

Army to alter garrison gate services in Europe

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By U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- U.S. Army garrisons in Germany, Italy and Belgium plan to alter services at their gates beginning Aug. 1.

U.S. Army Europe and Installation Management Command Europe officials have developed a plan to adjust contract guard manpower to meet current Department of the Army standards, said Tom Blackwell of USAREUR's Office of the Provost Marshal.

The plan is a workable method to maintain services and provide security within budget limits, said Blackwell. As USAREUR continues its transformation, all parties will refine the plan and adjust man-hours as necessary. He stressed that the changes will not degrade installation security, and said any future changes will be managed to ensure a consistent level of protection.

OPM officials said that the changes may create delays for some drivers entering Army installations in theater during high-traffic periods. They said commanders may use other manpower to reduce the problem or consider adjusting work hours to reduce congestion.

To help ease waiting times, OPM has authorized a "trusted traveler program" to expedite access for DOD ID card holders entering installation gates.

"The trusted traveler program allows a car with several DOD ID card holders access to post by only scanning one ID card," said Blackwell. "The holder of the ID card will be asked to vouch for the remaining ID card holders in the vehicle."

He added that most vehicles enter installations occupied by a single person and suggested that carpooling could help ease the volume of traffic at installation gates.

Blackwell also recommended that anyone with an unregistered ID card register it now at their local Installation Access Control office in compliance with Army in Europe Regulation 190-16 (Installation Access Control).

"People approaching the gates with unregistered ID cards significantly increase customer wait times, especially during high traffic," Blackwell said. "When a gate guard checks a driver's or pedestrian's identification, the process takes less than 15 seconds," he said. "To manually look up an unregistered or forgotten ID card can take up to three minutes, pulling guards away from the lane and holding up traffic."

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