

Base Exchange (BX) and Commissary



Base Exchange

The Base Exchange's mission is to provide quality merchandise and services of necessity and convenience to authorized customers at uniformly low prices; and generate reasonable earnings to supplement appropriated funds for the support of Air Force morale, welfare, and recreation as provided by Services units at locations supporting Air Force personnel. In 2001, the Army and Air Force Exchange System (AAFES) provided \$278 per service member in dividends back to bases worldwide, and over \$90,000 in savings bonds for academic achievement of Army and Air Force children.

Authorized customers can shop AAFES on-line at <http://www.aafes.com/> -- this site also has information about local Base Exchanges, coupons, sale advertisements, employment, sales of military clothing, the Mystery Shopper program, and more!



Commissary

Base Commissaries are operated by the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA). "DeCA's goal is to deliver the premier quality of life benefit for our military efficiently and effectively. *Premier* means customer savings of at least 30% over the commercial sector, with sales increase over the next several years, more innovations that serve our customers, and more attractive stores that match the military family needs. *Efficiently and effectively* means reducing our unit costs of output while assuring that the benefit performance delivered is improved."

Commissaries are required by law to sell items at prices set only high enough to recover item cost, with no profit or overhead factored into item price, and their pricing procedures adhere rigorously to this legislative requirement. Because the commissary charges you what it costs them, prices will vary from commissary to commissary, depending on local costs. You will see a 5% surcharge added onto your grocery bill. This surcharge covers the operational costs – cashier's salaries, electricity, etc. Surcharge is calculated on the total price before coupons are subtracted.

Tipping baggers – Baggers are not commissary employees, and work for tips only. There is no "hard and fast" rule about how much to tip baggers. You are under no obligation to use a bagger at all (you can bag and carry your groceries yourself), and if you do use a bagger, you have no obligation to tip them. An informal survey of spouses on AF Crossroad's Spouse Forum shows that tipping \$1 to \$5 is average, depending on the number of carts or total price of the groceries, and the service or attitude of the bagger. "Change" is the usual tip (\$1 or less) to baggers at the express lane when you carry out your own bags. At any rate, tip the baggers what you can afford!

If you go to <http://www.commissaries.com/> you can get information about sales, the locations and floor plans of commissaries, employment, recipes, and even a shopping list creator!