

ESSENTIAL PROPERTY INFORMATION – BFG

The following information can be found in more detail in your Accommodation booklet or in the material available from your Community Support Worker and Ramstein HIVE. It is vital that you are aware of the following immediately upon moving into your Married Quarter and throughout the lifetime of your tour. If you have any queries about any of these issues, please contact the DIO staff immediately.

Repairs and Maintenance

All properties are owned by individual landlords and not the British Forces. This means that if you need to report a routine, non-urgent repair, the DIO Work Services Clerk must then attempt to contact the landlord, who will then contact their own operative. The landlord will then advise DIO Works Services Clerk of a proposed appointment/timescale in which to complete the repair. The DIO Works Services Clerk will then contact you to check this is convenient. As you can appreciate, this can sometimes be a time consuming process if we are unable to contact people on the first attempt. Bear in mind that the DIO staff have very little, if any, influence over how long a landlord takes to arrange repairs and routine repairs can take up to three months to be completed.

In the event of an emergency repair, we will endeavour to have the necessary repairs undertaken as soon as is practically possible.

You must also be aware that as these properties are not owned by British Forces, in most cases, the landlord or the occupant are liable for the costs of any repairs. Repairs that are deemed to be "fair wear and tear" will be borne by the landlord.

Please ensure that when you are requesting a works service that you provide as much information as possible, including contact details and access times. Please include as detailed a summary as possible regarding the nature of the works required and not just a vague description such as "cooker not working". Please ensure that all works services requests are factual and not exaggerated in anyway to ensure adequate prioritising of all works services.

Any repairs that arise as a result of negligence, deliberate or accidental damage or failure to take relevant action to maintain the property will be the responsibility of the occupant.

Insurance

You are responsible for the behaviour of you, your family and pets throughout your time in Germany and many nationals will and do file claims against individuals who they believe have caused them a problem. It is advisable to procure Third Party Insurance to protect you against this. See your accommodation booklet for more information.

It is also strongly recommended that you have Tenants Liability Insurance to cover you against the costs of any accidental damage within your Married Quarter, especially at March Out. You should be aware that your landlord can decide on the level of works he wishes carried out to rectify any damages. If for example you break a single floor tile and it is impossible to source an identical replacement, you could be liable for the cost of re-tiling the full area, which could potentially cost you in excess of €1,000. Keep in mind that the cost of some materials in Germany differs greatly to their UK equivalents.

Shower/bath/basin drain rosettes and blockages

We have over recent months received a number of reports of leaks from plumbing appliances and on occasion this has been caused by occupants unscrewing the drain rosettes to clean/clear blockages and then re-fixing them. Can all occupants please be advised that they are not to use this practise – replacing the drain rosettes often results in a slight "shift" of their position, resulting in leaks. Any resulting damage sustained by anyone undertaking this action will be charged to the occupant accordingly. Please clear any blockages by using appropriate unblocking products (such as 'Drain-O) on sale in the Commissary or in local supermarkets – for further advice, please contact DIO staff.

A GUIDE TO COMBATING CONDENSATION AND MOULD IN SUBSTITUTE SERVICE FAMILY ACCOMMODATION (SSFA)

What is Condensation?

1. Condensation is the water produced when warm moist air or steam meets a cold surface such as windows, walls or floors. It is sometimes so severe that householders believe their windows leak or that their house is structurally damp. Condensation is often more of a problem in newer houses where doors and windows are more draught proof than in older properties, where there is central heating installed and there are no or fewer chimneys.
2. Although local weather conditions determine the initial moisture of the air, most water vapour inside a dwelling comes from the occupants and their activities. An average family produces about 12 kg of water vapour per day by breathing, cooking and washing. Flueless devices such as cookers release a significant quantity of water vapour. The wet construction process involved in an average brick house includes about 500 kg of water added to concrete, mortar and plaster. Most of this water evaporates into the air during the early months of occupancy. As a result, new properties have an initial 6 month drying-out allowance allocated to XY accounts from the date of build completion.
3. Condensation can cause mould growth on walls and can damage clothes and furnishings. Controlling it is a matter of reducing sources of water vapour to a minimum and finding the right balance between heating and ventilation in your particular house.

Dealing With Condensation and Mould

4. If you observe these measures, condensation will not be a serious problem but however careful you are, it may still occur to a lesser degree in certain weather conditions.
 - a. Always mop up condensation (on windowsills for example) as soon as you notice it. If it spills over, it may cause mould on walls or damp patches on carpets that are difficult to dry out.
 - b. If mould appears on walls or ceilings, wash it off carefully and straight away with a solution of one tablespoon of household bleach to a pint of warm water. If you give the mould spores time to get established, they will be more difficult to eradicate.
 - c. If mould appears on clothes or furnishings, brush off and air thoroughly. (If you are not going to wear clothes for some time, it is a good plan to have them cleaned before putting them away, preferably hung in polythene sheaths. However, make sure the air can circulate in the sheath).
5. Particular care should be taken to inspect for mould damage to walls behind portable wall units. These are often placed close to a wall, restricting the circulation of air, which would normally dry off any moisture present on the surface so preventing mould growth. If mould spores are allowed to establish the affected area needs to be given a fungicidal wash and decorated. This may be chargeable to the occupant if the cause was insufficient ventilation.

To Control Condensation

- When washing and drying clothes or cooking, keep kitchen door shut and open window.
- When bathing and after bathing, keep bathroom door shut and window open.
- Air your house every day. Every window in the house should be open for at least 10-15 minutes each day except in the coldest weather.
- Have bedroom windows slightly open at night, even the breath of a sleeping person contains a lot of water vapour.
- Take advantage of dry, sunny days to give your house a good airing; and don't forget the cupboards.
- Use extractor fans where fitted.
- NEVER block up air bricks, flues or ventilators. THIS COULD BE DANGEROUS.
- If you use paraffin or flueless gas heaters, keep the windows open a little (every gallon of paraffin burned produces 1¼ gallons of water!).
- Keep your house warm (consistent with fuel economy requirements) even if you are out during the day.

- A normal living room of, say, 45 m³ needs about 1.5 air changes per hour for the fresh air requirements of a family of four. An adequate supply of clean air is critical to occupants. The effect of air on health and comfort depends upon various factors, including its temperature, humidity and movement.
- Ventilation is necessary to prevent unduly high concentrations of carbon dioxide and water vapour. Further it is necessary to remove bacteria, odours, products of combustion etc.

6. Damage sustained due to inadequate ventilation will normally be charged to the occupant, including any associated call out fees and repairs.