

Stavanger, Norway Frequently Asked Questions

I have an EFMP family member. Can we come to Norway?

EFMP cases are handled individually. Typically, you can not be assigned to Stavanger, Norway if you have an EFMP family member. If a family member is identified as EFMP after your arrival, you will most likely be PCSed to a new location that can support your EFMP situation. We do not have an American doctor on station. All care is received through the Norwegian medical system. Some medications are not available in Norway and some services are not provided. In some cases the service is provided but it takes too long to get into the Norwegian system to get an appointment. Other cases, it is not cost effective for the medical care in Norway for your situation. If you are not sure about your specific situation, ask your sponsor to put you in touch with our Medical Station. In all cases, the medical station should know about any medical issues prior to your orders being produced.

How much does it cost to insure a vehicle, the annual registration fee, and any other misc. costs?

Are there any other requirements? Registration and inspection happens initially and requires a re-inspection every 2 yrs. Expect a charge of \$150-200 per vehicle to have it inspected and registered. Insurance premiums are reasonable. Rules: Parking lights must be clear and the VIN must be engraved into the body of the vehicle engine compartment (This can be completed here). Gasoline is currently \$8.00-\$10.00 per gallon

How easy is it to communicate in English with locals, particularly when it comes to shopping?

Almost everyone can speak English at some level. The exception is frequently elderly people educated prior to World War II.

What is the average monthly cost/availability for a family of five for the following?

International and local telephone service package: This is possibly the least expensive service in Norway. An average of \$150-\$200 per month is the average amount for a personal package. This includes approximately 15 hours of calls per month to the US.

Please Note: If you have computer access at home it's possible to speak to friends and family anywhere in the world for little or no cost. This is achieved by having both you and your contacts download a FREE program from www.skype.com. By doing this and purchasing a head set (usually inexpensive) you can call directly from computer to computer for no charge. Even if your contact does not have a computer in their home you can still call via your computer to their home telephone for a very low charge.

Cellular phone service for local and international calls. Many companies offer either a pay as you go or a full option plan.

Satellite cable (would we need to bring a satellite dish and what brands are recommended?) It will depend on what your requirements are. There are companies that offer a variety of TV packages. You will receive one dish and a decoder issued to you for AFN (FREE). It costs approximately 1,000 NOK to have the dish installed.

Utilities (to include heating/cooling/gas/garbage service, etc.) The heating is electrical. You do receive approximately \$500 a month for utilities. Winter months are more expensive as it is cooler and darker outside. Most homes have some type of wood burning fire place or stove. Wood can be purchased locally by individual packs or by volume. Wood is a great alternative heating choice and will help keep your electric bills lower.

Cooling you just don't need it! Garbage and water fees are also included.

Computer internet (DSL?) Depending on where you live, there are several options available for high speed internet connections. Some companies offer packages that include cable tv, internet and phone service.

Groceries (what kinds of food are available, is there a post BX, commissary, etc.?) We have a shopette/commissary/class 6/BX combined in one building. It has basic need items. It is possible for them to special order for you as well. The shopette also has a selection of frozen meats and a variety

of frozen products. Fresh fruits and vegetables can be obtained at the local store and are reasonably priced. You can shop online for things that aren't carried at the shopette.

Renters insurance. We use State Farm. Is there a local requirement for this; recommendations?

Renters insurance is not required but is HIGHLY recommended. Your current insurance provided or USAA can give you a quote. There are a number of local companies available as well.

What information can be provided on expected rent deposits and policies? Does MIHA cover move-in costs adequately in your experience? Deposit are normally required if you have pets and equal one months rent. Finance can forward you an advance to cover this amount and it can be repaid when you PCS out. MIHA is intended to offset the cost of moving in. It should cover most of your expenses, but it may not. The amount covered will depend on each individual's experiences.

I can double check with TMO here, but what can you tell me on what type of furniture, weight allowances, and government storage may be available if selected for the assignment? Refer to the JFTR or country instructions. This is a full weight allowance location. Also, concurrent travel is automatically approved.

What type of family activities are available either locally, at school? The International School of Stavanger offers many family activities throughout the year. Most activities are open to the public. You can visit their website for more information.

SVS offers many activities that are family oriented. SVS offers many activities that give you the chance to get out and about to enjoy Norway.

Does DoDDS cover all tuition costs on children attending school in Stavanger?

The Stavanger area is not a DoDDS (Department of Defense Dependent Schools) area. Education here is covered by Non Department of Defense (NonDoD). Most kids attend the [International School of Stavanger](#). There are other school options available. All of these are private schools that NonDoD covers tuition costs for our students each year. IMPORTANT: Registration must be completed through the School Liaison Officer in order for NonDoD funding to be obtained.

What additional expenses can we expect? There are additional costs for field trips. Some field trips are even to other countries. What a great opportunity! Sporting events could cost extra as well. School supplies are not provided by the school and can be expensive in Norway. It is a good idea to bring with you plenty of general school supplies. If you plan to send your kids to the International School of Stavanger, their list of school supplies can be found on their website (www.isstavanger.no).

What American items would you recommend we bring with us that are hard to find, not available or too costly in Stavanger? It may be beneficial to bring extra windshield wiper blades, oil filters and supplies to change your own oil, as well as any parts you might think you may need, such as snow tires. Most things you will require are available here, if not you can order online. There are some items that can not be mailed. If you have a home computer and printer, consider sending printer ink in your household goods. Also, make up is very, very expensive on the economy and is not available at the shopette.

Note: You can not ship oil in your household goods but you can buy it in the BX.

Is it recommended we have snow tires or chains for our vehicle(s)? You will need good snow tires in the winter, mainly for icy road conditions. In reference to having chains- while I have not heard of anyone using them, it may be a good idea to have them available in the car especially if you are traveling in the mountains for [ski trips](#) during the winter season. See the Vehicle Registration Handbook for more information.

What facilities are offered on base/post (i.e., gym, post office, money exchange, TLF, etc.)? We have a post office, finance office, and beauty/barber shop on the base. Active duty receives a free membership to a local gym. You can get a family membership for about \$70-\$80 per year. Children must be 16 years of age to become a member. If you are a single member with children less than 16 you do require a family membership.

Where would you get vehicle oil changed and/or maintenance done and how expensive on average? Auto repair in general is expensive. Again, you can not ship oil but you can ship or mail oil filters and other non-flammable parts. Oil can be purchased at the BX.

Is there somewhere to purchase bottled propane for outdoor grills? You CAN NOT ship a propane tank. You can purchase one here but you require a converter to operate it with your gas grill.

Would bicycles be a good idea to use to travel locally in Stavanger? Definitely! There are bicycle paths everywhere. You will require a horn, lights, reflectors, helmets etc. You can even purchase chains for bike tires!

Bringing American appliances? Is it recommended we bring them and if so, to what standard? Transformers? Converters? Recommendations? You may bring them all and you will receive 2 transformers. You will probably require more and they can be purchased at the BX. Transformers are expensive. US appliances operate on 110 volts, 60 Hertz and the Norwegian appliances operate on 220 volts, 50 Hertz. US appliances which are used with a transformer may experience a shortening of the life span of the product.

Small kitchen appliances are available at reasonable prices both at the shopette and on the economy. You will receive a loaner 220v microwave oven from housing. American lamps can be used with 220 bulbs and an adapter.

Items such as computers are dual voltage so they are ok, provided you remember to change the voltage switch before plugging it in. (Failure to observe this important step can result in spectacular results and a fried power supply.)

We recommend not bringing your larger appliances. Washing machines and dryers may be too large to fit through the doors in Norwegian homes. While it is standard that our washing machines require both cold and hot water connections, the connection in Norway is usually only for cold water and the washer itself heats the water. The US standard washing machines also require larger drains as they drain out much more water than the Norwegian appliance in a shorter time. This can possibly result in flooding due to the smaller drainage system here.

Most dryers in Norway are condensing dryers either with a tank to empty or a hose into the drain. Because of this difference, many homes are not equipped with ventilation holes for dryers. .

Is the faucet water drinkable? It is the best water I have ever tasted!! This country consists to a great extent, of lakes, streams, waterfalls and fjords.

How much is a gallon of gas currently? Gasoline is about \$8.00 - \$10.00 per gallon; remember your COLA will help offset the higher cost.

How much is a gallon of milk? While milk is not available in gallon sizes, a liter cost approximately \$2.00.

How is banking handled? We currently have Bank of America Military branch. Does Stavanger/JWC have ATMs? Check cashing services? Fees? How do you get cash for shopping, and how, for example, does one ordinarily pay bills. Is on-line bill pay accepted? Most people pay their US bills on line through their stateside bank's website or send checks in regular mail.

Everyone will need to set up a Norwegian bank account (passports are required to open an account). Banks and businesses here prefer to have bills paid online and most banks have comprehensive websites (not all are in English). Norwegian banks also offer ATM cards for purchases you make in Norway. American debit cards are accepted in some stores/businesses, but not in all of them. You will be able deposit Norwegian Kroner when you need to pay local bills online.

Everyone may use the cashier's cage and cash checks to obtain Kroner. There are no fees at our cashier cage. You can also obtain Norwegian Kroner from local ATMs with your state side bank debit card. Some banks charge fees for this service while others do not.