

## ECONOMY HOUSING FACT SHEET

5 April 2016

### **RENTAL LISTINGS:**

There are many resources that can be utilized to obtain rental information; however, to ensure that rental properties have been inspected and approved by Housing Referral, rental listings can be obtained by creating an account on [www.homes.mil](http://www.homes.mil), that is the only DOD sponsored website.

### **REAL ESTATE AGENTS:**

The use of a real estate agent, or German "Immobilien," is usually not necessary due to the availability of off base housing and should only be used as a last resort. Local real estate agents charge a finder's fee usually equal to one month's rent or more. Reimbursement of a realtor or Immobilien fee is NOT authorized by the Housing Office, and therefore, would be out-of-pocket expenses for the service member.

### **RENTAL CONTRACTS:**

A rental contract is a legal binding document between you and the Landlord. The Housing Office is not a party to the agreement, but merely certifies it's correct and that personnel assigned to the KMC have accepted an economy unit for occupancy. In the event of disputes between Landlord and Tenant, except for the terms and conditions specifically addressed in the contract, the provision of local rental laws will apply. The Legal Office is also a source of information for German Rental Laws and Landlord/Tenant issues.

### **SECURITY DEPOSITS**

A security deposit protects the Landlord from financial loss if Tenant causes damage to the property or does not clean property when rental agreement/lease is terminated. The security deposit **cannot** be used as the last month's rent. It is usually equal to one month's rent, but can be up to three month's rent.

**(MILITARY ONLY) ADVANCE OHA:** Ask a Housing Counselor about advance OHA for security deposit or advance rent. The Counselor can provide a blank copy of the AF 1039, and the member must have the form signed by their commander before taking it to finance. Army members must go to their S-1 to request advance OHA on the 4187. Deferred security deposits must be paid back to finance when terminating the lease.

### **COMMENTS:**

If you locate a housing unit that is not listed with Housing Referral, an inspection must be performed to ensure minimum adequacy standards are met and rental cost is reasonable. Call Housing Referral at 0631-536-6643/6659 to schedule an off-base inspection and be sure to let them know if you are in TLA status. Contracts will not be approved and housing allowances (OHA/LQA) will not be initiated prior to the inspection.

**VAT -Value Added Tax:** A 19% VAT is levied on all utility bills. **EXCEPTION:** water is 7%. A program exists to help service members save the VAT on utility bills. Contact your local VAT Office (Ramstein AB and Pulaski Barracks) to check your eligibility and complete necessary paperwork to sign up for the Utilities Tax Avoidance Program (UTAP) so you can get the tax relief. Also, due to the number of families who depart without paying their utility bills, some utility companies will charge a deposit.

### **DISCRIMINATION:**

The Air Force is committed to equal opportunity and treatment for all DoD personnel seeking housing, and to eliminate discrimination against DoD personnel in housing. It is the responsibility of the Housing Office representatives to counsel members on DoD equal opportunity policy in community housing and member's obligation to immediately report suspected discrimination. Any act, policy or procedure that arbitrarily denies equal treatment in housing because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or familial status to an individual or group of individuals must be reported to the Housing Office immediately. The Housing Flight Chief will immediately initiate a review in cooperation with installation and community agencies.