



Environmental Newsletter

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Service information

If you see this in your neighborhood, call the MP!

+49 611-143-548 7777/7778



An overflowing garbage collection point: Overfilled bins and improperly disposed bulk waste highlight the need for regular collection and proper waste segregation.

The Recycling Center is open:

Mo. - Fr.: 12:00 – 15:30

Tu.: 06:45—11:15 AM

For information, call

DSN: 548-4071 or 548-4029,

Comm: +49 611-143-548-4071/4029

Preserving the Mainz Sand Dunes – A Shared Responsibility

The Mainz Sand Dunes, located between the Mainz districts of Gonsenheim and Mombach, are a rare and ecologically significant nature reserve. They formed over 12,000 years ago as wind-blown sands accumulated after the last Ice Age. The nutrient-poor soils create a unique habitat for endangered plants and animals, including orchids, wild bees, and lizards. As part of the Natura 2000 conservation network, their preservation is essential.

This area is also designated as a Natura 2000 conservation site, highlighting its ecological significance within Europe. The combination of a dry, warm climate and specialized soil conditions allows rare steppe vegetation to flourish. However, the dunes are not just a protected natural reserve—they are also officially U.S. Army property. The site has been used as a military training ground since 1798 and remains under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden. Military and conservation efforts are carefully coordinated to ensure that both training activities and environmental protection can coexist.



Figure 1: Landscape of the Mainz Sand Dunes

The U.S. Army plays an active role in maintaining open landscapes and preventing the spread of invasive species. Activities such as controlled military vehicle movement, selective clearing, and habitat restoration contribute to the preservation of this fragile ecosystem. While these efforts support conservation, the increasing recreational use of the dunes by local residents and visitors has posed challenges. Pet waste contamination, off-trail hiking, and human disturbance threaten the balance of this habitat.

Guidelines for Visitors

To protect the Mainz Sand Dunes, all visitors are expected to:

- **Stay on designated paths** to minimize disturbance to rare plant and animal species.
- **Keep dogs on a leash** and clean up after pets to prevent soil contamination.
- **Follow posted signs and warnings** regarding restricted areas and safety protocols.
- **Respect military regulations**—the site remains an active training ground, and entering military zones is at your own risk. Visitors must comply with any instructions given by U.S. Military Police or Garrison Wiesbaden personnel.

Your cooperation is essential in maintaining the ecological integrity of this protected landscape while ensuring safety within the military training area.

2. Rabbit Fever (Tularemia) – What You Need to Know in the Wiesbaden Area

Rabbit Fever, officially known as Tularemia, is a rare but serious bacterial disease that affects wild animals and can also infect humans and pets. While overall risk remains low, confirmed cases have occurred in Germany and in the Wiesbaden area, so it's important to stay informed and take precautions.

Pathways of Exposure

Tularemia is caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis* and is primarily transmitted through direct contact with infected animals, especially wild hares, rabbits, or rodents. This includes touching or handling sick or dead wildlife. According to health authorities, infection generally requires close or intense contact, but due to the high infectiousness of the bacteria, even small amounts may pose a risk. Human-to-human transmission does not occur.

Impact on Pets

Pets, especially dogs and cats, can contract Tularemia. Dogs are generally more resistant and may only show mild signs like fever, tiredness, or swollen lymph nodes. Severe illness is uncommon.

Cats are more vulnerable and may develop fever, appetite loss, mouth ulcers, and swollen lymph nodes. In some cases, the disease can progress quickly and become life-threatening without treatment. If your pet shows unusual symptoms after outdoor activity, contact a veterinarian promptly.

Current Case Numbers

According to recent reports, Germany recorded 92 human Tularemia cases in 2023. In Hessen, there have been about 10 confirmed cases since early 2023, with isolated cases reported in the Wiesbaden area. While still rare, the presence of cases nearby highlights the importance of awareness.

Recommendations for the Community

To reduce the risk of exposure:

- Always keep dogs on a leash during walks, especially in wooded or grassy areas. This helps prevent contact with wild animals or carcasses.
- Avoid handling wild animals, even if they appear dead or injured. Report sightings to local authorities.
- Practice good hygiene after outdoor activities—wash hands thoroughly and prevent pets from drinking from puddles or streams.
- Check pets regularly for signs of illness if they've been in natural areas.

If you encounter a dead or injured rodent on-post, please contact DPW Customer Care during working hours (Mon–Fri, 0715–1200 and 1245–1600) at DSN 548-4357. Outside those hours, call Fire & Emergency Services at DSN 112 or COMM: 0611–143-548-0112.

3. Springtime Mold Watch: Prevent & Protect

Mold Prevention & Response

As spring nears and indoor humidity rises, homes may show signs of mold due to limited winter ventilation. Heated air combined with moisture creates ideal conditions for mold, which can damage property and affect indoor air quality, potentially causing allergies or respiratory issues. Addressing ventilation now can help prevent further growth.

Moisture control is the key to mold prevention!

Prevention Tips

Maintain good airflow and manage humidity levels. Air out rooms briefly with windows fully open, rather than tilted, to avoid condensation. Keep temperatures stable and use exhaust fans in kitchens and bathrooms. Wipe down condensation on windows and walls—using a squeegee on bathroom glass helps too.

Cleaning & Treatment

For small mold spots on nonporous surfaces (tile, glass, metal), clean with soap or detergent. Natural options include vinegar (kills and prevents regrowth) and borax (no rinse needed). For stubborn spots, diluted bleach can be used on hard surfaces—always wear gloves and ventilate well.

Product Tip

OxyClean 'Mold and Mildew' is an effective product for treating and preventing mold. It's available at the PX, Commissary, and Shopette.

When to Get Help

If mold spreads beyond small areas, avoid DIY removal. Larger infestations can release spores and should be handled by professionals. For ongoing issues, contact the Environmental Division for support.

