

Town Hall Opening Remarks

Garrison Commander COL Vogel

29OCT20

Good evening Vicenza and Darby military communities and thanks for joining us.

I'm Colonel Dan Vogel, the U.S. Army Garrison Italy commander.

As Maj. Gen. Rohling stated in his opening remarks, we are resuming virtual COVID town halls to address community concerns.

Today's town hall is being taped, however, you can still ask questions while watching this video in real time. So, please do not hesitate to post your questions in the comment section. We have our team of experts standing by.

First, let me emphasize the importance of getting the information from OFFICIAL sources. They are the U.S. Army Garrison Italy website and U.S. Army Garrison Italy Facebook page.

I want to be clear: USAG Vicenza is NOT an official Facebook page, it is not a source of credible information in relation to our installation, and is NOT endorsed by the senior leadership.

Since our last town hall Friday, the Italian government introduced new measures to help contain the further spread of COVID-19.

The latest decree is effective until November 24.

As new decrees are published, the garrison will evaluate and determine how they apply to our installations to include Darby.

There is extensive internal communication among senior leaders as we share thoughts on the decree application and how they will impact our services, with the goal to meet mission-readiness requirements by the Department of Defense.

In addition, we work closely with our Italian military leadership on all decisions. We appreciate your understanding and patience as new information is released.

We want to maintain open status for as many services and functions within the garrison as possible to preserve the well-being, health, and readiness of our Soldiers, Family Members, and Civilians.

We created an infographic that summarizes the latest Italian decree and its application to our military communities. Again, it is posted on the USAG Italy website and Facebook page.

We've received questions about the future of our food options. In line with the Host Nation decree, the dining facilities, or DFAC, and Mensa will remain open and available. However we are encouraging take-out.

Similarly, our food vendors will continue to operate with encouraging take-out to the fullest extent possible. Aligned with the Italian decree, they will switch to only take-out starting at 1800.

I would like to touch on a couple of the FMWR programs. The latest Italian decree does not restrict our SKIES Unlimited program, as it is a key component to the education and development of our military children and youth.

Our SKIES Unlimited staff will reach out directly to the families of those enrolled for specific information.

With the latest decree, Italian gyms, pools, spas, and fitness centers are closed as of Monday, October 26th. However, in line with the Host Nation decree, facilities in support of defense and security mission can continue to operate and remain available to personnel tied to that mission.

To further mitigate the spread of the virus, we will limit access of indoor physical fitness facilities to Active Duty military and our workforce, which includes Department of the Army Civilians, contractors and Host Nation professionals.

While we will maintain access to indoor facilities to this limited population, we strongly encourage these personnel to conduct individual physical training outside to the greatest extent as possible.

Travel conditions and restrictions continue to change. People should travel only if necessary. We discourage our community members from using public transportation.

Currently, there are five regions in Italy that have imposed curfews from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. These regions are Piedmont, Lombardy, Lazio, Campania, and Calabria.

For your situational awareness, the regions of Lombardy and Lazio, require a "self-declaration" form to be used while traveling during the curfew hours of 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. Please keep this in mind if you are traveling to and around Milan and or Rome.

You can download a copy of the fillable self-declaration by visiting the USAG Italy webpage.

Remember to always coordinate all your travel arrangement with your chain of command or supervisor.

I would like to remind you that there will not be any garrison-sponsored Halloween activities on our installations this year due to the Coronavirus. As a father, I absolutely understand your frustrations.

If you live on Villaggio, door-to-door trick-or-treating is not authorized. Off installation, we strongly encourage adults to not take children door-to-door trick-or-treating.

We must take action to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

We have been living with this unprecedented challenge since February. I cannot thank you enough for your sacrifices and understanding during these times. We continue to learn and expand our capabilities to ensure we are in a good position to act and react swiftly and effectively.

The recent incidents with DoDEA and the post offices have tested our current measures by being proactive in mitigating the spread of the virus, as well as conducting extensive contact tracing to ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

I have great respect for your hard work and sacrifice.

I appreciate your contribution in keeping everyone safe.

I couldn't be prouder of our Vicenza and Darby communities.

Thank you.