

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COVID-19 RESPONSE IN 7th ATC

Bavarian Decree / General Order #1A

Q: Do I need placards or passes to drive within Bavaria for essential needs? Is there a process to establish what is “essential travel” and when that applies?

A: Currently, the Bavarian State is not requiring placards or other passes for essential travel. Those traveling are only required to present a credible reason why someone is outside of their residence. As always, community members should carry their DoD identification card when traveling in the Host Nation. In the event that this changes, the command will provide guidance on what, if any, further documentation is required.

Credible reasons for essential travel include work, medical and veterinary treatment, everyday consumer goods, exercise alone or with immediate family members, and activities necessary for animal care.

Keeping travel to the absolute minimum extent possible may require individuals to shop at less desirable stores closer to their residence and/or walk pets in locations closer to their residence. In addition to the Bavarian Decree, Command policy limits such travel to a maximum of 20 kilometers from an individual’s off-post residence.

All members of the military community – Service Members, Dependents, and Civilian employees – are reminded that they are subject to German law and therefore may be punished if found to be in violation of the Bavarian Decree. Current possible punishments include a fine up to €25,000 EURO. Violations may also have a negative impact on their SOFA status. Finally, the command may also take adverse administrative action in the event that an individual violates either Host Nation law or military orders and directives.

Q: Are there exceptions to allow Soldiers and their dependents who live on post to leave the installation for essential items?

A: General Order #1A permits those living on-post to request an exception to policy that must be submitted to their summary court-martial convening authority (usually their Battalion Commander), or any higher authority, for approval. For example, permission to leave the installation for medical errands may be permissible so long as the Soldier gets advance approval from their Battalion Commander for the exception. This approval should be in writing and is for the specified purpose only.

Q: In general, what restrictions listed in General Order #1A apply to dependents? How are those restrictions enforced?

A: In general, all restrictions in General Order #1A apply to dependents, civilian employees, and Soldiers. The measures directed in General Order #1A (GO1A) and other established hygiene, social distancing, and screening protocols are intended to protect our communities from the public health threat posed by the Novel Coronavirus. COVID-19 does not distinguish between Soldiers, civilians, or dependents; we are all equally at risk and therefore we all bear an equal obligation to follow these rules.

Soldiers who violate certain portions of GO1A can be held accountable under the UCMJ. Dependent family members who chose to violate established protection measures can face a variety of consequences ranging from (but not limited to) loss of some installation privileges; being barred from the installation; and being returned to CONUS through an "Early Return of Dependents" action. In addition, the Bavarian Polizei are enforcing their law on this matter. For example, in Amberg recently, the Polizei cited a German national who was using an automated car-wash, because that is not essential. Fines of up to 25,000 Euro are possible for violation of the Bavarian Curfew.

Every member of our community, and their health and protection, is important to us, whether they are a Soldier or civilian, American or German. But each member of our community also has an obligation to protect each other, and complying with these measures is the best way to do that.

Q: How long are all of these restrictions expected to last?

A: Army leadership in Europe is continually reviewing what restrictions are needed for our communities to protect from COVID-19 as well as the restrictions imposed by the Host Nation. We are committed to gradually relaxing restrictions when it becomes prudent and lawful to do so.

Q: Are we allowed to travel between neighboring installations for essential services? Is this allowed and is the mail room open for this? Or will I need to wait until the restriction is lifted?

A: Travel between neighboring installations for essential supplies and services is permitted under Host Nation law and GO-1A. "Neighboring installations" means those located in close proximity to one another in the same community; primarily, this is designed for the Ansbach community where there are multiple small bases in the same city. It also allows for essential travel between Rose and Tower Barracks. But please note, essential travel does not include socializing!

Mailrooms have been identified as an essential service and will remain open. Community members will continue to have access to Military Post Offices, but will be required to adhere to established social distancing measures in effect on-post.

Q: Are community members permitted to buy & sell second-hand items through services like Bookoo, Facebook Marketplace, etc.?

A: These practices are prohibited under the Bavarian Decree and GO1A. Traveling outside one's home for the procurement of essential household goods is permitted. However, both the Bavarian Decree and General Order #1A provide specific examples of permitted establishments in which essential goods may be procured. These include places such as grocery stores and pharmacies. However, traveling to others' homes to purchase non-essential items in the informal marketplace is not permitted.

Q: Can I go shopping with another person or am I required to shop alone? Are there different rules on post?

A: Pursuant to the Bavarian Curfew, everyone is ordered to reduce all physical and social contacts with other persons, except for immediate family members living in the same household, to the absolute minimum extent possible. Departing a private residence is only permitted for certain authorized reasons to include shopping for essential household goods. Accordingly, shopping should be conducted alone unless there is an absolute need to have an immediate family member with you. For example, if your child is too young to leave alone at home, they may accompany you to the grocery store. Otherwise, you should do your essential travel alone.

Q: Does the ban of gatherings of more than two people apply on post or for U.S. Personnel?

A: Pursuant to the Bavarian Curfew, everyone is ordered to reduce all physical and social contacts with other persons, except for immediate family members living in the same household, to the absolute minimum extent possible; wherever possible, social distancing of approximately 6 feet is mandatory. With respect to official duties, each unit has its own unique requirements and personnel assets; leaders are continuously making assessments on how to continue operations while mitigating the risk of COVID-19. But even on post and during the performance of duty, every effort must be made to limit the number of people in the same room.

Q: Are there any exceptions to signing-on guests on post? For example, what about a family member not in DEERS system, or significant others?

A: Installation access requests (sign-in privileges) for unofficial visitors require prior, written approval by the sponsor's Summary Court-Martial Convening Authority (normally the Battalion Commander) or a GS-14 level supervisor. In general, absent a very compelling reason to grant it, these requests will be denied.

Family Members Desiring to Return to Europe

Q: Is a person with a SOFA stamp considered a permanent resident? (This refers to dependents who are currently out of the country and want to return to their duty station).

A: Community members in possession of a SOFA stamp will not be denied entry into Germany. They should also carry a copy of their sponsor's orders that lists them by name as a command-sponsored dependent. However, as commercial carriers continue to limit travel in response to COVID-19, persons desiring to return to Germany should act as soon as possible before travel is no longer available. It is also always a good idea to carry a copy of your orders when traveling to and from Germany as it further solidifies your status within the Host Nation.

Visiting Family Members (No SOFA Status)

Q: Who is legally considered a dependent? For example, there are Soldiers who have adult relatives temporarily staying with them, but the relatives are not on their orders. What restrictions apply to these relatives?

A: Everyone in our community is expected to do their part to ensure the health and safety of each other. Accordingly, relatives who are visiting the installation are expected to follow the standards of conduct expected of all members of our community and can be removed from the installation for failure to follow established installation protection measures. Additionally, everyone (regardless of status) is required to follow German laws on isolation, quarantine, and restrictions on movement. Those who violate these standards are subject to sanction by German authorities, and we are obligated to inform those authorities of violations. The German government can also revoke a person's SOFA or tourist visa status for failure to comply with Host Nation laws and regulations. Again, every member of our community is a valued partner and someone whom we are committed to keeping safe. But each member of

our community also has an obligation to protect each other, and complying with these measures is the best way to do that.

Q: Are tourist visas being automatically extended? What are the legalities there?

A: Currently, we are not aware of any directive to automatically extend tourist visas. However, individuals on tourist visas should regularly consult the U.S. Department of State website for updates. All visitors present on a tourist visa are strongly encouraged to make arrangements to return to their home country. On March 17, 2020, European Union member states approved a plan to shut down the external borders of the Schengen Zone. Accordingly, our community members should advise potential visitors that inbound travel is prohibited. For those who successfully depart Europe for the United States, they should expect a possible 14-day quarantine on their return to the U.S.

Social Distancing (Official Duty)

Q: There are concerns regarding social distancing and mitigation measures. What are the enforcement measures?

A: All community members are expected to adhere to social distancing rules. Regarding enforcement, screening teams will be asking individuals to maintain social distancing rules. Compliance is expected, and non-compliance may result in ejection, restriction, or bar from Garrison facilities or punishment under UCMJ. The challenges posed by COVID-19 are new and we are taking strides to adjust in response. Commanders at all levels are doing their best to accomplish mission essential tasks while taking into account the threat from the Novel Coronavirus. Each Army formation has its own unique requirements and personnel assets; leaders are regularly making assessments on how to continue operations while mitigating the risk of COVID-19. Within the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 response measures, we do still have missions to accomplish. If someone is concerned about the safety of a particular practice they should not hesitate to raise the issue directly with the chain of command.

*Q: Why are **Non**-Mission Essential Soldiers and Civilians still required to go to work?*

A: Non-Mission Essential Soldiers and Civilians should be teleworking whenever that is possible. Commanders and Directors make the determination of which Soldiers and Civilians are mission-essential under the COVID-19 Health Protection Conditions. Soldiers and Civilians should strictly adhere to the guidance, directives, and orders of their chain of command or supervision.

Right now, we are making every effort to minimize the presence of personnel in the workplace.

Travel Ban & Reimbursement for Leisure Travel Loss

Q: Are we able to provide military families in our communities with a standardized memorandum regarding the travel bans to assist with refunds for hotels, flights, etc. during this time?

A: The entire world is facing hardship in responding to the threat of COVID-19. Unfortunately, there is no military exception for monies lost as a result of this unforeseen global pandemic. Most major airlines are offering refunds for tickets on flights that have been cancelled in response to COVID-19. But there is no special exception or memorandum for military personnel, as these travel bans and cancellations are affecting the entire world.