

Varying levels of exchange support available to entire military community

Army & Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

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DALLAS -- From Fort Bragg, N.C. to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, military installations around the world are home to more than 3,000 Army & Air Force Exchange Service food, entertainment and retail options. The Army posts and Air Force bases where these exchange operations are located host a variety of visitors, contractors and Department of Defense civilians who often ask, "Who's authorized to shop these facilities?"

Exchange service authorization actually begins with the House Armed Services Committee and ultimately ends with the installation commander. The guidelines, as prescribed by Army Regulation 215-8/Air Force Instruction 34-211 (I) and the Armed Services Exchange Regulations, Department of Defense Instruction 1330.21, require proper identification of authorized customers, including uniformed personnel and members of the Reserve Components and family members, applicable DoD civilians, exchange associates, retirees and their dependents who possess a basic exchange purchase privilege authorization card.

While authorizations governing who can buy merchandise and services at exchanges often apply to a chosen few, the doors to AAFES' 1,631 food facilities and 284 shoppettes are open to virtually anyone looking for a quick bite to eat. In fact, DoD policy allows all federal government employees, and even installation visitors, to dine at AAFES restaurants as long as their orders are consumed on the installation. Furthermore, anyone can purchase single-serve consumables from a Shoppette, an option that is especially valuable late at night considering many AAFES convenience stores offer extended hours.

"The 'Snack Avenue' inside most AAFES Shoppettes offers a robust selection of single-serve consumables," said Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Helm, AAFES' senior enlisted advisor. "Candy bars, soft drinks and even hot dogs can be picked up by just about anyone with business on the installation."

Anyone who believes they may qualify for exchange benefits, including access to the main exchange, should contact their local AAFES manager for additional guidance as well as information regarding possible exceptions at specific BX/PX locations. Installation-specific contact information is available

online at www.aafes.com under the BX/PX "Store Locator" link.

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