

Army Europe Regulation 608-18-1 Child Supervision

Recently the term “free range parenting” has been bandied about the internet. While many yearn for the days of kids running rampant through town with no worries for their safety, the world and our understanding of the cognitive abilities of children has changed. Military installations are typically very safe in comparison to civilian neighborhoods in some countries. Nonetheless, it is vital that parents provide adequate supervision for children in line with their age and maturity levels whether on or off post.

A newly released Army Europe Regulation (AER-608-18-1) assists parents in identifying what the command expectations are regarding supervision of their dependent children. You can find the new Regulation at the following link www.aepubs.eur.army.mil

This AER identifies inadequate supervision as “A type of child neglect characterized by the absence or inattention of the parent, guardian, foster parent, or other caregiver that results in injury to the child, in the child being unable to care for himself or herself, or in injury or serious threat of injury to another person because the child’s behavior was not properly monitored. “

Army Community Services (ACS) under which the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) falls has partnered with Child and Youth Services to clearly outline for families stationed on Army installations in Europe the level of supervision required for children at various stages of development. The new AER contains a handy chart so parents can quickly answer questions such as “Am I allowed to leave my fifth grader home alone after school until I get there?” “Is it okay to leave my high school student home alone while I go for a weekend trip?” And “Can my 6th grader babysit my toddler?”

This new AER replaces the previous Army Europe Child and Youth Supervision Policy with a few significant changes.

The new AER classifies children by grade instead of by age. This aligns with how the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) schools and Army Child and Youth Services (CYS) classifies children. Homeschoolers and host nation schoolers never fear, there is a handy age to grade conversion chart for you to use. During summer months, children are considered to be the grade they just finished until school starts again.

Per the new AER, students are never permitted to be home alone until they are in grade six. There are further stipulations to this ability by grade and length of time.

With regard to walking to and from school as well as DoDEA bus stops; the new AER has certain restrictions by grade. Bear in mind however, that not all locations are identical in this regard. DoDEA schools may have further restrictions for your location. Your child’s school will inform parents of these.

Local Garrisons may also identify their local child supervision policy which may go further than the Army Europe Regulation 608-18-1. Your local garrison will publicize that information.

As with any child supervision regulation or policy, parents should always consider the abilities and maturity level of their child when making decisions for their family. Parents are always free to delay milestones of independence identified in the AER as their children grow and mature.

The Army community is dedicated to ensuring all our children are safe. Anyone who observes an incident of child abuse or neglect is encouraged to report the incident to the local military police. For questions on this AER please contact your local Family Advocacy Program.

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