

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Department of Army Civilians

1. Will all employees working for Headquarters, USAREUR in the greater Heidelberg area relocate with the Command?

With few exceptions, employees who are in a permanent or continuing position and assigned to Headquarters, USAREUR, will be relocating with the Command. Employees will receive advance notice of a Management Directed Reassignment approximately 120 days before the organization's move date. The only exceptions will be for employees who are exercising their return rights to CONUS or are registered in the DoD Priority Placement Program and are expected to be placed into a position in CONUS prior to the effective date of the move. All employees issued a notice of reassignment will receive counseling from the gaining CPAC on PCS eligibility and other entitlements associated with the Command's relocation.

2. Does a supervisor have the right to reassign me?

Yes. Supervisors may reassign an employee when they have a legitimate reason for the reassignment and the vacant position is at the same grade, or rate of pay as the employee's present position.

3. What is the notice period for US civilian employees to relocate?

Employees will be given a reasonable notice period of their reassignment. Generally, employees will receive at least 120 calendar days advance notice. However, the time period may be adjusted in some cases based upon mission requirements.

4. Will town hall meetings be conducted?

Yes, town hall meetings will be conducted. Additionally, there are several websites containing information about the relocation. Continue to check out the US Army Europe homepage at: <http://www.hqusareur.army.mil/default.htm> and the Civilian Personnel Directorate's website at: <http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/content/CPD/index.html>.

5. Will telework be implemented or offered to employees during the Command's relocation?

USAREUR's telework policy is currently under development. Managers may allow telework on a case by case basis in accordance with the Department of Defense telework policy at: http://www.cpms.osd.mil/telework/telework_index.aspx.

6. Will civilian employees be authorized excused absence to relocate?

Civilian employees are authorized time to conduct activities required for relocation, such as in/out processing, packing and receipt of household goods, etc. Additionally, supervisors will approve, as mission requirements allow, up to five days of excused absence for employees to find housing so that door to door moves may be accomplished.

7. Does travel time (by shuttle or POV) to the new duty station count as part of an employee's work day?

No, once you are officially reassigned to your new PDS, travel time to and from your new PDS will not be considered as part of the work day. According, to the Fair Labor Standards Act and 5CFR 551.422, "An employee who travels from home before the regular workday begins and returns home at the end of the workday is engaged in "normal home to work" travel; such travel is not hours of work". For those employees who are required to report for work at a duty station that is not their official duty station, comp time for travel may be authorized. See "Travel Time during the Duty Day" in Section 2 (I) in this guide).

8. Who will issue travel orders for Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) employees?

The Fort Huachuca CPAC has Human Resources Specialists located in Heidelberg who will issue the travel orders to the DCIPS employees. All other HQ USAREUR employees will receive their travel orders from the new CPAC. In most cases this will be the Wiesbaden CPAC.

9. Will I be eligible for early retirement if I choose not to relocate with the Command?

Employees who decline a MDR outside of their commuting area may be eligible for a Discontinued Service Retirement (DSR). A DSR provides an immediate, possibly reduced, annuity for eligible employees who decline a MDR. In order to qualify for a DSR, employees must submit a written declination of their MDR (to the Army Benefit Center – Civilian) and meet age and length of service requirements (25 years of creditable service at any age or at least age 50 with 20 years of service.)

For additional information, review the Discontinued Service Retirement relocation bulletin found on the USAREUR G1, Civilian Personnel Directorate webpage at:

<http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/content/CPD/index.html>.

10. Will Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) be offered to employees not willing to relocate with the Command?

There is no authority to offer VERA and VSIP based on the relocation.

11. Both my spouse and I are Federal employees stationed in Heidelberg and are currently employed by organizations relocating to communities outside of Heidelberg. What are our options if our respective organizations are moving at different times and/or relocating to different communities?

If both you and your spouse are employed by organizations that are relocating, you should discuss any potential issues with your move(s) with your respective supervisors. An open dialog between you, your spouse, and your respective leadership will help to lessen the potential impact these decisions may have on your family during this transition.

If both you and your spouse's organizations are relocating to different communities, you will have to make a decision concerning which reassignment(s) to accept/decline, if you both want to be employed in the same community. Spouses relocating to their new duty stations at different times will have to decide when they will move (if flexibility exists) and should work with their respective organizations to help ease the transition.

For additional information, see Section 1, paragraph J of this document and the Dual Employee Households relocation bulletin found on the USAREUR G1, Civilian Personnel Directorate webpage at: <http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/content/CPD/docs/mainPage/transformation/Bulletin-8.pdf>

12. Can I request a tour curtailment? What is the process and possible obligation?

Yes, employees may request tour curtailments. Your first step should be to set up a meeting with your supervisor to discuss the reason(s) for your request to determine if there are possible alternatives to tour curtailment. If after this meeting, you wish to formalize your request for curtailment, submit the request in writing through your Command channels to the appropriate approval authority.

If you have been here less than 1 year or taken Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) within the past 12 months, you will also need to request a release from transportation expenditures incurred by the Government on your behalf.

Keep in mind that curtailment of an overseas assignment can be extremely costly to you if your tour curtailment request is denied. You could be liable for both the move to the overseas area as well as your return to CONUS.

For additional information, review the Tour Management relocation bulletin found on the USAREUR G1, Civilian Personnel Directorate webpage at: <http://www.per.hqsareur.army.mil/content/CPD/index.html>.

13. Will tour extensions be automatically approved during the period of the Command's move?

No. Employees do not have an automatic entitlement to tour extensions. During the move, managers will maintain their current authority to extend or not extend employees based upon mission requirements and organizational needs.

14. Will the five-year limit on overseas tours be "removed" during the Command's relocation?

No, the five year limit will not be "removed". It is Department of Defense (DoD) policy to limit the time appropriated fund civilian employees in the competitive service spend in foreign areas to 5 years. This typically equates to one foreign area tour (three years) and one renewal agreement tour of duty (24 months). The DoD policy was established to provide management the necessary flexibility to regulate the ever-changing foreign area workforce requirements, provide a continuous flow of jobs for newly assigned personnel, and to provide career-enhancing opportunities for continental US (CONUS)-based employees.

HQ, USAREUR recognizes the need for management flexibility to perform mission essential functions and manage their workforce. Accordingly, USAREUR's policy provides approving officials the authority to extend an employee beyond the five-year limit. Tour extensions are granted based on mission requirements and organizational needs provided the employee meets the DoD criteria for extension.

15. What types of reasons might justify extending an employee beyond the five-year limit?

Managers may consider reasons such as:

- The continued need for an employee's skills or corporate knowledge when there is a documented history of difficulty filling the position.
- The need to maintain stability during mandated organizational staff reductions.
- The assignment of new missions or tasks to the organization.
- A requirement to keep an employee to complete a special project.
- Simultaneous DEROs of other employees in the same career field.

16. Will the Government fund my move, and if so, what are my entitlements? I currently have a transportation entitlement to return to the United States.

PCS entitlements will be determined in accordance with the JTR II. Unless you already live within a 10 mile radius of your new duty station, you may be authorized a PCS move. Once you accept a management directed reassignment, you will be instructed to complete a Request for Travel Orders (RFO) – Europe Transformation form, which is located at Appendix E and on the USAREUR, G1, CPD website at: <http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/content/CPD/index.html>. Upon completion of a RFO, your travel entitlements will be determined by your organization. Entitlements under a government paid relocation include: (1) shipment of household goods (HHGs) of up to 18,000 pounds, (2) temporary storage of HHGs, if needed, (3) mileage for traveling by POV to the new permanent duty station, to facilitate the actual move, and (4) miscellaneous expense allowance.

17. Both, my spouse and I are civilian career employees, each of us having our own transportation entitlement; will both of us have PCS entitlements to the new PDS?

Yes, both of you may be eligible for PCS entitlements to the same location if you otherwise meet JTR requirements. Refer to question #16 above for additional information.

18. I currently do not have a transportation entitlement to the United States; will I still be eligible for a Government-funded move during the relocation?

Yes; however, the intra-theatre move will not create a transportation entitlement to the United States.

19. I am a civilian career employee who came to the overseas area under my own Government orders; my spouse is a member of the uniformed services, who will also relocate to the Wiesbaden area. What are our entitlements?

If you are eligible for PCS entitlements and married to a member in the military, you are authorized a PCS when transferred in the Government's interest, even if your military spouse is also transferred at the same time to the same location. However, you may not receive PCS travel and transportation allowance payments for the same purpose or expense. You may combine your respective weight allowances and ship up to the allowable amounts specified by the JTR 2 and JFTR.

20. Once I have moved to the new PDS, how long will I be obligated to remain at the new permanent duty station?

All employees who PCS from Heidelberg to Wiesbaden will sign a transportation agreement, which obligates the employee to remain in government service for 12 months or risk incurring the cost of the move.

21. Although I live about 100 kilometers from my new PDS and PCS orders were issued to me, I would be willing to commute; will I be able to maintain my current residence and continue to receive LQA?

Yes, even if you are eligible for a PCS move, you can choose not to request travel orders and continue to reside in your current residence and commute to your new PDS. This will not change your eligibility for LQA.

22. Can authorization of rental agent (Immobilien) fees be considered to ease relocation stress?

Yes, the rental agent fees and other fees or expenses associated with the move of the household may be reimbursed up to a certain limit, in accordance with the provisions of the JTR II, Chapter 5, Part G, Paragraph C5310. The claim would be filed as a Miscellaneous Expense Allowance. An employee without a family may be eligible to claim actual itemized expenses for up to one week's salary for the employee or the rate of a GS-13, step 10 (whichever is the lesser amount). An employee with a family may be eligible to claim up to two weeks salary or the rate of a GS-13, step 10 (whichever is the lesser amount). Employees should submit appropriate expenses on DD Form 1351-2, Travel Voucher.

23. If I prefer to move to the new PDS earlier than directed, will the Government reimburse me for the move or will it be at my own cost?

If you choose to move earlier than directed to your new duty station, you will be responsible for the costs associated with that move.

24. If I volunteer to go in advance to Wiesbaden, will I be reimbursed for mileage?

No. There are no provisions to pay for commuting costs between your residence and your duty station.

25. I am eligible for and receive LQA now; can I relocate my family to Wiesbaden in advance and receive LQA for that area?

No; the applicable LQA rate for an eligible employee is determined by the duty location. If your official duty station is Heidelberg, then the rate applicable for Heidelberg is used for reimbursement of living expenses, irrespective of where your family resides in Germany.

26. I am not eligible for LQA now. If receive a management directed reassignment to Wiesbaden (or another duty location) and am eligible for a PCS move to the new PDS, will I become eligible for LQA?

USAREUR has authorized the use of granting LQA based on the MDR to employees who are currently not eligible for the allowance, under certain conditions. Authorization of LQA is not automatic and must be requested by Primary Staff Principals for employees and approved by the USAREUR, G1, CPD. The employee must meet certain eligibility criteria, for example, the employee must be at or above the GS-09 grade level. The employee must be authorized a PCS move to the new PDS and the employee's new residence must be closer to the new duty station than it is to the old duty station. The authorization to grant the allowance does not extend to employees who are already living in the area of the new PDS. Final approval of the allowance rests with USAREUR G1, CPD.

27. I am eligible for and receive LQA now; my MDR is effective 15 February 2012 but I cannot move my household until 01 June 2012. When do I get the LQA rate for Wiesbaden?

Since you are an LQA recipient now, the LQA rate applicable to the new duty station is effective on the day of the official reassignment, e.g., 15 February 2012, irrespective of when you physically move to the greater Wiesbaden area. Keep in mind that LQA is based on actual expenses so the rate you receive may not change.

28. Will Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA) be authorized for the household move to my new PDS?

Yes, if you are eligible for LQA you will generally be authorized TQSA for up to 7 days. The intent of the 120 day advance notice of the MDR is to provide employees sufficient notice to facilitate door-to-door moves. However, extensions may be approved on a case by case basis when an employee is unable to secure a new residence when they are vacating their old residence.

29. My spouse and I are both civilian career employees whose offices will relocate to Wiesbaden but not at the same time; her office's move will be delayed by approximately six to nine months; we are eligible for LQA. Will either one of us be able to receive either separate maintenance allowance or compensation for the commute during the transition phase?

No; there is no authorization to pay separate maintenance allowance or compensate for mileage in such instances.

30. I purchased a home in the Heidelberg area; will I get LQA when I move to Wiesbaden?

Provided you are eligible for LQA, you may get the allowance for only one residence that you designate as permanent.