

Kaiserslautern Military Community Retiree Activities Office

Fact Sheet: Last Will and Testament—A German Will

BLUF: Each case is different, there is no standard answer who needs a will and which type is best for their particular situation. If Americans/Foreigners live in Germany and are not sure if they need an American and/or German will, it is highly recommended to make an appointment at one of the local Legal Centers and talk to one of the German attorney advisors, free of charge.

-- The German attorney can advise on and recommend if a will is needed at all, if an American will suffices and/or needs to be translated, if a German will is recommended and which type of will is preferred. He provides expert advice for the customer based on their specific situation, family status and relations, citizenship and residency, location of property and real estate, etc.

-- If there is a big family and or step- children involved, one should know about Inheritance laws. (**See Fact Sheet—Inheritance**)

Note: At the same time, the German attorney advisors at the military legal centers are not authorized to actually prepare a German will for their customers.

-- In Germany there are two types of wills, the holographic and the notarized one (handschriftlich und notariell). If neither a holographic nor notarized will exist, the estate will be settled by-law.

-----If one does not own property or real estate, does not have a large family, especially no children, siblings and relatives, things could seem fairly easy and a holographic will in German could be sufficient. This means the person has to handwrite his/her own will in its entirety, from the beginning to the end, starting with a headliner like "Letzter Wille" or "Testament", add city, date it, and sign it on the bottom.

-----It is also possible for a couple to hand write a joint will (Gemeinschaftliches Testament) meaning only one handwrites their wishes and both have to sign and date it, no witnesses are required. In the case a holographic will is desired, the attorney advisor can help with input for that will, but cannot write it themselves for the person.

Legal Center Contact Numbers: Kleber 0631-411-8848 or DSN 483-8848

Ramstein AB: 06371-47-5911 or DSN 480-5911

Contacts: Via telephone at DSN 480-5486 or Civilian 06371-47-5486 (Leave a message if no one is in) or write an e-mail to: 86aw.rao@ramstein.af.mil

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