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PRESS RELEASE

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TIPS ON HOW TO SHIP YOUR PET(S) HOME THIS SUMMER

Heidelberg, GE – The Installation Management Agency – Europe (IMA-E) is gearing up for the high volume of Soldiers and families leaving Europe this summer and have provided tips on how to make the shipping of your pet(s) home go smoothly.

Following these tips will assure an easier return of your pet(s) home:

Plan Ahead.

Ensure vaccinations and health records are up to date. All pets require a health certificate that is less than 10-days old at time of flight and a current rabies vaccination that is at least 30-days old but not older than one year. Animals not old enough to be rabies immunized prior to travel should obtain a memorandum from the veterinarian waiving this requirement. It is also very important to have at least two copies of your orders because it will help speed your pet through customs and a complete contact address and phone number in the U.S is required. It is also important to ask your sponsor or point of contact at your next duty station if any additional local or national pet restrictions apply.

Make Reservations.

Contact your local commercial travel office (SatoTravel) to make travel reservations for your pet and all members of your household after you receive Permanent Change Station (PCS) orders and have a confirmed household goods pick-up date. US air carrier websites contain information on rules, policies and procedures for pet travel on the aircraft. The information is general and subject to changes.

Be prepared.

The cost of shipping a pet can be expensive. All costs associated with shipping pets are the responsibility of the pet owner. Civilians may claim pet shipping expenses and mandatory quarantine fees as part of their miscellaneous expense allowance. This may not cover the entire cost of shipping a pet, but it may defer some of the costs.

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PET

Military members are entitled to have costs associated with the mandatory quarantine of a pet paid up to \$550 per PCS, and are given a Dislocation Allowance (DLA), which is designed to offset moving costs, such as pet shipment, not otherwise covered. Ensure shipping kennels or cages meet standards for size, ventilation, strength and design. Animals must have enough room to stand up and turn around and each species must have its own kennel with the exception of compatible cats and dogs of similar size. When in doubt use a larger kennel. Dogs and cats must be at least eight weeks old and must be weaned before traveling by air.

Instructions for feeding and providing water to the animal over a 24-hour period must be attached to the kennel. The 24-hour schedule will assist the airline in providing care for your animal in case it is diverted from its original destination. You as a pet owner are required to certify your pet had been offered food and water within four hours of transport, and the documentation must include the time and date of feeding. Food and water dishes must be securely attached and be accessible to caretakers without opening the kennel. Food and water must be provided to puppies and kittens every 12 hours if they are eight to 16 weeks old. Mature animals must be fed every 24 hours and given water every 12 hours.

Be Aware.

Restrictions on shipping pets are established to ensure animals are not exposed to extreme hot or cold temperatures. Restrictions can apply at originating, connecting, or terminating airport locations. You will be notified in advance if a restriction applies. If a restriction is enforced, your pet may not be able to fly on your scheduled flight. Your pet may be re-routed to another airport or held over until conditions at the origin or destination improve. Please understand that this is done to protect the welfare of your pet. Have a back-up plan just in case.

Commercial Pet Shippers.

An alternate option is to ship your pet through a commercial animal shipper. These companies have been around for decades and specialize in pet shipping. They offer daily departures, same day arrivals, boarding service, daily flights to over 200 U.S. airports, and kennels available in various sizes. The cost is more expensive; however, they can normally ship your pet when restrictions are enforced by the airlines. For a fee, they also offer pick-up services throughout Germany. The Soldier/family member will bear all costs and potential risks associated with using these companies.

There is no military entitlement to ship pets home when it's time to PCS. It is the responsibility of the service member to make arrangements and pay for the shipping costs. Please see the USAREUR Customs web site for more information (<http://www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/pets.htm>), or contact your local veterinary detachment office for more details.

