

# Army in Europe Bulletin

Number 12

IMCOM-Europe (IMEU-GD), Unit 23103, APO AE 09136-3103

December 2015

This bulletin expires 1 year from date of publication.

## USING GOVERNMENT FUNDS AND EQUIPMENT FOR HOLIDAY PARTYS

Many units host parties and other seasonal events during the holiday season. Units that want to purchase or print invitations, programs, and other material to support these celebrations must ensure that they use the correct type of funds and should check with their servicing staff judge advocate before using funds. Units are encouraged to use electronic means (for example, e-mail) to advertise events and distribute information instead of printing items. However, units should be mindful that preparations for holiday events should not burden Government communications systems or become a significant part of any employee's duties.

The following fiscal law provides guidance on using appropriated and informal funds to support holiday celebrations:

### Appropriated Funds

Appropriated funds may generally not be used to purchase or print holiday party items (invitations, programs, advertisements) or greeting cards. Unit Government purchase card (GPC) accounts are normally linked to appropriated funds. Accordingly, GPC cardholders will not purchase items merely for personal convenience, comfort, or entertainment and not required for an official Government use. The cost of greeting cards is a personal expense and may not be charged to public funds. It does not matter if the card is nonpersonal (sent by the agency and not listing the names of any individuals). Seasonal decorations are permissible where the purchase is consistent with work-related objectives (such as morale), applicable regulations, and the agency mission, and is not primarily for the personal convenience or satisfaction of a Government employee.

### Informal Funds

Units may use informal funds (for example, bake-sale and carwash proceeds) to purchase holiday items (invitations, programs, advertisements) from commercial sources if all members of the sponsoring unit may participate in the event. Government printing offices (Defense Logistics Agency Document Services) may not print holiday party items funded with informal unit funds.

Units may raise money to reduce the cost of a holiday event. Although the Joint Ethics Regulation generally prohibits fundraising in the Federal workplace, an exception exists for office events. Employees may fundraise within the organization when approved by the organization head and after consulting an ethics counselor from their servicing staff judge advocate office. Personnel should never solicit money from subordinates.

[AE Regulation 210-22](#) provides specific guidance, but generally the following apply:

- Fundraising should be kept low key.
- Use of Government time should be minimized.
- Government equipment such as computers and printers may be used at no cost, but leaders should exercise good judgment in approving any use of Government resources.
- Donations or door prizes should not be solicited from outside sources.
- Raffles may not be used to raise money for office functions.

## HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Federal employees who celebrate the holidays in the workplace must comply with the standards of ethical conduct. While holiday celebrations provide an opportunity to enjoy the season, certain ground rules must be observed. [Appendix A](#) of this bulletin provides information about holiday celebrations in the workplace.

## HOLIDAY SAFETY

Holiday lights and decorations are potential safety hazards. Personnel should take precautions when decorating to help prevent accidents and injuries.

### Christmas Trees

A dry Christmas tree is a fire hazard. A fresh tree should be deep green in color and have a strong pine scent. The needles should bend, not break, and branch tips should

bend easily without snapping. If more than a few needles fall when the tree is shaken or bounced on the ground, the tree is too dry. To prevent trees from drying out—

- Cut off 2 or 3 inches from the trunk diagonally and stand the tree in a container of water.
- Put the tree in a cool place away from heaters and fireplaces.
- Add water to the tree-stand every day. As a rule of thumb, 1 quart of water should be used for every inch of the trunk's diameter. The amount of water might vary depending on the condition of the tree.

### Holiday Plants

The leaves or berries of many plants (for example, amaryllis, holly, Jerusalem-cherry, mistletoe) are poisonous. Poinsettias, while not poisonous, can cause mouth and throat inflammation or stomach aches if eaten. These and other plants should be kept out of the reach of children and pets.

### Decorations

Decorations should be noncombustable or flame-resistant. When decorating—

- Avoid draping greenery, tinsel, and garlands on mantels or near other heat sources.
- Inspect holiday-light sets for frayed cords, exposed wires, loose connections, and broken sockets. "Daisy chaining" extension cords should be avoided. Light-sets must meet the Underwriters Laboratories standard or equivalent European standards (for example, *Verband Deutscher Elektrotechniker*). Light-sets should be unplugged before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Hang breakable tree ornaments on the upper branches where children and pets cannot reach them. Ornaments that could be mistaken for food should not be used.
- Wear gloves when using spun glass (angel hair).
- Place candles away from flammable materials in a place where they cannot be knocked over. Candles must be blown out before leaving the room and should never be put on or near the tree.

### Physical Safety

Physical safety concerns during the holidays include accidents and incidents involving fires, slipping, tripping, and falling.

To increase physical safety—

- Make sure working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are installed in the home.
- Keep a fire extinguisher within easy reach.
- Turn on the light when getting up during the night or place night lights in the home.
- Tidy up toys and other trip hazards so they do not obstruct walking paths. Also make sure extension cords are placed so they will not become a trip hazard.
- For driveways or walkways, make sure both are free of snow and ice, and light these areas sufficiently.
- Be careful when climbing ladders to hang lights and other decorations outside or inside the home.

### Toy Safety

Parents should inspect toys regularly for signs of dangers and wear, and to ensure safety devices are functional. If children receive bicycles, roller blades, or skateboards, they should also receive a properly fitted safety helmet.

## ARMY IN EUROPE PUBLISHING NEWS

The following have been published and are available in the Army in Europe Library & Publishing System:

### Army in Europe Command Memorandums:

- [Delegation of Authority to Approve the Acceptance, Retention, and Permanent Wear of Foreign Badges and Foreign Decorations](#), AEPE-AGP (mil 537-1143), 3 November 2015
- [Delegation of Authority to Approve, Disapprove, or Downgrade Recommendations for Awards under Peacetime Criteria](#), AEPE-AGP (mil 537-1143), 3 November 2015
- [Terms of Reference for the Senior Responsible Officers of Army Communities in Europe](#), AEOP (mil 537-3002), 12 November 2015

### Army in Europe Publications:

- [AE Supplement 1 to AR 95-1](#), Flight Regulations, 18 November 2015

➤ [AE Supplement 1 to AR 672-20](#), Incentive Awards, 5 November 2015

### Army in Europe Forms:

➤ [AE Form 25-1H](#), Army in Europe LandWarNet Remote-Access Request–Category 1

➤ [AE Form 25-1K](#), Request for USAREUR Aviation Operations Branch Staff-Assistance Visit

➤ [AE Form 95-1B](#), Request for USAREUR Aviation Operations Branch Staff-Assistance Visit

➤ [AE Form 95-1C](#), Annual Flying Hour Requirements

➤ [AE Form 190-6D, Part A](#), Application to Conduct FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check

➤ [AE Form 220-90A](#), USAREUR Band and Chorus Performance Request / *Anforderung des Musikkorps und des Chores der US-Army in Europa*

➤ [AE Form 385-10A \(TEMP\)](#), *Unfallanzeige* / LN Accident Report

➤ [AE Form 385-10B \(TEMP\)](#), *Anzeige des Unternehmers bei Anhaltspunkten für eine Berufskrankheit* / Report of Employer Based on Symptoms Indicating an Occupational Illness

[AE Form 690-70E](#), *Mitteilung über den Stand des Arbeitsverhältnisses* / Notification of Employment Status

➤ [AE Form 690-99J](#), Claim Record and Voucher for 1-Day Duty Travel and Duty Trips / *Forderungsnachweis und Abrechnung über Eintägige Dienstreisen und Fahrten*

## HOW TO USE THIS BULLETIN

IMCOM-Europe publishes the Army in Europe Bulletin during the 1st week of each month. Only members of HQ USAREUR staff offices, HQ IMCOM-Europe staff offices, and the United States Army Civilian Human Resources Agency, Northeast / Europe Region, may submit items for publication in the Army in Europe Bulletin.

Personnel assigned to USAREUR major subordinate and specialized commands may submit items for publication, provided the request is sent through the command's affiliated HQ USAREUR staff office.

Personnel assigned to United States Army garrisons may also submit items for publication, provided the request is sent through the IMCOM-Europe SGS.

Personnel with questions or comments about this bulletin may contact the editor by telephone (mil 544-1460) or by e-mail: *USARMY Sembach IMCOM Europe Mailbox PUBSMail*.

---

For the Director:

ROBERT L. MYERS  
Chief of Staff

Official:



DWAYNE J. VIERGUTZ  
Chief, Army in Europe  
Document Management

**APPENDIX A**

**HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Alcohol**

In accordance with the Army Substance Abuse Program, official and unofficial functions will not encourage or glamorize the consumption of alcohol. Alcohol consumption during duty hours is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the first general officer or Senior Executive Service officer in the supervisory chain or, if not reasonably available, the garrison commander. AR 215-1 prohibits using alcoholic beverages as prizes. All official events must have an adequate supply of nonalcoholic beverages available. Commanders should also reinforce using designated drivers or other suitable programs for transportation from any event. Regardless of the event, all personnel are responsible for their own decisions and actions.

**Attendance at Parties**

Employees (including contractor employees) are free to attend private off-duty parties hosted by Federal employees. Food, refreshments, and entertainment may be shared. Subordinates may bring hospitality gifts, such as a bottle of wine, but the gifts must not be extravagant. Hospitality gifts are not limited to \$10 in value, but this limit should be used as a guide. Hospitality gifts from contractor employees, however, are strictly limited to \$20 in value. Ideally, hospitality gifts will be edible.

**Contractor Employees**

Contractor employees may attend office celebrations. Contractors, however, must decide if and under which conditions their employees may attend.

➤ Contractor employees may not be tasked with or asked to volunteer to organize holiday events.

➤ Contractor-employee time off and the nature of the time off (leave, personal day, administrative absence) are between contractors and their employees. No official encouragement should be given for someone else's employees to leave their workplace for an office celebration. They may be told, however, that they are welcome to attend.

**Gifts**

Gifts may be exchanged among employees in the workplace during the holiday season. Employees, however, should be mindful of appearances and avoid creating the perception of partiality or favoritism. Gift-giving should be equitable and democratic in spirit. No one should be left out of the gift exchange. Some specific rules apply:

➤ Supervisors generally may not accept gifts from Federal employees who earn less money than they do. However, an exception to this policy allows Federal employees to give holiday gifts to superiors if the value of the gift does not exceed \$10 and contributions are not solicited from other employees. There are no restrictions on the cost of gifts given to peers and subordinates.

➤ Federal employees generally may not accept gifts from contractors, contractor employees, or other outside sources. They may, however, accept gifts (other than cash) costing less than \$20 as long as the employee does not accept more than \$50 worth of gifts from the contractor (defined as the entire contractor company, not an individual contractor) during the calendar year.

Federal employees may accept free attendance at a private party hosted by contractors or contractor employees if any of the following conditions apply; if none apply, the invitation must be declined or the employee must pay the fair-market value of the attendance:

➤ The average cost per guest does not exceed \$20.

➤ The invitation is based on a bona fide personal relationship with the host.

- The party qualifies as a “widely attended gathering” of more than 20 attendees and the employee’s supervisor, after consulting an ethics counselor, determines that attendance is in the organization’s interest.
- The contractor is having an open house.
- The employee has been assigned to represent the Army at an official function (such as an embassy event).

### **Sensitivity to Others**

Employees should be sensitive to the fact that not everyone celebrates the same holidays. The same consideration should be used when decorating common areas. All Federal employees must be aware of the Constitutional restrictions against Government endorsement of religion. Employees should direct questions about this to their servicing judge advocate or chaplain’s office.

### **Use of Government Time and Resources**

Some holiday celebrations may occur on Government time. Celebrations should be kept low key. Time used to attend an event (for example, a potluck in the office or a luncheon at a restaurant) is usually not an issue. The time used to prepare for the event, however, must be limited. Supervisors may permit employees to use some duty time for preparations, but the preparations should not be a significant part of any employee’s duties or duty day.