

# *Customs News Release*

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## **Customs helps guests to get around in Germany**

*By Kai Vollmer, Customs Specialist, U.S. Army Customs Agency – Europe*

**WIESBADEN, Germany** – One advantage of being stationed in Germany is that friends and family can visit you and travel around Europe. But you must first receive customs approval if you want to lend them your USAREUR-AF plated vehicle for their excursions.

However, you do not require the approval, if any member of your household who has a USAREUR-AF driver's license, is going to be in the vehicle while your guests drive.

To obtain an *Exception to Policy for Authorization to Operate a Privately Owned Vehicle (AEA Form 550-175D)*, visit your local U.S. Forces customs office and the customer service personnel will assist in filling out the application form. If you would like to have the paperwork ready before your relatives or friends arrive, you should bring along your vehicle registration and legible copies of their passports, stateside driver's licenses and either an official German translation of their licenses or an International Driving Permit (IDP).

In the United States, International Driving Permits are issued by the American Automobile Association (AAA) only and come as a grey (5.8 x 4.1") paper booklet. IDPs issued by other providers, especially online versions, are not genuine and are considered invalid. For visitors from countries other than the USA, please ask your local customs office if an International Driving Permit or translation is required. Also, please make sure that your automobile insurance covers your guests.

It is also important to note that your guests cannot be residents of Germany or plan to establish residency in Germany and must be 18 years or older.

For visiting dependents the USACA-E will issue AEA Form 190-1APQ for up to 90 days.

Your guests can use this exception to policy to drive a USAREUR-AF registered POV in Germany for up to 90 days within a six-month time period. The 90-day period begins on the day the visitor arrives in Germany or any other country of the European Union. The document must remain in the car when your guests use your vehicle independently, along with their passports, the vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and their International Driving Permits (or official translations of their licenses).

Driving in Germany is a tax-free privilege for U.S. Forces personnel and their family members, which is why the customs authorization is required for guests. This exception to policy does not allow your guests to buy gas at AAFES/ESSO gas stations or use your AAFES fuel ration card. Likewise, friends or family visiting Germany who rent a car may not use AAFES gas stations or fuel ration cards.

Your guests can have a great time driving around Europe if you plan ahead. If you have questions E-mail or call any US Forces Customs office to find out more, or consult the customs web site at <https://www.europeafrica.army.mil/customs/> for more details on procedures and locations of customs offices.