

CASTEAU HANDBOOK



Military Family Services (Europe)

www.cafconnection.ca/Europe



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GREETINGS FROM YOUR MFS(E) TEAM

Your Military Family Services Europe (MFS(E)) team wishes to congratulate you and your family on your OUTCAN posting. We would like to be the first to welcome you all to Europe! Your MFS(E) team supports families in over 20 countries around Europe, and the Casteau team supports more than **225 members, spouses and children posted to 9 locations** in Belgium, France & Luxembourg.

MFS(E) is here to facilitate a smooth integration for you and your family into your new posting, whatever your family unit may look like. We serve everyone from single members to blended families and empty nesters, so please make sure to ask us how we can best help you. MFS(E) programs differ from those of MFRCs in Canada, staff are located throughout Europe, and our programs are offered virtually or from one of the six European Centres.

As you and your family begin the transition to Europe, MFS(E) is here to assist you along the way. Throughout your posting, you can expect phone calls, e-mails, virtual programming as well as workshops for your spouse and children. We also send crafts and packages in the mail!

This Handbook is a living and dynamic document. Once you are settled, we would welcome your input to keep it relevant and current. We would like to extend our sincerest THANK YOU to local families for sharing their experiences and suggestions as to how to make the guide as complete as possible.

Our website (www.cafconnection.ca) can be a useful resource for your transition overseas, as it provides information that is location and country specific and provides links to current MFS(E) newsletters, programming, and even overseas job postings for spouses.

MFS(E) SERVICES

MFS(E) is here to support your transition from one community to another. Some MFS(E) programs include, but are not limited to:

- *Social Worker support*
- *Children's craft mailings*
- *Youth Employment Preparation (YEP) Program*
- *Family Separation & Reunion support*
- *Emergency and Respite Child Care support*
- *Host Language training*
- *Virtual workshops via our easy-to-use WebEx platform, including virtual coffee breaks, virtual travel forums and health and wellness subjects*

- *Online Home Alone course*
- *Friends on a Journey*
- *Unique offerings at each MFS Centre, based on community needs*

There are also numerous other supports offered by Personnel Support Programs (PSP) and Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS). Take time to look through the CAF Connection website (www.cafconnection.ca) to find all that's available.

This is your opportunity to connect with other Canadian families going through a similar transition to Europe. If there is any wisdom, we can pass along to you from the get go, we encourage you and your family to build a strong support network while you are in Europe. MFS(E) is your key resource to getting in contact with others and to share your experiences and your insight.

Once you have arrived and settled at your new location, MFS(E) will provide you with a welcome package containing information specific to your location and to your unique family dynamic. You can pick it up at the centre, or if you are remote, your package will be delivered by mail once you have secured living accommodations. Please let us know when you are settled and ready to receive mail. Also, please make sure you keep us informed of your contact information, an updated telephone number and e-mail address is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about living in Europe or if you wish to know what your MFS(E) team can do to help you and your family, in all shapes and forms, please contact one of our staff members, or e-mail us directly at MFSE.SHAPE@cfmws.com.

You can meet the MFS Casteau team at this link –

- [https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Locations/Belgium/CASTEAU/MFS\(E\)-Casteau/Staff-Contact.aspx](https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Locations/Belgium/CASTEAU/MFS(E)-Casteau/Staff-Contact.aspx)

We look forward to hearing about your adventures and new experiences soon. Help us serve you better, don't be a stranger!

Best Regards,
Your MFS(E) Casteau Team

MFS(E) SHAPE

1D Pluton apt 1 -2
7010 SHAPE CASTEAU

Centre Hours: Monday to Thursday 8:30am – 4:00pm and Friday 8:30am to 3:30pm
Tel: +32 065 44 5926

EUROPEAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Military Family Services (Europe) (MFS(E)) Advisory Committee (AC) is a group of volunteers representing Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) families and communities across Europe. The AC works to enhance MFS(E)'s capacity to implement family programs and services to all Canadian military families regardless of where they are located in Europe.

As a group of volunteers, the AC is not authorized to act as decision-makers or policy-makers. Their primary role is to provide advice to the Senior Manager MFSP Europe about the needs of the community and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

CAF members (in a non-official capacity), and their civilian spouses/partners and dependents (18 years or older) are eligible to volunteer for the AC. Fifty-one (51) percent of the voting membership must be civilian family members of CAF members. Members representing a particular region must reside in that region at the time of recruitment and must have the support of their local CAF Commander.

The MFS(E) AC meets on site at the Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe) in Geilenkirchen once a year, usually in the winter. All other meetings, usually held every second month, are conducted on-line. No special computer equipment or program required but reliable internet is required. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this opportunity further, please see the [website](#).

USING THIS GUIDE

Moving around in the guide:

- *To go to a Table of Contents entry or a website link, simply click on it*
- *To search for a specific word, use the Find tool by pressing "Ctrl" then F*

Several of the websites referenced in this guide will be in a language other than English. There are a couple of options to obtain the information in English:

- *You can enter the address of the website directly into <https://translate.google.com/> and it will translate the entire website*
- *If you have Google Chrome, you can right click anywhere on the page and it will bring up a dialog box which often has a "Translate to English" option. Due to website formatting, this option may not be available for all pages or for all text on the page.*
- *Some sites have the option to change the language. These sites will have either a drop-down menu listing multiple languages or flags symbolizing the language. Simply click on the language or flag (typically a British or American flag) to see a translated version of the website. Often this option can be found in the top right corner.*

This guide is an ongoing work in progress, and we need your help:

- *Please let us know of any errors or omissions and we will update them in the next edition.*
- *Our Handbooks heavily rely on the time, energy and experiences of our families posted to Europe. For that reason, some sections may be more complete than others.*
- *If there is a topic you'd like added to the next edition, do not hesitate to let us know.*

You can contact us at:

+32 065 44 5962

MFSE.SHAPE@cfmws.com

***DISCLAIMER: Due to rules and regulations ever changing, please ensure you do your own research and consult with the resources provided for the most up-to-date policies and procedures before making any assumptions or relying on information provided here as accurate as policies and procedures change and could be different from the time this document was created and updated.
Thank you for your cooperation and attention in this matter.***

SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES

Please be sure to connect with us online often for the latest programs and services being offered:

MFS(E) Website

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Home.aspx>

MFS(E) Facebook Page

- <https://www.facebook.com/MFSEurope/>

MFS(E) YouTube Channel

- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbQXCBqcVYvLZhDj0a37h8Q>

CAF Connection Website

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Home.aspx>

My Voice/Ma Voix

MyVoice is a closed Facebook group open only to the Canadian military community. MyVoice is a place for you to communicate with Military Family Services (MFS). The group is a safe place to discuss your experiences as a military family and offer feedback about your military lifestyle.

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MyVoiceMaVoix/>

Family Information Line

The Family Information Line (FIL) is a confidential, personal, bilingual and free service offering information, support, referrals, reassurance and crisis management to the military community. We serve Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans and their families- immediate and extended.

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Stay-Connected/Family-Information-Line.aspx>

OVERVIEW OF BELGIUM

MAP OF BELGIUM (WITH MONS)



GEOGRAPHY/POLITICS

Belgium is situated in the west of Europe, bordered to the north by the Netherlands, to the east by Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and to the south and the west by France. Belgium has a population of 11 267 910 people with a density of 363 inhabitants per km². Although its surface area of 30,528 km² makes it a small country, its location has made it the economic and urban nerve centre of Europe.

Belgium is a federal state made up of three Communities (the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German speaking Community) and three regions (the Brussels-Capital Region, the Flemish Region and the Walloon Region). The main federal institutions are the federal government and the federal parliament, and the Communities and Regions also have their own legislative and executive bodies. Belgium is a constitutional monarchy and King Philippe is the 7th King of the Belgians. Independence of the country was declared in 1830, which makes Belgium quite a young independent country with rich History.

CLIMATE

Belgium has a temperate maritime climate influenced by the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean, with cool summers and moderate winters. Since the country is small there is little variation in climate from region to region, although the marine influences are less inland. Rainfall is distributed throughout the year with a dryer period from April to September. Especially in fall and winter strong Atlantic low-pressure systems can bring gales and uncomfortable weather. Sometimes easterly winds can cause a more continental type of weather, warm and dry in the summer, but cold and clear in the winter with temperatures sometimes far below zero.

LANGUAGES

The local language of Wallonia is French and the official languages of Belgium are French, Dutch and German.

The ability to speak and understand your host nation's language will ensure your European post is as rewarding as possible. It will make day-to-day life such as grocery shopping and banking easier. It will also be easier to connect and build friendships and ensure your cultural experience is more enriching.

Rosetta Stone is the world's number one language-learning program. We offer Rosetta Stone licences to Canadian Armed Forces Military Spouses. If you are interested in Host Language Training, contact the Military Family Services (Europe) Virtual Programs Coordinator at mfse.virtualprograms@cfmws.com.

Besides Rosetta Stone, there are options to take classes at your local centre or on the economy. There are also various online resources available. Please see the Host Language Document:

- https://www.cafconnection.ca/getmedia/7370f595-6269-4a8d-a6a1-4a91c1206c1c/Host-Language-Information_2018EN.pdf.aspx

or contact your Virtual Programs Coordinator for more information.

RELIGION

Religion in Belgium is diversified, with Christianity, in particular the Catholic Church, representing the largest community (54%), though it has experienced a significant decline since the 1980s (when it was the religion of over 70% of the population). Agnosticism counts for 21%. Belgium's policy separates the state from the churches, and freedom of religion of the citizens is guaranteed by the country's constitution.

CANADIAN/EXPAT COMMUNITY

You can find online communities of Canadian Expatriates in Belgium here:

- <https://www.expat.com/en/network/canadian/in/437-belgium/>

CULTURAL NUANCES, ETIQUETTE AND TRADITIONS

Family plays a central role in most Belgians' lives. The obligation to the family is a person's first priority. Many people remain in the town in which they were raised, which creates close extended families.

Greetings entail a degree of formality. A brief handshake is the common greeting among people who do not know each other. Once a relationship is developed, three kisses on the cheek may replace the handshake. This is more a kissing of the air near the person's cheek. Start with the left cheek and alternate. Although, men do not kiss other men, but prefer to shake hands, you will see men in the Wallonia region give one brief kiss on the cheek to other men.

If you are invited to a Belgian's house, bring flowers or good quality chocolates for the hostess. Liquor or wine should only be given to close friends.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Belgian public holidays 2020

There are officially 12 Belgian national holidays but two fall on a Sunday – Easter Sunday and Whit Sunday (Whitsun or Pentecost) – typically giving workers 10 Belgian public holidays, unless other Belgian holidays fall on a Sunday:

- **Wednesday, 1 January:** New Year's Day
- **Monday, 13 April:** Easter Monday
- **Friday, 1 May:** Labour Day
- **Thursday, 21 May:** Ascension Day (40 days after Easter)
- **Monday, 1 June:** Whit Monday – the seventh Monday after Easter, also known as Pentecost Monday
- **Tuesday, 21 July:** Belgium National Day (Belgian Independence Day) – commemorates the day Leopold I took the constitutional oath as the first King of Belgium in 1831
- **Saturday, 15 August:** Assumption Day (Assumption of Mary)
- **Sunday, 1 November:** All Saints' Day – note that the following day, Monday 2 November, is not given as a public holiday
- **Wednesday, 11 November:** Armistice Day
- **Friday, 25 December:** Christmas Day

NEWS

Radio X is a Brussels-based, commercial radio station serving English speakers in Belgium. It features local and regional news, talk shows, comment, special interest programmes, cultural items and contemporary music. It is also possible to listen via the smartphone app.

AFN (American Forces Network Europe) 360 Benelux is the Internet Radio run by the American on base (SHAPE & Chièvres Air Base). You can also listen to it in your car.

AFN Benelux – The Eagle (Radio Frequencies)

- *Chièvres Air Base: 107.9 FM*
- *SHAPE & Casteau: 106.5 FM*

RTBF (Radio-Télévision belge de la Communauté française) is the French speaking broadcasting news that is the most popular in Wallonia.

The Bulletin is an English Publication and it focuses on political, cultural and social news about Belgium and Brussels for English-speaking residents. It publishes a list of the TV-programmes on the Brussels cable network.

BEFORE YOU COME

Things to Consider/Bring:

- *Immunization Records (for school registration – don't pack in the sea shipment!)*
- *Long form birth certificates and your marriage certificate (this may be required for entry to DoDEA school – to prove dependents are "yours", a Canadian posting message may not be enough. Also, don't pack in the sea shipment!)*
- *If your children will be participating in sports on a US Garrison or in a DoDEA school, they will require a sports physical. It can be challenging to get this done on arrival, so if possible, have their Canadian doctor complete the form before leaving. This will cost, but it may be claimable through Sun Life. Get the form from the school on your HHT.*
- *If your teens participate in the [Youth Employment Preparation \(YEP\) Program](#), they will require a Social Insurance Number (SIN). Get this well before leaving Canada.*
- *If you plan on working in a field that may require a Police Check, get one done before leaving Canada.*

You and your family are all ambassadors for Canada while you are here. You will likely get invited to a neighbour's home or participate in hosting an international night or Canadian social for your military community or spouse's community or your children will have an international day at their school where they will showcase Canada. If you can stock up on Canadian goodies, they will be a big hit. Everything from the items the local dollar store has for Canada Day celebrations in July to decorations to gifts that symbolize Canada (maple syrup, Aboriginal/Inuit crafts, books, flags, maple leaves, Canada clothing, children's stuffed animals of beavers or RCMP.... get creative!).

Some people really miss their Kraft Peanut Butter, Tim Horton's coffee, Kraft Dinner, Coffee Crisps, real maple syrup or ketchup chips and prefer to bring a bit of a stockpile of comfort food as these items are not available in Europe or you will pay a high premium to be able to get them. Some common cooking ingredients can also be hard to track down so you can either bring graham wafer crumbs or improvise by crushing up digestives. The choice is yours and it is part of the experience. Just as you can't get some of that comfort food you have been used to, you will get to experience all kinds of new and interesting tasty treats while in Europe.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- Police (Emergency) 101
 - Ambulance/Fire (Emergency)..... 112
 - CFSU(E) Duty Officer+49 (0) 1725 345 900
 - CFSU(E) Chaplain.....+32 (0) 65 44 6179
 - Embassy of Canada+32 2 741 06 11
 - Consulate of Canada.....+32 2 741 06 11
- https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/belgium-belgique/offices-bureaux/contact_consular-contactez_consulaire.aspx?lang=eng

GETTING SETTLED

MAKING PHONE CALLS

Calling Within Europe

There is no standard way to write a European phone number, which will lead to confusion. This is the same number, written different ways –

+32 - 65 - 343 80 - 14 +32 (65) 343 80 - 14 0032 (0) 65 343 80 - 14
(065) 343 80 - 14 065 / 343 80 - 14 065 343 80 14

The "+32" at the start is the exit code and Belgium country code. The "65" is the area code and the "3438014" is the phone number. There is no standard length for area codes (2-5 digits) or phone numbers (5-12 digits).

So...when dialing within the country you're in, you do not need the exit code and country code (+32).

If you're dialing within the same area code, you do not need to enter the area code. But it's a good idea to use it just in case!

Calling Outside of Belgium

The exit code for calling out of the country in Europe is 00. You then follow that with the country code, area code, and telephone number. The "+" means to use the exit code for the country you're in – in Europe, that's 00, in Canada, it's 011. You can use the "+" on your mobile phone as the exit code, and your phone should pick up the right exit code, no matter what country you're in!

Calling Canada from Belgium

The country code for Canada and the United States is 1. Dial the exit code (00) then the country code (1) then the number.

00 - 1 - area code - seven-digit number

Calling Belgium from Canada

The exit code in Canada is "011"

011 – 32 – area code – rest of the number

Some Country Codes:

Austria.....	43
Belgium	32
Czech Republic.....	420
Estonia	372
France	33
Italy	39
Germany	49
Latvia	371
Netherlands.....	31
Spain.....	34
Switzerland	41
Turkey	90
United Kingdom	44

Summary:

To dial a number within Belgium	0 711 1234567
To dial a Belgian number from elsewhere in Europe	+32 711 1234567
	or 00 32 711 1234567
To dial a number outside Belgium	+33 121 1234567
	or 00 33 121 1234567
To dial Canada from Belgium	00 1 613 5551234
To dial Belgium from Canada	011 32 711 1234567

Toll Free and Charges for Calls

Per minute charges for calls

Check your phone contract, both land line and cell phone. Many families have been surprised by charges on their bill for calls they thought were “free” or included. Depending on your contract, you may end up paying per minute for local calls. It is common for calls to be free to numbers with the same provider, but not always. Some contracts charge for calls to cell phone numbers, but land lines may be included. The same applies to long distance – if you get a plan that includes calling to Canada, that may only include calls to land lines.

Check the plan for the term “flat”, which means that calls are included – for example, “Belgium flat” means you can call anywhere in Belgium, where “Proximus flat” means your calls to other Proximus customers are included. If you have a landline, you may have to pay to call a cell phone, or vice versa.

0800

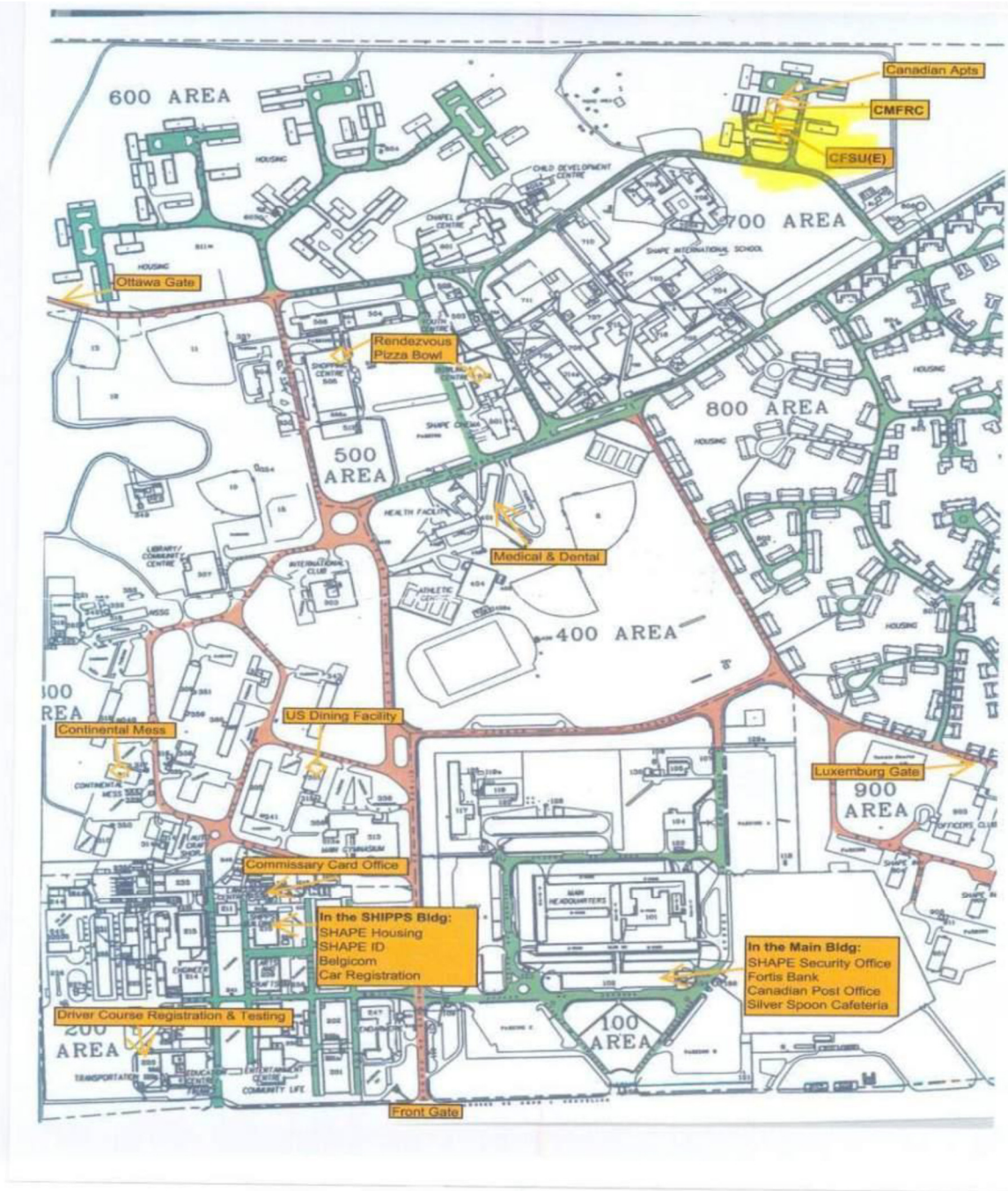
0800 is the dialing prefix for Toll Free Calls in most of Europe.

0900 and 0180 calls

0900 numbers are “premium-rate” services, and 0180 numbers are for service-oriented calls and are billed at a per minute or per call. Costs will vary.

BASE INFORMATION

MAP OF SHAPE



EXCHANGE/COMMISSARY

The Post Exchange (PX)

Located at the Chièvres American Air Base, which is about 20 minutes away from SHAPE. PX sells clothing, cosmetics, house-wares, audio-visual equipment, giftware, etc. Also offers a variety of hardware items, household and garden tools, some recreational furniture, power tools and children's toys. A special-order service and layaway plan is available. There is also an auto parts section carrying *limited* North American parts, tires and accessories with possibility of special-order services.

Commissary

Large facility with a selection of groceries, meats, and toiletries, similar to what we're used to in Canada. This is where you can purchase many items like peanut butter, cereal and snack foods that you might be craving. The baggers are not store employees and work for tips only. They will pack your groceries and take them to your vehicle.

Other examples of services available at the Chièvres compound are: Laundromat/Dry Cleaning, Souvenir Store, Video Rental, Travel Agency, Auto Skills, Car Sales & Rental Office, Barber/Beauty Shop, Food Court Restaurants, Thrift Shop, Bank, Car wash, Library, etc.

NOTE: Payment is expected in US Dollars, not Euros. Canadian credit and debit cards are accepted, Belgian credit card as well, but not Belgian debit cards.

SCHOOLS

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/education/shape-school>

MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/leisure>

HOUSING

Canadian housing: 065/44.5643 or 065/44.4759

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

065/44.6179 Canadian padre

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/shape-chapel>

POST OFFICE

Bldg 102, Room 102, Telephone **065.44.4395** and **7903**

Full postal service is provided to Canadian Forces Personnel and dependants, Canadian teachers and Canadian civilians at SHAPE. Money orders are available in Canadian dollars (limit \$999.99) and American dollars (limit \$999.99). Charges are in euro and the current exchange rate is used. Services are the same as any post office in Canada and include:

- Locked individual mail boxes, accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, sale and cashing of money orders (if money is available)
- Letter and parcel mailing.
- Special Services including; registered mail, Xpress Post and cash on delivery.

The SHAPE address from Canada:
Rank and Name

Slot # XXXX

PO Box 5048

STN Forces Belleville ON

K8N 5W6

The SHAPE address within
Europe:

Rank and Name

CFSU(E) Det SHAPE, Slot # XXXX

CFPO 5048

B-7010 Casteau, Belgium

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday	10:00 to 12:00 (Closed for lunch) 13:00 to 16:00
Tuesday to Thursday	10:00 to 16:00 (Open during lunch)
Friday	10:00 to 15:00

DELIVERY FROM CANADA VIA COURIER SERVICES

If you have a delivery coming from Canada by courier services (UPS, FEDEX, etc.) requiring a civic address (number & street name), the following is the address you should provide to the sender:

(Your name)

PO Box 5048 STN Forces

Canadian Forces Postal Unit

Building 348, 15 Westwin

CFB Trenton, Astra, ON

K0K 3W0

TEL: (613) 965-2237

The Postal Unit in Trenton will accept the parcel and will redirect it to CFPO 5048. Please specify the delivery has to be made during regular working hours to ensure that the Postal Unit in Trenton is open. Also make sure that the parcel meets postal regulations for weight and dimension or it will be refused. For more info please consult the web site:

<https://www.canadapost.ca/cpc/en>



TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION

SUBSIDIZED TRAVEL

The Chalet Program offers accommodation options in various parts of Europe at a 40% subsidy. It is open to all European Fund members and chalets are awarded by draw. For more information please visit:

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Programs-Services/Chalet-Program.aspx>

NON-UNIT FUND AND CANEX/SISIP GRANT

As a CAF member of Formation Europe you and your family are members of the European Fund (EF). EF members who are not part of a Unit Fund due to their geographical location are termed Non-Unit Fund (NUF) members. In order to ensure equitability across Formation Europe, all EF members have the same entitlements; however, certain entitlements are managed differently depending on location. See this link for more information:

- [https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Programs-Services/European-Fund/Non-Unit-Fund-\(NUF\)-Member-Personnel.aspx](https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Programs-Services/European-Fund/Non-Unit-Fund-(NUF)-Member-Personnel.aspx)

AIR TRAVEL

NAME	WEB SITE	DESCRIPTION	DEPART FROM	WEBSITE LANGUAGE
Ryanair	www.ryanair.com		Cheap airline	Charleroi Brussels English French Dutch
Brussels Airlines	www.brusselsairlines.com		More conventional airline (the equivalent of our Air Canada)	Brussels French English Dutch
Wizzair	www.wizzair.com		Goes mostly to the eastern Europe countries (Prague, Krakow)	Charleroi French English Dutch
Flybe	www.flybe.com		If you want to go to the UK	Brussels English French

Turkish Airline	www.turkishairlines.com	Best to go to Turkey	Brussels	Multilingual
Easy Jet	www.easyjet.com	Goes mostly to Italy, France and Switzerland	Brussels	Multilingual
Jetairfly	www.jetairfly.com	Goes almost everywhere in Europe from April to October	Brussels Charleroi	Multilingual

PUBLIC TRANSIT

WEB SITE	DESTINATIONS AND DESCRIPTION	LANGUAGE
www.b-rail.be	Local and international trains (SNCB) To be used to go everywhere in Belgium and also in conjunction with Thalys and Eurostar...	French and English
www.thalys.com	To go to Paris, Amsterdam and many other destinations. Very good option. 1 ½ hrs to go to Paris. As low as 50 € return when on special sale.	French English
www.eurostar.com	To go to London it is perfect.	English French
www.b-europe.com	To go from one country to another	French English

TRAIN

<https://www.belgiantrain.be/en>

TAXIS

SHAPE authorizes four local companies to access the SHAPE installation as an alternative means of transportation. Three taxi services and one airport shuttle service. Regular taxis are not authorized in the 100 area. The shuttle service HG Travel-Autos is allowed in the

100 area. All taxis are authorized to provide services from the 200 to the 900 areas. If you are entering SHAPE in one of the four authorized taxi companies, the driver must show the proper identification and each passenger in the vehicle must show their SHAPE identification card. Failure to follow any of these procedures will result in the taxi not being authorized to enter the installation.

- *Taxis Willy: 0497/49.60.00 (English speaking dispatcher) or 065/31.98.08 (French speaking dispatcher)*
- *Taxi Top: 065/84.24.06 (English or French speaking dispatchers)*
- *Taxi Philippe: 0473/79.89.23 (St-Ghislain) or 0474/69.22.72 (Mons)*
- *Travel Autos Airport Shuttle Service: 068/28.51.36 (English or French dispatcher)*

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/security-emergency/international-military-police>

CAR RENTAL

Europcar (office located across SHAPE)

https://www.europcar.be/fr-be/agences/belgique/mons-maisieres?utm_source=local&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=QMON01

TRAVEL ADVISORIES

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisor>

ADMINISTRATION

BANKING

Local Currency

The local currency in Belgium is the Euro

<http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/exchange/daily-converter/>

Online Banking Payments – IBANs, BICs, and TANs

Bank accounts in Europe have an “IBAN” (International Bank Account Number) and a “BIC” (Bank Identifier Code). You will use these for making payments and receiving money. If you are paying a bill, you will typically find their IBAN on the bill and you can use that in your online banking to make the payment. You will also provide your IBAN to companies to pay your bills (insurance, gym payments, cell phone, etc). The orderly room and claims section at CFSU(E) will use your IBAN to deposit pay and claims into your bank account.

To make a payment, you will often need a TAN (Transaction Authorization Number). This can be a complex thing to get used to in Europe. You will likely get a sheet of TANs when you initially get your bank account, but then through your mobile banking you can use mobile TANs (a number sent to your phone) or photo TANs with an app on your phone. To use mobile or photo TANs, you will need to register your mobile number in the online banking.

Money Transfer

You will likely have a requirement to move money between Canadian and European accounts. Transferwise.com and XE.com are both worth looking at for this.

CRA AND RESIDENCY STATUS FOR SPOUSES/DEPENDENTS

Completing and submitting an income tax return from OUTCAN can be even more fun than doing it in Canada. In the past, there has been significant confusion regarding the residency status of spouses. Unfortunately, some CAF families have found out that choosing incorrectly can have a major financial impact. Many have found this issue confusing and have sought professional tax advice.

The following information regarding residency status has been provided to us by the CRA:

Spouses of Canadian Government Employees on Foreign Assignment – Residency Status for Tax Purposes

The purpose of this document is to provide general residency information for the spouses of employees of the Department of National Defence (“DND”)/members of the Canadian Armed Forces (“CAF”) and Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (“DFATD”) Canada that are sent on foreign assignments. This document does not address all possible situations that may require more analysis when determining the tax implications.

Please note that our reference to a spouse in this document includes a common-law partner.

Spouses that Intend to Return to Canada and expect to Maintain their Canadian Residency

Where you are the spouse of a Canadian Government employee and are moving with your spouse and family to another country for your spouse to carry out a foreign assignment for the Government of Canada and it is your intention to return to Canada following the assignment, then you will be considered a factual resident of Canada. This factual residency is based on your intention to return to Canada as well as your secondary residential ties maintained with Canada, as described in paragraph 1.14 of Folio S5-F1-C1.

Please do not complete a Form NR73, Determination of Residency Status (Leaving Canada).

As a factual resident, you will have to complete and file your Canadian Personal Income Tax Return and you will meet the residency requirement for Canadian benefits administered by the CRA.

Spouses that do not expect to Maintain their Canadian Residency

If you believe that you will be a non-resident of Canada when you leave with your spouse and family for the foreign assignment because your intention, primary ties and secondary ties support your status as a non-resident of Canada, then you should complete Form NR73, Determination of Residency Status (Leaving Canada). The Canada Revenue Agency will review the information provided in your completed Form NR73 to determine whether or not you will be considered a non-resident of Canada.

If it is determined that you will be a non-resident of Canada, you should know the tax implications, which include:

- 1. You will be deemed to have disposed of certain properties that may give rise to capital gains (taxes on gains can be deferred by using Form T1244, Election , Under Subsection*

220(4.5) of the Information Sheet Income Tax Act, to Defer the Payment of Tax on Income Relating to the Deemed Disposition of Property);

2. You will only be able to create additional RRSP room if you have earned income in Canada;
3. You will not be able to contribute to a Tax Free Savings Account; and
4. You will be subject to tax of up to 25% on certain payments from Canadian sources, such as investment income (Part XIII tax).

For further information with respect to the determination of an individual's residence status, please consult CRA's Income Tax Folio S5-F1-C1 available at: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/tchncl/ncmtx/fls/s5/f1/s5-f1-c1-eng.html>

Further information on how income tax rules apply to Canadian residents that leave the country can be found in <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/nnrstdnts/ndvdl/nnrs-eng.html>

Should you have any further questions or require additional information regarding this, please do not hesitate to communicate with the International and Ottawa Tax Services Office.

CHILD TAX BENEFITS

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) may be paid directly through Direct Deposit to a Canadian bank account. If you are eligible to receive CCB, you will continue to receive the CCB during your absence from Canada. However, to make sure your payments are not interrupted, you must file an income tax return each year, so your CCB can be calculated. Any inquiries regarding the CCB should be directed to the CRA.

If you were receiving Child Benefit from your province, it may stop once you move to Europe. Each province is different and you may want to check with the appropriate authorities to see if your provincial benefit will continue and avoid any bad surprises.

PETS

Bringing Pets into Belgium

Please take note that even the smallest mistake on one of the forms required for your pet could result in the Belgian authorities seizing them from you. Unfortunately, they have the authority to destroy them if the pets do not meet the importation standards or you are not able to provide the proper documentation.

[Air Canada Traveling with your Pet](#)

[KLM Traveling with Pets](#)

- [Canadian Government Regulations for transporting your pets internationally](#)
- [Regulations for Belgium](#)

Tips from previous years

- Book pets on same flights as you
- Keep boarding passes to show pets were on same flights
- If pets have to fly cargo, they can still be on same flight (e.g. Air Canada direct flight from Montreal to Brussels)
- AirTransat is favoured by many people who fly with pets
- If pets are flying as checked baggage, they will be dropped off by the baggage area in the Brussels airport
- If pets are flying as cargo (even if they are on the same flight) they will need to be picked up in the Cargo area that is outside of the airport complex.
- If pets are flying as cargo, you will go where the animal is being held to have your paperwork checked, you will be sent to another building for paperwork to be stamped, and then sent back to the original building for more paperwork. You will need to pay a fee of about €60. The cargo building is not associated with a particular airline (eg will not say Air Canada Cargo on building)
- If you fly in on a weekend or outside normal working hours, your pets could be held in the cargo area until they are cleared by a vet and brokered into the country. You could be charged for this service as well as boarding of the pets (could be €500-1200!)
- Book flights so you arrive during normal working hours! (Monday to Friday)
- Freeze water in water dishes (the kind that attaches to the kennel)
- Attach single serving of kibble in ziplock bag with pet's name on it and any feeding instructions
- Photocopy pet paperwork and attach to kennel, carry originals (or get two original copies and attach one)
- Bring tools to take kennel apart in your luggage; they might be needed to get kennels in rental vehicles or in hotel room
- If your dog gets stressed easily, speak with your vet about a hormone collar to help with it. No side effects and it lasts about a month.

Reminders

In order to bring your pet into Belgium, they need:

- *A microchip*
- *A rabies shot AFTER **the microchip is entered AND more than 21 days prior to entry** but before the expiration date of the manufacturer of the vaccine*
- *Health certificate:*
 - *A licensed veterinarian (with the CFIA) must complete the health form **WITHIN 20 days prior to the date of entry***
 - *The form must be endorsed by the local CFIA*

- *Puppies and kittens under **15 weeks of age** cannot enter the country because they are too young to get the microchip and receive the necessary vaccines to be imported*

Triple-check with your veterinarian and airline to make sure you have ALL of the necessary documents, vaccinations, signatures, etc. to assure a stress-free voyage with your pet

HEALTH SERVICES

GENERAL

The Health team at CFSU(E) is able to provide support, education, and resources to the CAF community, including remote families. You can contact them at:

+49 2451 717 301

GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca

CANADIAN CLINIC ON BASE

The Canadian doctor's office is available Monday through Friday by appointment. Please note that there is no "sick parade" or appointments on Thursdays morning due to training. Other hours are by appointment only unless it is an emergency.

For a regular appointment with the Canadian doctor, you can call **065.44.5959**.

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday – Friday 07:30 to 12:00 13:00 to 16:00

Sick Parade: Monday-Friday (except Thursdays) 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

BELGIUM Emergency	112
Police, Fire	100
Operator	7111
SHAPE Emergency	065.44.3333
SHAPE	
Federal Police	065.44.3334
SHAPE Police (Non-emergency)	065.44.3353
Operator	065.44.7111

HOSPITALS

SHAPE HEALTHCARE FACILITY (including the Canadian Clinic)
Avenue d'Oslo
Bldg 401
SHAPE, B-7010

Appointment Civilian telephone (0730-1630 hrs):
+32(0)65/44.58.86

Appointment DSN (0730-1630 hrs):
Primary Care 423-5886

After hours Phone:

English Liaison at Ambroise Paré Hospital
+32(0)65/41.40.09

After Hours Other:

SHAPE Healthcare Facility closes at 1700 hours, for life threatening or serious injuries requiring immediate care, please contact the Liaison at Ambroise Paré, then proceed to Ambroise Paré in Mons.

LOCAL HOSPITALS

MONS: Hôpital Ambroise Paré 2, boul. Kennedy 065.39.2111

MONS: Clinique St-Joseph 5, avenue Beaudoin de Constantinople 065.38.5511

BAUDOUR : Clinique Louis Caty 136, rue Louis Caty 065.76.8111

LA LOUVIÈRE : Centre hospitalier Tivoli 34, avenue M. Buset 064.27.6111

HAINÉ ST-PAUL : Hôpital de Jolimont 159, rue Ferrer 064.23.3011

HORNU : Centre hospitalier du Grand Hornu 63, route de Mons 065.71.3111

SOIGNIES : Hospital Center Régional De La Haute Senne - Le Tilleriau 49, Chaussée de Braine 067.34.8411 bilingual 067 34 8769

PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

SHAPE HEALTHCARE FACILITY, Telephone Refills **065.44.5981**

Most medications prescribed by your physician are also free of charge from the SHF pharmacy. If the medication or equivalent product cannot be provided by the SHF pharmacy, it must be purchased on the economy at the patient's expense. Military members will be reimbursed by DND. Dependants may claim through PSHCP. Note that if you see a Belgian doctor, you can only take your prescription to a Belgian pharmacist.

Visit <http://www.pharmacie.be/> to find the pharmacies around your house or to locate the pharmacy on duty during the night/weekend/holidays.

DENTAL CLINICS

Bldg 504

There is a Canadian dentist and dental assistant on the international dental staff. Regular check-ups and dental treatments are available and free to the military and family members. For Sick Call, report between 0800 - 0830 hrs, and between 0800 - 1000 hrs on weekends. Regular appointments are to be booked through the Canadian Dental office **065.44.5885**.

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday-Friday 08:00 to 12:00 13:00 to 16:30

SOCIAL SERVICES

The following options are available to military members and their families for access to psychosocial or mental health resources:

Social Worker

You can reach the MFS(E) Social Worker Myriam Chebat at:

myriam.chebat@forces.gc.ca

+49 (0) 2451 717 206

You can reach the CAF Formation Europe Social Worker, Captain Martin Laferrière-Simard at:

martin.laferrieresimard@forces.gc.ca

+49 (0) 2451 717 309

Padre

There are three Padres serving the families in Europe, and they are also available for consultation:

Maj Jean-Guy Morin Located in Casteau Responsible for Central Europe (Netherlands, Germany, France, Belgium)	Lt(N) Lesley Fox Located in London Responsible for UK and Northern Europe	Capt Gerson Flor Located in Naples Responsible for Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, Romania)
jean-guy.morin@forces.gc.ca +32 (0) 65 44 6179	lesley.fox@forces.gc.ca +44 (0) 1895 613 022	gerson.flor@forces.gc.ca +39 345 080 5673

CAF Member Assistance Program

Military members and their families can also contact the CAF Member Assistance Program at +1 800 268 7708. This is a voluntary and confidential service that allows callers to speak with a professional counsellor and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Please note that Canadian toll-free numbers are not free when calling from another country, but the CAF Member Assistance Program will also accept collect calls at +1 613 941 5842.

Family Information Line

The Family Information Line offers confidential assistance and supportive counselling 24/7. When you call you will be connected to one of their experienced professionals who can connect you with local and national resources. The Family Information Line can be called toll free, from Europe, at 00 800 7711 7722.

Local Resources

Military families can also access resources in their community, as recommended by their doctor or other sources, but they should ensure with their Public Service Health Care Plan that they will be covered for the services they are considering. For their services, military members are required to go through their medical system or the CAF Member Assistance Program.

A. A. Meetings

Information on Alcoholic Anonymous meetings in Europe or online is available at <https://alcoholics-anonymous.eu/>

GREAT WEST LIFE/ALLIANZ

Dental Claims

Unless you are served by a CAF Dental Clinic, dental claims will need to be sent to Great-West Life, using the paper form. Log into your account on the Great-West Life website and print a claim form. Claims and original receipts need to be mailed to the following address:

Great-West Life Health and Dental Benefits
Foreign Benefit Payments
PO Box 6000
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3A5

Be sure to keep copies of your receipts!

Medical Claims

For medical claims, you will also need to submit a paper claim to Allianz, using the PSHCP Out-of-Country claim form (http://www.pshcp.ca/media/43901/claimform_out_fill.pdf).

Send the claim form and the original receipts to:

Allianz Global Assistance
Public Service Health Care Plan
PO Box 880
Waterloo, ON N2J 4C3

Be sure to keep copies of your receipts!

ON THE ROAD

GENERAL

You must be 18 or over to drive a private motor vehicle in Belgium. It is essential that you sufficiently familiarize yourself with Belgian and EU regulations (including the standard traffic control signs) before you drive. You are subject to Belgian law for traffic violations and in the case of accidents.

DRIVER'S LICENCE

A SHAPE driver's license is required for all permanent SHAPE residents (including military personnel). To obtain this license a test must be passed. The test is divided into two parts. One involves sign recognition and the other is scenario analysis. Both tests are administered during a daylong training seminar. The morning consists of lessons about the particulars of Belgian driving and the afternoon is when the two tests are taken. If you happen to fail one of the tests, you only need to re-do the test you failed and not the whole process. A study guide can be picked up when you register for the tests. Dependants that turn 18 while in Belgium and have never been issued a Canadian driver's license prior to posting to SHAPE can obtain a driver's license in Belgium however it is very expensive and complicated. Dependants that already have a permit prior to posting to SHAPE can drive in Belgium upon reaching the age of 18.

BELGIAN DRIVER'S LICENSE

To obtain a Belgian driver's license you must first be in possession of a Belgian Special Identity / Protocol card. Additionally, to obtain a Belgian driver's license you must also have a valid Canadian driver's license and a SHAPE driver's license. There is no examination process required to obtain this card. There is a small registration fee associated with it. The exact amount depends on what commune you live in. The permit is valid for 10 years. You have to go to your commune to get it.

INFORMATION ON DRIVER'S LICENCE IN CANADA AND RENEWAL

Province	Mailing Address	Phone Number	Internet Site
Alberta	Alberta Transportation Main Floor- Twin Atria 4999-98 Ave Edmonton, AB T6B 2X3	(780) 310-0000 Outside AB: (780) 427-8230	Government of Alberta Ministry of Transportation: Drivers & Vehicles
British Columbia	ICBC Licensing Driver Services Centre 151 West Esplanade North Vancouver, BC V7M 3H9	From Lower BC: (604) 661-2800 Toll Free in NA: (800) 663-3051	http://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/Pages/default.aspx
Manitoba	Manitoba Transportation Driver & Vehicle Licensing 234 Donald St, Box 6300 Winnipeg, NB R3C 4A4	(204) 985-7000 Fax: (204) 954-5338 or Toll Free in NA: (800) 665-2410	http://residents.gov.mb.ca/re ference.html?d=details&progr am_id=304
New Brunswick	NB Department of Transportation 364 Argyle St Fredericton, NB E3B 1T9	DPS- MSP.Information @gnb.ca	http://www2.gnb.ca/content/ gnb/en/services/driving_and vehicles.html
Newfoundland & Labrador	Motor Registration Division Department of Government Services PO Box 8710 St. John's NF A1B 4J5	(709) 729-4834	http://www.gs.gov.nl.ca/drive rs.html
North West Territories	Government of NWT Department of Transport 5003 - 49th Street, Yellowknife NWT X1A 2L9	(867) 873-7487 Fax: (867) 669-9094	http://www.dot.gov.nt.ca/ liv e/pages/wpPages/issuingoffic es.aspx
Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Registry of Motor Vehicles 300 Horseshoe Lake drive Bayers Lake Business Park Halifax, NS B3S 0B7	(902) 424-5851 Toll Free in NA: (800) 898-7668	http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/ access/drivers.asp

Province	Mailing Address	Phone Number	Internet Site
Nunavut	Motor Vehicles Division Department of Economic Development & Transportation Box 1000 Station 1575 Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0	Toll Free: (867) 975-7800	http://www.gov.nu.ca/programs-services/vehicle-registration
Ontario	Ministry of Transportation Licensing Admin. Office 77 Wellesley Street West Ferguson Block, 3rd Floor Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8	(416) 235-2999 Toll Free: (800) 387-3445 Fax: (416) 235-4414	http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv
Prince Edward Island	Prince Edward Island Depart. of Transportation & Public Works PO Box 2000 Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8	(902) 368-5228 Fax: (902) 368-5236	http://www.gov.pe.ca/tir/index.php3?number=20138&lang=E
Quebec	Societe de l'Assurance Automobile de Quebec P.O. Box 19600, Terminus 333 blvd. Jean- Lesage Quebec, PQ G1K 8J6	Quebec, PQ: (418) 643-7620 Montreal, PQ: (514) 873-7620 Toll Free in PQ: 1 (800) 361-7620	http://www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/index.php
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), Licensing and Registration Services 2260 11th Avenue Regina, SK S4P 0J9	(306) 775-6900 Toll Free: (800) 667-9868	http://www.sgi.sk.ca/individuals/index.html
Yukon	Gold Creek Building (Old Rogers Video Building) Unit A, 2251-2nd Avenue Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5W1	(867) 667-5315 Fax: (867) 393-6220 Toll Free: (800) 661-0408 ext. 5315	http://www.hpw.gov.yk.ca/mv/mvdrlic.html
Transport Canada	Transport Canada Tower C, Place de Ville 330 Sparks St Ottawa, ON K1A 0N5	(613) 990-2309 Toll Free: (866) 995-9737	http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/road-menu.htm

CAR INSURANCE

Insurance is compulsory for all vehicles. The minimum level of cover required is third party, but comprehensive coverage is common. The car, and not the driver, is insured so many people have additional insurance for themselves in the event of personal injury.

VEHICLE REGISTRATION

<https://www.shape2day.com/arrivingleaving/vehicles>

EMISSION STICKER

European Green Zones

Germany (58 zones), France (28 zones), Belgium (3 zones), Denmark (5 zones), and Austria (6 zones) have Green Zones and corresponding stickers. If you will be driving in the Green Zones of those countries, you may need a sticker for your car. You can order a sticker for your vehicle from the links in this website:

<https://www.green-zones.eu/en.html>

FUEL CARD

RATIONED ITEMS STORE (RIS)

065/44.5628

The RIS is the place where you can find a wide range of liquors, tobaccos and wines from many different countries. It also includes a perfumes, cosmetics, jewelry and skincare department featuring the most famous brands. Telephone cards and FINA petrol cards are also sold in the Rationed Items Store.

ITEMS IN YOUR CAR

It is compulsory to carry the following documents in the car at all times:

- Driving license
- Insurance certificate
- Vehicle registration documents
- Protocol ID/proof of identity
- Proof of payment of road tax (if applicable)

- Accident form
- Valid CT (contrôle technique) form

All vehicles must also carry:

- A warning triangle; in the event of an accident or breakdown the triangle must be placed 30 metres behind the vehicle on ordinary roads and 100 metres on motorways to warn following traffic. It must be visible at a distance of 50 metres
- A first aid kit
- A fire extinguisher, which must be accessible from the driver's seat
- A reflective vest (one for each passenger of the vehicle). The vest must be put on before getting out of the car in the event of an accident.

PARKING

In Belgium, parking restrictions are made fairly obvious to drivers. Most parking is on a fee-basis and parking meters can be found on the majority of streets. Most cities operate the so-called Blue-Zone parking system, which means drivers must display a cardboard display clock set to their time of arrival. The blue clock is available from petrol stations, newsagents and police stations however, the MFSE has provided you with one free of charge.

Parking is forbidden within 15 metres of a tram, bus or rail stop or near where tram or rail lines cross the road. A yellow line on the curb indicates no parking. Many communes allow parking on alternate sides of the streets. For example, from the 1st to 15th you may park on the right side and from the 16th to 31st on the left. Make sure that you park on the correct side as the fine is 100 Euros.

TOLLS

When traveling, be aware of toll costs. To drive on the autoroutes in Switzerland, for example, you require a sticker (called a *vignette*) on your windshield. The vignette is only available as an annual purchase. For Austria, you can purchase a 10-day, 2-month or annual vignette. In France, you will find toll booths on the autoroute. For some you pay a toll to go through the booth, for others you take a ticket and pay when you exit the toll road. The website <https://www.viamichelin.com/> is an excellent resource for calculating toll costs before a trip.

SAFETY BELTS AND CHILD SEATS

It's compulsory to wear a seat belt (*ceinture de sécurité*), including in the back seats if belts are fitted. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure all passengers wear their belts (and the driver will be fined if passengers are not belted in).

Driving with children in the car:

- Babies up to 13 Kg must travel in a car seat, facing backwards
- Children 13 Kg to 18 Kg must travel in a car seat, facing forwards
- Children 18 Kg to 36 Kg must travel in an adapted car seat using the normal seat belt (Children measuring less than 1.35m must travel in an adapted car seat)

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile cellular telephones may only be used with a "handsfree" system. This rule applies to all kind of drivers or riders (bicycles, mopeds and motorcycles).

WINTER TIRES

<https://www.continental-tires.com/transport/knowhow/european-winter-regulations>

ALCOHOL AND NARCOTICS

The blood/alcohol limit in Belgium is 0.5 grams of alcohol per litre of blood. The police have the power to carry out random alcohol tests on drivers at any time and a blood sample will be taken if a driver refuses a breathalyser test. Drivers can request to wait 15 minutes before taking a breath test.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

EUROPASSISTANCE

<http://www.europ-assistance.be>

CLUB TOTAL

One fill up every 3 weeks covers you for a full month

<http://www.total.be>

TOURING CLUB DE BELGIQUE

<http://www.touring.be/>

Note: If a non-resident driver in Belgium has a breakdown or accident and is a member of an automobile association in their own country (such as the AA or RAC), they may find reciprocal agreements with garages and institutions in Belgium. Check with the association before departure.

IF INVOLVED IN A CAR ACCIDENT

Persons failing to stop after an accident: this is any driver or person who knows that he (or his vehicle or animal) has been involved in an accident in a public place and who fails to stop to establish the details of the incident. This also applies if the person was not to blame for the accident.

Leaving the scene to seek assistance is not considered as failing to stop after an accident.

** If you have an accident, you can call the SHAPE police to come assist you and help you fill the accident report.

Military Police Desk (call first) 065.44.3333

SHAPE Federal Police 065.44.3334

BUYING OR SELLING A CAR

<https://www.shape2day.com/arrivingleaving/vehicles>

AROUND THE HOUSE

INTERNET/TELEVISION/MOBILE PHONE

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Phones

Several Canadian families have used a VoIP phone, and this is worth investigating **before leaving Canada** (so you can keep your number).

With a VoIP phone, you can keep a Canadian phone number. This has a few benefits. Your family and friends can call you, and you can call them, without overseas long-distance charges. Besides cost, it is also less confusing for people who may not be used to European calling (like elderly parents). Keeping a Canadian phone number also can help when completing online forms, banking, registering on Canadian websites etc. And finally, if you want to keep a phone number for continuity, you can move a number to a VoIP provider when you move OUTCAN, then move the same number back to a Canadian provider when you return.

Which provider to use? There are several, with varying costs and services. MagicJack and Vonage are two of the big companies, but many other VoIP providers are out there.

Internet, Television and Cell Phone Providers

To get internet connection, TV or land line installed in your house you need to get in contact with either Proximus or Voo (depending on which one is working in your area, to make sure, check with your landlord or neighbours). They offer long distance phone plans as well as internet and TV services. When you go to see them, they will arrange a time when one of their technicians will come by your house to set up your phone, internet and TV. Be warned that you will normally have to wait 2 to 3 weeks between the time when you sign up and when a technician comes to your house to install your phone.

<https://www.proximus.be/en/>

<https://www.voo.be/en>

ELECTRICITY

Electricity in Europe differs from electricity in Canada, in that the voltage is higher and the frequency is lower. In Canada our electricity is 110V 60Hz, while in Europe, they have 220-

230V and 50Hz. Some electronics are not compatible with European power and require transformers, while others are dual voltage and only require a plug adapter.

To find out if an electronic is dual voltage, look for the electronic information on the product. This information is often found on the bottom or back of the product, or on its battery pack. If the input gives a range such as 100-240V 50-60Hz, then the product **is** dual voltage and works with both Canadian and European electricity. If the input does not give a range and only says 110V 60Hz, then it is **not** compatible with European electricity.

Dual Voltage

If your product is dual voltage, then all you need is a plug adapter in order to use it. Since the product is already compatible with the local electricity, all the adapter does is allow the prongs to fit the electrical outlets. If you use an adapter with a product that is not dual voltage, you will not only damage your product, but you may also cause electrical damage to the building.

Lamps are considered dual voltage; however, you will need to replace the light bulbs with European lightbulbs.

Single Voltage

If your electronics only says 110V 60Hz, then it is not compatible with European electricity. In order to use it while in Europe, you will need to use a transformer. Transformers convert the local electricity to 110V 60Hz, so you are able to plug devices into it as if you were plugging them into a wall in Canada.



Most electronic devices have a prominent label that looks like this picture. On this device (a camera battery charger), you can see that after "Input" it says "110 - 240 volt", which means that it can be used with any voltage within that range, including the 110 volt standard in Canada or the 220-230 volt standard in much of Europe. All you'll need is a plug adaptor.



On this next label, you can see that this coffee maker is **NOT** dual voltage. It lists simply "120 volts". Other items may say "110" - anything in this range is a standard North American appliance. If you want to use something like this overseas, it will need to be on a transformer



In this final image, you can see that some appliances have a switch for use between higher and lower voltages. This can be used overseas with only a **plug adaptor**, but don't forget to flip the switch!

Transformers

Transformers are created with different wattage ratings, so you will need to make sure you are using the correct wattage to handle what you are plugging into it.

The total wattage of appliances plugged into the transformer must be less than the wattage rating of the transformer. To find out the wattage of an electronic device, if it's not on the label, you can multiply the voltage of the item by the number of amperes (amps). For example, if the information on an item says 110V 60Hz 1A, you would multiple 110 (voltage) by 1 (amps) to get 110 watts.

There are also websites that have information on the approximate wattage of electronic and household appliances, for example,

- <https://www.wholesalesolar.com/solar-information/how-to-save-energy/power-table>

Research before choosing transformers. If in doubt, buy bigger. Some items (like TVs) need a big surge of power when switched on, so go with three times the wattage (a 500W appliance might need a 1500W transformer). Items that produce heat (iron, hair dryer) will require more wattage.

Transformers that do not have an ON/OFF switch, or have a switch and are turned on, will consume energy while plugged in, even if you do not have an appliance plugged into them. Therefore, you should always keep your transformers off or unplugged when not in use.

As part of your furniture claim, you can purchase and claim 50% of the cost of up to four transformers.

APPLIANCES

You will find that your appliances around your house are often smaller than what you are accustomed to in Canada. As a result, some of your cooking pans may not fit inside the ovens here. The washer and dryer are often much smaller and slower. This can pose problems for washing typical Canadian bedding.

BEDS

You should note that sizes of beds and bedding differ between Canada and Europe. It may be helpful to purchase extra bedding prior to your move, or you may find that you have to have it shipped from Canada. If you plan on purchasing a bed while you are in Europe, do your research to ensure you will be able to find bedding that will fit upon your return to Canada.

WATER QUALITY CALCIUM IN BELGIAN WATER

Even if harmless to your health, the calcium build-up leaves white residue and certain products can be used to eliminate or prevent it. You should use liquid Calgon in the laundry machine with the European laundry soap. Some have used powder Calgon and soap only to have jammed pipes and a lot of water on their floors! An alcohol based; anti-calcium solution is also available at the Carrefour. This is especially good for the build-up on faucets.

COFFEE MAKER

Use a special product or one cup of vinegar to clean your machine each month. You can use bottle water to prevent calcium residue or build-up.

KETTLES

Calcium deposits in kettles can be dissolved with vinegar. Fill the kettle with vinegar or a powder available at the Carrefour and let it sit overnight and the calcium will dissolve. Rinse before use.

IRON

Only use distilled water found in the hardware store or certain grocery stores (Carrefour on Shape carries it) because the lime deposits will eventually block your iron

BATHROOM

Regular use of products to eliminate calcium deposits is necessary, as build-up can be very hard to get rid of. Wiping down the shower after each use will help as well as the vinegar added to your water when cleaning. Make sure you check the compatibility of products when using on acrylic surface.

**Odor hints for bathrooms - try VANISH Super Strength Pine Scent. It hangs inside the toilet bowl (Not if you are on a septic tank)

WATER DELIVERY

For those who like bottled water (fluoride water). A home delivery service of Culligan water jugs for water coolers is possible for all Shape ID holders. You need to contact Felton Sanders at SandersFe@aafes.com for more information. Same cost as going to the PX minus the hassle.

GARBAGE AND RECYCLING

GARBAGE SERVICES AT YOUR HOUSE

Garbage and recyclables are picked up at your curb just like in Canada, however for your garbage and recyclables to be picked up, they need to be placed in the appropriate standardized bags. Depending on your commune, these bags can be purchased at the Carrefour on SHAPE, at local stores, or at the *Parc à Conteneurs* in your village. Don't throw your garbage/recycling bag receipts away because you can be reimbursed for the cost by taking your receipts to the housing office.

It is important to note that if your garbage men come knocking on your door within a couple of days of the Christmas holiday, they are looking for their holiday tip which is customary in Belgium. Normally a couple of euros does the trick.

To know which day your garbage/ recycling is being picked up:

<https://www.hygea.be/profils/citoyen/votre-calendrier-de-collecte.html>

GARBAGE FACILITIES

Only certain recyclable materials can be placed at your curb. Also, recyclable materials may be picked up on alternating weeks (i.e. your plastics one week, paper the next). If you are ever doubtful of what to do, just look at what your neighbours have placed at their curb. To recycle heavier materials or if you need to get rid of grass clippings, leaves and things of that nature, there are regional recycling facilities where you can drop off waste. These facilities are free and are open Monday – Saturday. Hours vary.

Recycling centre on base : <https://www.shape2day.com/community/recycling-centre/recycling-center>

See the MFSE for information.

METRIC CONVERSION

Oven Temperature

275 F = 135 C	350 F = 175 C	425 F = 220 C
300 F = 150 C	375 F = 190 C	450 F = 230 C
325 F = 165 C	400 F = 205 C	500 F = 260 C

Cup & Spoon Equivalents

¼ cup = 60 ml	1/8 tsp = 0.6 ml	1 tbsp = 15 ml
1/3 cup = 80 ml	¼ tsp = 1.3 ml	2 tbsp = 30 ml
½ cup = 120 ml	3/8 tsp = 2 ml	3 tbsp = 45 ml
2/3 cup = 160 ml	½ tsp = 2.5 ml	
¾ cup = 180 ml	1 tsp = 5 ml	
1 cup = 240 ml		
1¼ cup = 300 ml		
1½ cup = 360 ml		
2 cup = 480 ml		
3 cup = 720 ml		

EMPLOYMENT

WORKING FOR MILITARY FAMILY SERVICES (MFS) OR PERSONNEL SUPPORT PROGRAMS (PSP)

If you want to work for MFS and PSP while in Europe, you should bring the following information with you. It will be required to process your file to obtain the required security clearance to work in Europe. Having this information at your fingertips will speed-up the hiring process:

- *Copy of passport, SOFA or VISA stamp (some of those, you will get in Europe)*
- *Another form of government (federal or provincial) photo ID (birth certificate, Driver's Licence, etc.). If Government photo ID is not available a 3rd piece of photo ID (such as student ID) must be provided*
- *Five years of resident addresses along with proof (mail, bill, T4, etc.). The dates must be five years from the date of filling out the form back exactly five years from that date (i.e.: 24 Oct 2018 back to 24 Oct 2013)*
- *Proof of relevant education and professional qualifications (transcripts, diplomas, etc.)*
- *Proof of previous employment (back 5 years), (work agreements, T4s, etc.)*
- *Two References (names and addresses at least – reference letters are good to have as well)*

SPOUSAL/DEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION

Our Education, Employment and Training Program Coordinator creates and delivers programs such as the Youth Employment Preparation and the Adult Employability Programs. The coordinator also offers employment and training assistance to working age youth and adult family members. These services include; job search information and tools, career related training and programs, and one-on-one employment assistance (resume writing, cover letter, interview skills).

For information regarding education or employment please contact the MFS(E) Education, Employment and Training Programs Coordinator at MFSE.EmploymentEducationTraining@cfmws.com.

JOB POSTINGS

Civilian employment opportunities are published regularly on the CAF Connection Website:

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Programs-Services/Employment.aspx>

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

If you are interested in working for a local employer, your SOFA stamp/dependent status does not confer the right to be employed on the economy. This is entirely a matter for the host nation to decide and it is an individual's responsibility to seek permission from local authorities. The host nation embassy in Canada may be able to assist before departure or upon arrival, consult the appropriate department of the host nation government.

ADULT EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAM

If you will be looking for employment when you return to Canada, MFS(E) can help you to be well prepared through our Adult Employability Program. Through participation in a series of virtual workshops, you can receive help creating a strong resume, cover letter and career portfolio as well as learn and practice interview techniques.

VOLUNTEERING

An OUTCAN posting is a good opportunity to get involved with your community. Volunteer work not only helps support other CAF families and provides social networks and personal satisfaction, but it can help build your skill set and improve your resume.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION PROGRAM

The Youth Employment Preparation (YEP) Program provides real-life workplace training and employment opportunities to the youth of the CAF members and Canadian Forces support personnel posted in Europe. YEP aims to assist youth - between the age of 15 and 24 who are pursuing full-time studies – gain the knowledge, skills and experience to make a successful transition into the labour market. For more information on this program, see:

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Programs-Services/Employment/Youth-Employment-Preparation-Program.aspx>

EDUCATION

SCHOOLS

Please note, MFS(E) strongly encourages you to do your own research regarding educational institutions for your children, based on their abilities and needs. The following is a list of options on base and on the economy. If you have questions regarding the curriculum, entitlements or other important questions, please contact the school directly or contact the Children's Education Manager for Europe: CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca

Local Schools

You may send your child to Belgian schools (*École communale*) beginning as early as two and a half years of age. You must go to the school and fill out an application form. You will have few options for local schools, depending where you live. Some schools have waiting lists, so it is advised to have a plan B.

Department of Defense Education Authority (DoDEA)

SHAPE American Elementary School, SHAPE American Middle School, and SHAPE American High School are part of Department of Defense Education Activity. The DoDEA-Europe-West district office is located in Brussels, Belgium, and the DoDEA-Europe regional office is in Sembach, Germany.

To know more: <https://www.shape2day.com/community/education/shape-intl-school/enrollment-/united-states-section>

<https://www.dodea.edu/SHAPEHS/>

International School

The SHAPE International School

Telephone 065.44 + extension listed below.

American Elementary 5718
Canadian School 5985
American High School 5747
German School 5705
Belgian Elementary 5707

International Kindergarten
5723/5739
Belgian High School 5708/5709
British School 5285
Registration Office 4329

The SHAPE International School provides for approximately 2600 pupils from various NATO countries represented at SHAPE. School facilities include a cafeteria, infirmary, gymnasium, SHAPE sports field and swimming pool. The SHAPE School is divided into several sections:

- Two Belgian sections for elementary and secondary students of all nationalities. Lessons are given in French and follow the Belgian curriculum.
- Two American sections (elementary and secondary)
- One Canadian section (elementary - Grades 1 to 8) Follows the Ontario curriculum.
- One British section (elementary)
- Two German sections (elementary and secondary)
- One Italian section (elementary)
- One Norwegian section that offers supplemental lessons to Norwegian students regularly enrolled in other sections of SIS.
- One International Kindergarten for 2 ½ to 5-year-old.

Canadian children may attend the International Kindergarten on SHAPE (or the American Kindergarten if they are 5 by October). Children may attend mornings only in the International Kindergarten but staff prefers that 5-year-olds stay the entire day. Instructions are in French. There is bussing available for 5-year-old and older except Wednesday at noon (Belgian school) when the parent must pick up the child when school finishes.

SCHOOL BUS OFFICE

Bldg 710, room 102, Telephone **065.44.4013**

All parents of children requiring school bus transport for the following academic year must register with the International School Bus office. The minimum age for children to travel on SHAPE school buses is 5 years.

** For more information, please visit the SHAPE 2 DAY website at:

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/education/shape-intl-school/school-bus>

IMMUNIZATION

Everyone arriving at SHAPE must possess an up-to-date record of immunizations. Present all your international vaccination certificates at the time of immunization. If you receive a short-notice posting, it is possible to receive vaccinations at SHAPE. Pre-school children must have up-to-date vaccinations and you must bring your child's immunization record with you in order to use the facilities at the SHAPE Child Development Centre (daily and drop-off childcare). The schools will expect school age children to have their immunizations up-to-date upon enrolment or ASAP.

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION MANAGEMENT (CEM)

For school-age children and benefits associated with university-aged dependent children studying in Canada, the Children's Education Management Officer for Europe, Nathalie Gagné, should be your first point of contact. Her contact information is: +49 2451 717 164 or Nathalie.Gagne@forces.gc.ca.

For full information on education OUTCAN, please visit Children's Education Management on CAFConnection.ca

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/Education-and-Training/Children-s-Education-Management.aspx>

SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY INFORMATION

A variety of scholarships and bursaries are available to serving and former Canadian Armed Forces members and their families. These scholarships and bursaries are funded by educational institutions, government partners and charitable organizations and are not administered by MFS(E). More information can be found here:

- https://www.cfmws.com/en/SupportOurTroops/Programs/Documents/Scholarship_e_FIN_AL_25%20Mar%202013.pdf

The European Fund (EF) Academic Program is established to recognize the academic accomplishments of students graduating from high school who are dependents of European Fund Members and to encourage students to continue towards post-secondary studies. All students accepted and attending a recognized post-secondary institution will receive €500.

- <https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Programs-Services/Education-Training/Academic-Scholarship.aspx>

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

An OUTCAN posting can be an ideal time to continue your education, whether through part-time or full-time studies, working towards a degree or certificate, for professional development or taking a special interest course for fun. Studies can be done in person at local colleges and universities or on-line through a variety of institutions.

If you plan on studying with a local university or college, be aware that Canadians may have to pay overseas (international) student fees and these fees can be double or triple what a local student will pay. Check with the institutions to see if part-time studies lower these fees.

Local Institutions

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (<http://cicic.ca>) can provide you with information related to Canadians studying abroad or returning to Canada with foreign credentials.

If you are looking to continue a degree that you started in Canada, transferring credits or studying on a Letter of Permission from your Canadian university can be challenging due to differences in the educational systems. Do some research into programs available at your local universities and colleges, attend open days, and connect with their international admissions department to see what options are available to you. Your Canadian university may also have information about studying abroad.

If you choose to pursue an educational program locally and intend to use it professionally, you must ensure that it is an accredited program and your diploma/degree will be recognized in Canada. If there is a governing body for your line of work in the province you will be returning to (i.e. teaching, nursing, accounting) you should check with them to determine how they view foreign qualifications. If you plan to continue with higher education upon returning to Canada, you may want to contact the Canadian institution you are interested in attending in order to see how they will assess your foreign education.

Distance learning in your local community may be available; however, if distance learning is your desired method, it may be easier (and cheaper) to go through a Canadian institution.

Canadian Institutions

Many Canadian universities and colleges offer distance education programs. The delivery of these programs can vary based on the institution or field of study, for example, some programs are offered completely online, some may require you to have proctored exams, while others may require you to visit the institution in person periodically.

When choosing a program, it is important to make sure that it is offered through a recognized, authorized, registered and/or licensed educational institution.

To check the current status of an institution you can use the following search tool:

- <https://www.cicic.ca/868/Search-the-Directory-of-Educational-Institutions-in-Canada/index.canada>

For more information on this directory please visit:

- <https://www.cicic.ca/871/Read-more-information-about-the-Directory-of-Educational-Institutions-in-Canada/index.canada>

ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE

FAMILY LIFE AND RECREATION

The family holds strong ties in Belgium. Many weekends feature visits to other members of the family, if only for a ritual peck on the cheek and a snatch of gossip before heading to the shops. Parents bring their kids to the restaurant, even late in the evening.

CARNIVAL

Belgium's cities burst alive with colourful festivals throughout the year, perfect to see on a weekend holiday in Belgium. Belgium's zany and colourful festivals celebrate everything from bears and beer to witches and giants – some dating hundreds of years old – alongside a good collection of film, music and theatre festivals.

Carnival in Belgium is an important part of cultural heritage and happens every year at Lent, mostly in smaller towns and villages in Wallonia. The most famous carnival is in Binche, not far from Charleroi. The Carnaval de Binche is several hundred years old and has been listed by UNESCO because of its cultural significance and longevity. There are strict rules for taking part: only men born in Binche can don the traditional Gilles costume. The costumes are wonderfully outrageous and carry strange, secret symbols. The festivities last three days (the best day is Shrove Tuesday), culminating in a parade where boys throw blood oranges into the crowd as gifts.

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

- *Pairi Daiza* <https://www.pairidaiza.eu/en>
- *Le Pass parc* <https://pass.be/>

To find all the local attractions: <https://www.365.be/en/>

CINEMAS

SHAPE ALLIANCE AUDITORIUM (movies in EN)

Bldg 502, Telephone **065.44.5600** (recorded listings) or 5968

Recent American films are shown. Films start promptly as scheduled. Ticket sales begin 30 minutes prior to showing. The cinema schedule is published in the SHAPE Community Life magazine as well as on the website:

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/leisure/cinema>

IMAGIX MONS (movies in FR)

Boulevard André Delvaux 1, 7000 Mons **065.35.7373**

<https://tickets.imagix.be/>

CONCERTS

Théâtre Royal de Mons: <https://www.infoconcert.com/salle/theatre-royal-de-mons-14564/concerts.html>

Concerts in Mons: <https://www.songkick.com/metro-areas/26864-belgium-mons>

Concert in Brussels: <https://www.ticketmaster.be/music/concerts/1221/events>

Concerts in Belgium and Europe: https://www.bandsintown.com/en?came_from=257

For more classical concerts, ballets and opera you can visit the federal Opera House of Brussels, La Monnaie/ De Munt website <https://www.lamonnaie.be/en/program?c=1> to see their schedule as well as purchase tickets to their shows.

HOBBIES & CLUBS

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/leisure/group-ii-activities>

SPORTS & ATHLETICS

Check out the **Outdoor Recreation** in the commercial center just across from the SHAPE Rendez-Vous Café! Here you can rent sport equipment, camping gear, BBQs and party games, bouncy castles...They also have a bike repair shop.

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/sports-fitness/outdoor-recreation>

ATHLETIC CENTRE (GREEN GYM BEHIND MEDICAL CLINIC)

Bldg 404, Telephone **065.44.5156**

All ID card holders, 14 and older, may use the tennis courts. There are 8 outdoor courts and two indoor courts located at SHAPE and reservations are recommended. Also available in the gym are weights and Nautilus equipment.

PLAYING FIELDS

Bldg 313, Telephone **065.44.4405**

As these are scattered all over the SHAPE complex, a map or phone call to the gym is the easiest means of locating a particular area.

GYMNASIUM / POOL

Bldg 313, Telephone **065.44.4405** (gym) or **5325** (pool)

The Sports Office is located in this facility. There are 3 squash and 2 racquetball courts, a 6-lane pool, saunas, and gym facilities for basketball, volleyball, and badminton. Aerobic classes for all levels by qualified instructors are held upstairs and water aerobics classes are

held at the pool. Modern fitness room available. Schedules are available at the office for various activities within the gym complex.
Pool is closed for annual cleaning during the month of June.

More info on the Sport & Fitness Centre: <https://www.shape2day.com/community/sports-fitness/sports-fitness-centre>

RECREATION CENTRES & PARKS

- *ImagiPark in Mons*: <https://www.imagipark.be/>
- *Lago Piscine du Grand Large in Mons* : <https://www.lago.be/mons>
- *Le Belvédère in Dour*: <https://www.visitmons.co.uk/see-do/leisure/le-belvedere-1559207>
- *Dock 79 in Saint-Ghislain*: <https://www.dock79.be/>
- *La Casa des Géants in Ath* : <http://casadesgeants.be/>
- *Adventure valley in Durbuy*: <https://www.adventure-valley.be/>
- *Les lacs de l'Eau d'Heure in Boussu-lez-Walcourt* : <https://www.lacsdeleaudheure.be/>

AMUSEMENT PARKS

- *Walibi* <https://www.walibi.be/>
- *Plopsaland De Panne* <https://www.plopsalanddepanne.be/en>
- *Bellewaerde* <https://www.plopsalanddepanne.be/en>
- *Mini-Europe* <https://www.minieurope.com/en/>

DINING OUT

One of the adjustments Canadians faced in moving to Belgium has been the nature of the restaurant experiences. In Belgium, dining out is an entirely different experience. Belgians — who are always in a hurry when they're in the car — are in no rush when they enter a restaurant. Your server will wander over to deliver menus whenever it's convenient, will tell you about the daily specials only if asked, will not offer refills on your drinks unless summoned to the table. You won't be interrupted, engaged in conversation or rushed to complete your meal, but the down side of this is that receiving and settling the check can take quite a lot of time.

Be patient, enjoy your meal and don't be shy to ask for your waiter's attention.

Tipping

Tipping in Belgium isn't a standard practice, as service is typically included in the final bill. For instance, most restaurants add a 10 to 15 percent service charge to the bill, so there is no need to tip anything extra. Plus, most employees earn a livable wage, which means gratuity is not relied upon as a source of income. A few euros, however, will always be appreciated by those that exceed your expectations. You may find tipping is more common in South Belgium than in the North, but a few euros still go a long way.

Restaurant Server: It is common for a 10 to 15 percent service charge to be included in the final bill, so tipping anything extra is unnecessary. You can, however, leave a few extra euros for stellar service, if desired.

Bartender: There's no obligation to tip at a bar, but feel free to leave a few euros for service that exceeds expectations.

Tour Guides: Most tour prices include gratuity, but not all. A tip isn't expected, but a few extra euros are always appreciated.

Taxis: Tips are not expected or obligatory, but feel free to let the driver "keep the change." You can always give a few euros if the driver helps with luggage or offers insider tips about the area.

Doorman: Services are typically included in the overall cost of your stay, so it isn't necessary to tip anything extra.

Bellhop: Services are typically included in the overall cost of your stay, so it isn't necessary to tip anything extra. If, however, service exceeds expectations, you can leave €2.

Housecleaning: Services are typically included in the overall cost of your stay, so it isn't necessary to tip anything extra.

Concierge: Services are typically included in the overall cost of your stay, so it isn't necessary to tip anything extra.

Stylist: Though tipping isn't common, feel free to leave a few euros if happy with you new do.

Spa Service Provider: Service cost typically includes gratuity, but feel free to leave a few euros at reception if the staff exceeded expectations.

SHOPPING

GENERAL SHOPPING TIPS

Local Store Hours/Sunday/Holiday Shopping

- *'On the economy' is a term used for shopping outside of SHAPE & Chièvres Air Base.*
- *Shop hours can appear to be completely arbitrary.*
- *Some stores are open on Sunday mornings, but closed Monday morning, or all day Monday.*
- *Some stores will close for one or two weeks in the summer when the owners go on holiday (usually in August).*
- *Many small shops close over the lunch hour and for the month of August, but that, too, is variable. In the Netherlands, stores are closed only in the mornings on Mondays.*
- *Shopping Malls, Pharmacies and most stores are closed on Sundays.*

Public Washrooms

Be prepared that most of the public washroom have fees. Between 0.50 to 0.70€. Public washrooms are very hard to come by on the Belgian highway when you travel long distances. It is not unusual to see Truck drivers peeing on the side of the road, everywhere (that is also the case in the Hainaut province and around SHAPE).

You might have to pay to use the public bathroom in places such as the cinema, bar and restaurants, even though you are a customer of the place.

Shopping Bags

Grocery stores do not give plastic or paper bags, you have to bring your own reusable bags or buy the ones they offer.

In pharmacies and small stores, they might offer you a *'sachet'*, which is a small paper bag, free of charge.

In retail and department stores, they can offer you a bag, but it will not be free (sometime a 0.10€ charge). Most places offer paper bags, it is very uncommon to get a plastic bag (except on Chièvres Air Base and at the Rationed Items Store on SHAPE).

It is advisable to carry reusable bags with you at all time when you go out for shopping.

GROCERIES

CARREFOUR MARKET SHAPE

Grocery and Department Store, Bldg. 505 **065.32.8570**

The main section of the store consists of a grocery, bakery and department store where Pay & Go refill cards for cellular phones can be purchased. There is also a section with electronics and computers. The advantage of shopping on base is that you save the VAT tax on produces.

There are plenty of Carrefour stores around SHAPE (some are smaller and are called Carrefour Market and some are bigger (similar to Walmart) with toys, books, clothing on top of the groceries and those are called Carrefour Hypermarché.

Other grocery store around SHAPE and in Belgium: Colruyt, Aldi, Cora, Delhaize, Lidl, Okay, Intermarché.

For Bio and Bulk:

- *Bio-Planet in Mons:* <https://bioplanet.collectandgo.be/cogo/fr/home>
- *Equivrac (in Casteau, Soignies, Braine-le-Comte, La Louvière and more) :*
<http://www.ekivrac.com/nos-magasins/>

One of the best places to buy fresh and local produces is at your local Market. Click [here](#) to see the different markets around Mons. Items bought at the market are usually cheaper than the same item would be in the grocery store. Payments are usually made in cash.

Cooking and Baking

Some baking ingredients are hard to come by on the economy, but are easy to find at the Commissary on Chièvres Air Base (chocolate chips for example).

***The MFS team in Casteau offers an Info-Session about baking products for Newcomers (usually in the Fall).*

GENERAL SHOPPING

TYPES OF STORES (examples)

Book Stores: Club, Belgique Loisirs

Clothing Stores: JBC, H&M, Zara, Esprit, Vero Moda

Craft Store: Ava

Department Stores: Carrefour Hypermarché (like Superstore), Cora (like Walmart), Makro (like Costco)

Animal Stores: Tom&Co, Jardiland (also a gardening Centre)

Hardware Stores: Brico, Hubo, Brico Plan-it

CLOTHING SIZES

Women size

Canada	Belgium & France	Great Britain	Germany & Netherlands	Italy
6	36	8	34	38
8	38	10	36	40
10	40	12	38	42
12	42	14	40	44
14	44	16	42	46
16	46	18	44	48
18	48	20	46	50
20	50	22	48	52

Less precise are the Small, Medium and Large (S, M, L) designations which correspond to another unit of measurement, 1, 2, and 3.

Bras (Band sizes)

Canada	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
Europe	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
UK	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44

Bras (Cup sizes)

Canada	AA	A	B	C	D	DD	DDD or E
Europe	AA	A	B	C	D	E	F
UK	AA	A	B	C	D	DD	E

Men size

Shirts (collar size)

Canada & Great Britain	14	14 ½	15	15 ½	15 ¾	16	16 ½	16 ¾
Europe	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43

Men's suits

Canada & Great Britain	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
Europe	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58

Women's shoes size

Canada	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Europe	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
UK	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Men's shoes size

Canada	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5
Europe	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46
UK	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Children's shoes size

Canada	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3
Europe	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
UK	1.5	2.5	3.5	4.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5

VAT FREE SHOPPING

Purchases of goods and services in Belgium are subject to VAT. The amount of the tax depends on the item to be bought or the service rendered. Members of SHAPE pay VAT on the purchase of goods outside of the SHAPE stores.

It is possible to get the VAT reimbursed on certain items. Members may purchase VAT exempt items in Belgium. Ask the Detachment Orderly Room for details on the procedure. This exemption is limited to certain items, for example:

Furniture	Personal Computers
Radios and CD players (even for cars), Tablecloths	Refrigerator, Stove, dishwasher, washing machine
Curtains (provided they do not become fixtures)	Crockery, glassware, cutlery
Light fittings/Lamps	Bicycles and motorcycles (< 50 CC)
Carpets (provided they do not become fixtures)	Garden furniture
	Televisions, videos, hi-fi systems
	Vehicles

The exemption does not include clothing, telephone, faxes, tools, musical instruments, cameras, and other personal effects (e.g. jewellery). It does not include services either such as car repairs. Members may also buy tax free items from the Carrefour and the Rationed Item Store at SHAPE. Additional information and a thorough list of items that you can buy tax free are available [here](#).

LOCAL SERVICES

DRY CLEANING

SHAPE Toni Shop, Bldg. 505

Contact: 065/44.70.58 or <http://tonishop.be/>

Opening Hours:

Monday-Friday: 11.00-18.00 hours

** Located behind the Recreation Centre, it is equipped with regular and oversize washers and dryers (Open 24 hours.)

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/commercial-activities/shops-on-base>

CHIÈVRES PX - Military Clothing Store/ Cleaners/ Alterations
Bldg. 20005

[https://www.shopmyexchange.com/exchange-](https://www.shopmyexchange.com/exchange-stores/Belgium/BEL/Chievres/Chi%C3%A8vres-1366125)

[stores/Belgium/BEL/Chievres/Chi%C3%A8vres-1366125](https://www.shopmyexchange.com/exchange-stores/Belgium/BEL/Chievres/Chi%C3%A8vres-1366125)

BARBER AND BEAUTY

1. Barber Shop Bldg. 102 (SHAPE Headquarter), Room 201, Telephone **065.44.5498**
2. Ladies & Barber Shop (SHAPE), Bldg.504 tel **065.44.2614**
3. Stylique Salon (Chièvres) Bldg. 4, tel **068.27.5340**
4. Barber Shop (Chièvres), tel **068.27.5635**

Many options on the economy as well, but will likely be only in French and be prepared to pay way more than what you are used to for the same service in Canada.

LIBRARY

Bldg. 307, Telephone **065.44.5631**

Books, magazines, reference section, pocket book exchange, CD's, tapes, videos, DVDs, electronic, etc.

Computer room with 9 stations equipped with Internet (1 Hr. max use). The SHAPE ID is required to have the library card (available at the check-out desk.). They also offer Wi-Fi internet. They have special reading activities for kids.

<https://www.shape2day.com/community/education/library>

CHILDCARE

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (CDC)

Bldg. 616, Telephone **065.44.5616**

SHAPE has a daycare center that has accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (American). The CDC operates four complete programs that include full-day and part-day care, preschool, part-day before and after international preschool and hourly care (not always offered) for children ranging in age from six weeks to five years. The center operates from 07:30 – 18:30 hours. All CDC patrons must register their children, complete all the required documents, and schedule a pre-enrolment orientation. This is done at central registration located in Bldg 503 (in front of the Carrefour parking lot). CDC also offers a Kinder camp during summer.

Details on programs and childcare registration are available at the Central Enrolment Registration Office (CER) in Building 503.

<https://chievres.armymwr.com/programs/cysreg>

SCHOOL AGED SERVICES (SAS)

Bldg. 602, Telephone **065.44.6077**

Provides daily and hourly care for children ages 6 to 11 years old, or first through sixth grade. Also offers a summer camp.

Details on programs and childcare registration are available at the CER registration office (Bld. 503).

<https://chievres.armymwr.com/programs/childcare>

TWEEN & TEEN CENTRE

Bldg. 503, Telephone **065.44.5610/5613**

The Tween Centre is open to youths in grade 6, 7 and 8 with membership card and the Teen Centre is open for teens in grade 9 through 12 with a membership card. This facility offers social, cultural and recreational programs as well as trips. It also offers a middle school teen camp during summer. Yearly membership fees and opening hours change, so it is best to inquire at the CER office, Bldg 503.

<https://chievres.armymwr.com/programs/youth-centers>

PET CARE

Telephone **068.27.5436**

There is a limited facility for boarding dogs and cats. It is located in the building close to the PX (Chièvres US air base), on the other side of the road leading to Gate 1. Appointments are on a first-come, first-served basis. You must book early for summer and school vacations.

<https://chievres.armymwr.com/programs/kennel>

IN CLOSING

Your posting to Europe may be one of the most memorable postings you will experience with the Canadian Armed Forces. This experience comes from a combination of your outlook on life, your specific location and your family dynamics. While some revel in relaxed weekends roaming their local area, others are perpetually traveling to various locations otherwise too far or too expensive to discover from Canada.

Through it all, MFS(E) is here to assist you to maximize the good times and overcome any bumps along the way. Our focus is on virtual programming, email and telephone contact and on informational mailings. This may be different than what you are used to, but support is very much available to you, and we await your arrival with anticipation.

This Handbook is a special tool designed with you in mind. You may be surprised at the cultural differences upon first arrival. This guide is set in place to assist you in understanding some of the differences.

We have a Military Family Services Europe Facebook page so please take a moment to follow and 'like' the page. It helps get everyone in touch and keep up to date on upcoming events and programs. As this is always a working document and every family's experience is different, we welcome any recommendations to improve this guide. It is your input that helps us to better serve you. We wish you a pleasant posting and we look forward to meeting with you at any of our organized events or programs, or online during one of our virtual programs. Remember we, are only a phone call or email away.

Welcome!

MFS(E) Staff, Advisory Committee & Volunteers



***DISCLAIMER: Due to rules and regulations ever changing, please ensure you do your own research and consult with the resources provided for the most up-to-date policies and procedures before making any assumptions or relying on information provided here as accurate as policies and procedures change and could be different from the time this document was created and updated.
Thank you for your cooperation and attention in this matter.***

USEFUL LINKS

COMMUNITY FACEBOOK GROUPS

Pages/Groups ONLY for the Canadians posted to SHAPE/Casteau

- CFAS
- CFSU(E) Det Casteau Group

Pages/Groups for the SHAPE/Chièvres community

- SHAPE families*
- SHAPE for sale*
- SHAPE motors*
- SHAPE Canadian school
- SHAPE Pets*
- SHAPE kids stuff for sale*
- SHAPE Travel Group
- U.S. Army Garrison Benelux
- USAG Benelux Family and MWR
- Chievres FMWR

Pages/Groups for larger Outcan community

- Outcan Spouses of Canadian Military Europe
- Canadian Virtual University and College Fair (**run by MFS US*)

NOTE: *To be added to those groups you have to be in Belgium.

USEFUL TRANSLATIONS & PHRASES

BASIC WORDS, PHRASES AND QUESTIONS

English	french
Yes (formal)	Oui
Yes (informal)	Oui
No (formal)	Non
No (informal)	Non
Hello	Bonjour
Good Bye	Au revoir
Hi	Salut
Bye	Bye
Please	S'il vous plaît
Thank You	Merci
Excuse Me	Excuse-moi
My name is...	Je m'appelle
What's your name?	Comment t'appelles-tu?
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous Anglais?
I don't speak French	Je ne parle pas français
How are you?	Comment ça va?
Would you help me please?	Pouvez-vous m'aider s'il vous plaît?
What time is it?	Quelle heure est-il?
How much does it cost?	Combien ça coûte ?
Where do I find...?	Où puis-je trouver...?
Where are the bathrooms?	Où sont les toilettes?
Do you have...?	Est-ce que vous avez...?
Where is...?	Où est...?
Could you please talk more slowly?	Pouvez-vous parler plus lentement s'il vous plaît ?
Could you repeat that, please?	Pourriez-vous répéter cela, s'il vous plaît ?

NUMBERS

English	French	English	French
one	un	eleven	onze
two	deux	twelve	douze
three	trois	thirteen	treize
four	quatre	fourteen	quatorze
five	cinq	fifteen	quinze
six	six	sixteen	seize
seven	sept	seventeen	dix-sept
eight	huit	eighteen	dix-huit
nine	neuf	nineteen	dix-neuf
ten	dix	twenty	vingt

PHRASES FOR EMERGENCIES

English	French
Help!	Aidez-moi! / À l'aide!
Police!	Police!
Fire!	Feu!
Get a doctor!	Obtenir un docteur
I am sick.	Je suis malade

ORDERING IN A RESTAURANT

English	French
The menu, please.	Le menu, s'il vous plaît.
Do you have a menu in English?	Est-ce que vous avez un menu en anglais?
I'd like....	Je voudrais...
Could you recommend something?	Pourriez-vous recommander quelque chose?
Another (beer) please.	Une autre bière s'il vous plaît.
The check, please.	L'addition s'il vous plaît.

English	French
A receipt, please.	Un reçu s'il vous plaît.
Breakfast	Petit-déjeuner (EU) / Déjeuner (CAN)
Lunch	Déjeuner (EU)/ Dîner (CAN)
Dinner	Souper

HOUSE HUNTING

English	French
House	maison
Apartment	appartement
Rooms	pièces
Bedrooms	chambres
Living Room	salon
Kitchen	cuisine
Dining Room	Salle à manger
Rent	Loyer
Utilities	services
Parking	Parking / Stationnement