, mail box registration information, and school registration instructions for school-aged children. The PCSing Soldier has coordinated all requirements and actions to support the PCS, including: shipment of household goods and vehicle, receipt of documentation required for entry (example: visas for those going to Italy), and scheduled transportation.

On the day of travel, the Soldier and their Family will do a COVID-19 self-screening using a provided list of screening questions. With no Family Members meeting any of the screening alert criteria, the Service Member will proceed with dependents to the airport where they will begin their travel using either Patriot Express or authorized commercial options. They will observe all directed health precautions, to include using face coverings and maintaining proper physical distancing as they are able.

Upon arrival at the receiving German airport, the Soldier and his/her Family will undergo screening per local government requirements, proceed through passport/customs control, and collect their baggage. The Family is met outside baggage claim by the Soldier’s sponsor or designated reception team individual. Using government vehicles (if appropriate under AR 58-1), the incoming Family will be transported to their new duty station.

Upon arrival at the garrison, the Family will be taken to their assigned Restriction of Movement (ROM) quarters. Ideally, these quarters will be the home that the family will be permanently assigned for the duration of their USAREUR assignment. If permanent quarters are not immediately available, the Family will be placed into temporary quarters that afford adequate space and cooking facilities for the Family. The quarters are already outfitted with

loaner furniture and the sponsor or reception team has acquired a kitchen loaner kit from Army Community Service. Additionally, through prior coordination, the sponsor has shopped for groceries and critical items (at the in-bound Family's expense) to sustain the Family.

The sponsor or designated health official will conduct a COVID-19 screening of the entire Family and again explain the ROM requirements. The Soldier will sign a document acknowledging the left and right limits of the restrictions. Information provided must, at a minimum, include the times and locations authorized to conduct out-of-quarters PT and for walking their dog(s) (if applicable). Ideally, and provided it is consistent with host nation restrictions, all ROM participants will be permitted outside of quarters daily. Physical distancing and other transmission mitigation measures will be used to the maximum extent practicable while outside of quarters. For example, this may mean face masks, phased approaches to use of certain facilities that are then adequately sanitized, etc. The sponsor or designated health professional will also discuss the daily screening measures personnel can expect, as well as detail the actions personnel should take if one of the Family Members becomes symptomatic. The Soldier ideally receives a loaner phone, if required; a WiFi puck or log-on instructions for available WiFi; contact numbers for his/her chain of command, emergency services, and Army Community Service; and their own work and home phone numbers. Finally, the incoming Soldier should sign a hand receipt accepting responsibility for the loaner furniture, the ACS kitchen kit, and any other equipment outfitted for their use (e.g., telephones and WiFi pucks).

Over the next two weeks, the SM is able to complete an in-processing checklist, and is contacted at least daily by their sponsor to ensure the Family's needs are being met. They are additionally contacted by their battalion medic or servicing health professional who conducts a daily COVID screening. On the last day of ROM, the SM receives official release notification from the Garrison Commander, and is able to complete in-processing requirements and integrate into the unit, schools, and community.

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS from **APPENDIX 3 (HEALTH SERVICE SUPPORT) TO ANNEX F (SUSTAINMENT) TO USAREUR TASKORD 20-0008 (USAREUR SUMMER PCS MOVES)**

Diagnostic/clinical testing: medical procedure performed in a hospital, clinic, medical treatment facility (MTF), etc. to detect the presence of a disease requiring treatment.

Restriction of movement (ROM): personnel maintaining social distancing requirements, and preventing contact with other individuals & organizations.

Screening: systematic application of criteria to identify individuals at risk of spreading the COVID-19 infectious disease. Techniques used in screening are, but not limited to questionnaires, medical exams, and lab tests. These techniques can be applied to individuals or a population.

Surveillance/batch testing: testing a targeted population by dividing the population into related groups (cohorts) for analysis of potential infectious disease samples to determine the prevalence of an infectious disease in the targeted population.