



Army Europe postal service centers remain open:

HEIDELBERG, Germany - Installation Management Command-Europe Region postal service centers remain open and continue to receive mail as officials prepare to implement plans to speedily get mail to its final destination once air-transport restrictions caused by volcanic ash are lifted in Europe.

Postal officials say part of the plan to keep mail moving is to store customer mail at regional or local distribution points until it can be transported to Frankfurt for airlift to CONUS processing points as quickly as possible once airlift becomes available.

“We realize how important the mail is to our Soldiers and Families, and we’re developing plans to ensure we are best able to get mail moving to and from theater as soon as possible,” said Alfred Lang, acting director, IMCOM Europe Region Host Nation Liaison Field Operating Activity. “We want customers to understand that we are still in the postal business. Until aviation officials lift the restrictions, we will safeguard customer mail and keep our customers informed of events.”

Officials continue to develop a workaround to the current stoppage of the flow of Military Postal Service (MPS) “intra-theater mail” commonly used to mail items from Families to deployed members or from individuals at one APO to another. MPS “intra-theater mail” is normally processed at the German Air Mail Terminal in Frankfurt, however that facility can no longer take mail due to a backlog.

Postal officials remind Families and friends of personnel deployed downrange that they can still use “the other mail” – email – or online telephone / video resources, such as Skype.

“We understand how much a box of goodies means to a Soldier downrange, and we will work to find a solution,” said Keith Jones, IMCOM Europe Region Host Nation Liaison Field Operating Activity, chief, postal operations branch.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO AVOID PROBLEMS?

Postal customers should conduct “personal postal assessments” to ensure they don’t lose track of postal transactions, such as bills they need to pay, wedding announcements they planned to send, or birthday cards to friends and family.

“Take time now to contact billing agencies to explain the situation. Many agencies will work with customers who call to explain delays associated with acts of nature or disasters,” said Stephen Blewett, IMCOM-Europe region counsel.

Individuals who pay bills by mail should mitigate potential monetary woes caused by late bill payment by contacting crediting agencies as soon as possible to explain the delayed payment.

Jones said, “We’re working with the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) to get a letter signed that bill payers can use when talking to billing agencies about late payments due to delayed mail. These letters can be obtained at garrison directorate of human resource offices.”

Some banks and crediting agencies provide customers with options to do wireless banking, such as scanning and sending in copies of bills and checks as a way to validate payment en route.

“We recommend people do some research and contact their crediting agencies to determine the best way to ensure financial obligations are met,” said Jones.

Postal officials say customers can expect an orderly transition from a backlog of delayed mail to a more normal environment once flights resume.

Postal officials are currently assessing each garrison’s storage capacity and throughput capability – how much mail can be moved each day – to better assess when mail can be moved. Officials will let customers know as soon as possible after mail flights continue about how long mail may take to be delivered.

Postal officials encourage all customers to stay informed by watching the news, visiting local garrison websites, and contacting their local postal service centers for periodic updates.