



Virginia Association of First Responders EMS Exchange Program – Kassel, Germany

Thank you for your interest in the VAFR EMS Exchange Program. By submitting an application you are one step closer to a voyage most in our profession will never have the opportunity to experience. Those who have made this journey have forged friendships and collected priceless memories.

Started in 1995, the VAFR EMS Exchange Program offers a unique opportunity for EMTs and Paramedics to observe EMS and public safety systems abroad. Exchange students traditionally tour hospitals; police, fire, and rescue stations; and sites of historic significance. Time is also spent working alongside our German colleagues in ambulances and attending briefings with department managers. The exchange typically lasts for 17 days, however one to two days may be added or removed for scheduling purposes.

Though in the name, you are NOT required to be a paramedic to apply. Plenty of EMTs have made the trip in years past. Possessing an ALS certification or other advanced medical training does add merit to your application, however.

VAVRS is partnered with the City of Kassel branch of the German Red Cross (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz or ORK). Kassel is a city of 192,000 located 2 hours north of Frankfurt, in the west/central state of Hessen. Students typically spend the majority of their time within Kassel and the surrounding villages, though ventures to further cities are occasionally scheduled.

In the city of Kassel and surrounding county, emergency medical services, or Rettungsdienst "Rescue Service" is provided by three different agencies. The ORK operates the majority of stations and ambulances, followed by Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (private organization), and the Feuerwehr Kassel "City of Kassel Fire Defense" (Fire Department).

Applications will be reviewed by the Exchange Committee, with candidates being invited to a panel interview. Interviews are held at the VAFR headquarters in Goochland County. A total of four applicants will be selected for the program, with two additional as alternates. You will be contacted by the Chairman of the Exchange Committee regarding the status of your application.

It is also important to note that:

- As an exchange student, you are not only a representative of your Rescue Squad and the Virginia Association of First Responders, but of the Commonwealth of Virginia and our Nation. The highest standards of professionalism and accountability are required and will be expected at all times.

- While food and lodging in Germany is provided by the ORK at no cost, program members are responsible for the purchase of their airline ticket. Traditionally, a student's respective agency will subsidize a percentage of this expense, but it is not required.
- Your three weeks in Germany will include daily activities that begin early and end late. This may be physically and mentally taxing to some, and must be considered before applying.
- Germany has a strong public health system and additional vaccines are not required for travel.

A promotional video covering the 2012 Exchange can be found on YouTube@

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f5t5wsexzk>

Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of any further assistance to you with your application. If you need additional space for your comments on the application, please feel free to attach additional documents. The application can be scanned and emailed to me at En2b8@aol.com or mailed to the VAFR office at 2535 Turkey Creek Road, Oilville, VA 23129. Again, thank you for your interest in the VAFR EMS Exchange Program. We look forward to receiving your application.

Wayne Perry
Exchange Committee Chair
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