

"I know there is significant concern about when our Soldiers, family members and employees will be able to receive the COVID vaccination. The vaccination doses are a concern to all the senior leaders in this command. Across all fronts this is being engaged within our higher command including the Commanding General being in contact with the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Vice Chief on our vaccination status and receiving our "fair share" of the vaccinations available." Brig. Gen. Jed Schaertl, Senior Responsible Officer for the US Army Garrison Wiesbaden Community

Questions & Answers

Facebook Live Town Hall, March 16

WHERE ARE THE VACCINES? Why is our supply chain so much different than elsewhere? Where are the ones going that EUCOM is receiving and why aren't we getting an appropriate amount? When are the next ones coming? To date, we have administered over 20,000 vaccine doses and fully vaccinated more than 10,000 people in our military communities across Europe. This has been accomplished through a tiered distribution process that prioritizes those most at risk of contracting COVID-19, and those who are most vulnerable.

Can we get some INFORMATION regarding the vaccine? What's the holdup? Details about the vaccine distribution process are posted every Monday on the Clinic web site and Facebook page. Information is also shared through garrison web and social media as well as AFN.

When will civilians be able to get the vaccine? Why is there no information on a timeline? Why are there delays in getting a supply of the vaccine here? Should we be trying to arrange a vaccine with German doctors when they receive supplies (rumored to begin in April)? Difficult to establish a specific timeline at this point, but we are doing everything in our power to get you COVID Vaccines as quickly as possible. BLUF: We aren't going to get a lot of vaccine over the next several weeks. However, we anticipate the supply will start ramping up again in early April. Our senior military leaders here in Europe are working very hard with Department of the Army to push the supply chain to get us more vaccine. Great demand for vaccine world-wide and vaccine production by multiple companies is just starting to ramp up sufficiently to meet that demand.

When are spouses and dependents getting vaccines? Will employees who are due to PCS in a couple of months be given priority? Difficult to establish a specific timeline at this point, but we are doing everything in our power to get you COVID Vaccines as quickly as possible. The first two sub-tiers within Tier 1 include healthcare workers, first responders, our deployable Forces, and other mission essential personnel like teachers and vital installation service support staff. We have to follow the DoD Prioritization schema for the order of vaccinations.

What is the specific delineation of conditions included in tier 1c? The public guidance so far has not listed specific conditions that place an individual in 1c, other than to say that CDC will be followed. So have specific health conditions been identified, and have beneficiaries been placed into that category, as civilian CONUS jurisdictions have done, and further if and when that is done, will beneficiaries be notified that they are in that category, or will there be some other process to self-identify and verify? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions, such as cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, heart conditions, among several others, are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Medical history will be looked at to determine if an individual is high-risk.

Is there anyone actively fighting to get us an adequate vaccine supply. Who is advocating for THIS military community. Germany is entering a third wave with new variants. We only have one clinic that will provide us with the vaccine, and they are unable to do so. Should we all be writing to our congressmen? Should we just fly back to the US and get it? Our senior military leaders here in Europe are working very hard with Department of the Army to push the supply chain to get us more vaccine.

Since it seems like the best way to get a vaccine is to fly back to the US, is there any plan to change the travel related quarantine/ROM rules so they align with the host nation and CDC? Our senior military leaders here in Europe are continuous evaluating our protective posture and are working very hard with Department of the Army to push the supply chain to get us more vaccine.

When can we expect to have service members and adult dependents vaccinated? Will the vaccine be offered to minors? Various states in the US are offering to people as young as 16. We are using the Moderna vaccine here in Europe, which is only approved for those 18+. It is difficult to establish a timeline beyond Tier 1 right now.

What is the usage rate for prepared vaccines for USAG Wiesbaden? Referring to vaccines that are brought to temp for use within the window they are able to be administered but are not used in time. If for whatever all readied doses are not administered, what's done? If there is a percentage that is readied and not administered, could there be a daily end of day time slot made open for first come first serve people who want to get the vaccine? . Every time we have vaccinations available, we have additional people identified just in case we have extra vaccines available, so every day we have 100 percent usage, nothing goes unused. Actually, we are getting more than a 100 percent usage because we can sometimes get 11 doses out of a vial instead of 10. Bottom line is that we have not wasted a single dose. , so if you are hearing that, that is categorically false.

The Stars & Stripes published an article on 11 March about the vaccine delay, and said the delay is only impacting the European theater. There are no delays in Asia or the Middle East theaters. The article does not address the cause of the delay. Can you explain the cause and what leadership is doing to correct it? The current demand for the COVID vaccine continues to outweigh the supply. We are asking for your patience as we work through limited vaccine supply constraints. Our senior military leaders here in Europe are working very hard with Department of the Army to push the supply chain to get us more vaccine and our MTFs are standing by to continue vaccinations according to the DOD's Prioritization Schema.

I know Landstuhl is canceling vaccine appointments because they are out of vaccines. They don't know how long it will be before they will get more and predicting it will be several weeks. Since we fall in the Landstuhl footprint am I right in assuming we will see similar delays to an already grossly delayed vaccine rollout? Each MTF receives vaccines directly from the Defense Logistics Agency. We do fall in the LRMC footprint, but we are allocated our own doses.

Is there a projected timeline for the COVID vaccination schedule? In other words, when should each tier expect to be offered the vaccine? Difficult to establish a specific timeline at this point, but we are doing everything in our power to get you COVID Vaccines as quickly as possible.

Will the garrison be receiving other vaccines as they receive approval, for example the Johnson and Johnson vaccine? Stripes reported that military bases in other OCONUS locations have already been sent the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, but that DLA hasn't received any orders for the vaccine from European installations? WHY NOT?! The simple answer is yes, we will be getting the Janssen vaccine in Europe over the coming weeks. The Janssen vaccine is a single-dose COVID vaccine that doesn't have the extreme cold storage requirements that the mRNA vaccines like Moderna have. As a result, it will be used to vaccinate our Soldiers who are forward deployed to places where we don't have robust medical treatment facilities.

Regarding a COVID vaccine schedule - when should each tier expect to be offered the vaccine? Difficult to establish a specific timeline at this point, but we are doing everything in our power to get you COVID vaccines as quickly as possible. We recommend following the various garrison and clinic webpages to stay current with most recent updates.

Will the garrison be receiving other vaccines as they receive approval, for example the Johnson and Johnson vaccine? We are currently only receiving the Moderna vaccine for use at our health clinics and hospitals. In the future we anticipate receiving the recently approved Johnson and Johnson or Janssen vaccine.

What about the COVID vaccine for Active Duty members and family members who are getting ready to PCS this summer? Every circumstance is different. Please confer with your chain of command and health care facility if you have received orders for specific guidance.

Who is in charge of making decisions for vaccine procurement for the European theater and the Army? What is the plan for distribution from the top level down to the Garrison? Our senior military leaders here in Europe are working very hard with Department of the Army to push the supply chain to get us more vaccine. Our MTFs are standing by to continue vaccinations according to the DOD's Prioritization Schema.

They have discussed family members but no specifics as to D.A. civilians or Active Duty specifically. Can you address their priority? If we are talking healthy family members and healthy service members, they would fall under Tier 2. Once we clear the other tiers and sub-tiers, then anyone older than 18 with a DoD ID card will be eligible to receive a vaccine.

Can you clarify the high-risk population? We have to alert the unit of a high-risk or will they know? I thought the clinic was making that call when they notify patients. It is going to be a combination of things based on CDC guidance. Most folks should be self-identifying their high-risk and we will have a process to validate that at the vaccination site. Additionally, we are trying to reach out to people we know are high-risk and to call them forward as well.

I am a civilian and my spouse is a civilian so we don't see you at the clinic regularly, how will you know we are high-risk? There is some level of self-identification and so we will communicate with the community over Facebook or the web page. If you fall within that category and you are not getting called forward by Garrison Operations, then we recommend you reach out to us and we can make sure you are being accounted for, especially if you do not fall under a unit for any particular reason -- that would be a good reason to reach out to us. Garrison collects information, not just from the military units but it is every unit and every agency on the installation to include all dependents and elements on the installation, so you should report to your agency what tier you are in and that agency needs to report their numbers up to Garrison.

So you need to self-identify to your chain of command, who then reports their numbers to Garrison, who then puts out the schedule.

Why does EUCOM appear to be such a low priority in getting this vaccine? To date there have been more than 20,000 vaccines administered with about 10,000 people being fully vaccinated across Europe and that has been accomplished through the Tier process that we talked about earlier, and I am not getting too specific, those numbers are general enough to share, but we are being distributed the vaccine in accordance with the Department of the Army's distribution plan, so I wouldn't say we are any higher or lower than any other unit in the plan.

Are you able to request a certain Vaccine brand when you get your vaccine if Janssen and Moderna are both available? That is a little hard, because we are not hearing that we will have anything other than Moderna. If we had two different vaccines, we would have certain criteria set up for us, as you know Moderna is a two-shot dose and the J & J shot is a one-time go, but there would be some kind of criteria that would be established, but I really can't answer that because we only have the one vaccine. I would say, do not wait if the vaccine is available to you, then take the vaccine that is available. Don't wait for 2 months down the road and hope that Janssen is available to you. As we have said, we can only project out 3 weeks. If it is available, I highly recommend you take it when it is available.

What if you get your first shot in the U.S., how does that affect when you might get your 2nd shot if you are here? This a correction to the actual town hall as new guidance has come out. First, you have to be mindful if you are getting your first shot in the U.S. because we are only currently receiving Moderna shots here. Recent changes to CDC guidance allow us to provide a mRNA vaccine from different manufacturer in extenuating circumstances. Such as if the original vaccine is no longer available. If you are getting your first shot in the U.S. then we will have to work you back into the process according to the DoD priority scheme. Your priority will not suddenly jump up because you went back to the U.S. to get a shot. Please keep that in mind. Additionally, if you have to receive the second dose outside the 28-42 day window we have full confidence that you would receive adequate protection from COVID.

My husband is a retiree and works at DLA. Can we get the vaccine too? Yes, since you are a beneficiary of the DoD system, you would be eligible to get the vaccine.

Are you going to keep ROM the same during Spring Break or follow Host Nation ROM requirements? We are keeping our ROM requirements the same. We are not looking to change our ROM requirements whether we have the vaccinations or not. The travel restrictions that exist is something we still have to follow. There is specific guidance on where you can travel to and right now you really cannot travel outside Germany, and Germany is pretty much the country with the lowest numbers in Central Europe.

If a Soldier is on leave long enough in the U.S. can they get the vaccine there? Yes, but you have to be sure that they will be there for the full 30-days and get the two shots. There is no reason that you couldn't as I am aware. And, it depends on where they go and what that installation has for supply.

I am concerned about sharing my medical information with my husband's command team. HIPAA! Can I still get the shot? Yes, you can get the shot. We are not asking for specifics, they just have to identify that they are high-risk.

If my spouse is high-risk, can I add him to our request for the vaccine? Yes.

How are retirees getting in the numbers for the vaccines? We have reached out to the Retiree Service Councils and ACS for those numbers and when people have reached out to the clinic about this we readily share those points of contact with them.

Will people PCSing in the summer have priority in getting the vaccines? Currently I am not tracking a priority for people who are PCSing. If they are healthy, they are going to PCS, they are going to ROM, and keep in mind even if you have the vaccine, you still have ROM requirements, you still have mask requirements, you still have to wash your hands, keep your distance, but you will ROM as you PCS in until guidance changes from the Department of the Army.

When our turn comes to get the vaccine, will we be told what date to show up for it or can we be given a choice of dates to show up or an appointment? We will specify date and time. We do not want 200 people waiting outside the vaccination site. We do not want a huge group. We want to control it very tightly on the lower end because it is less likely for exposure. Every 30 minutes we have a group to show up and we don't want people to show up early.

What is the usage rate for the prepared vaccines for USAG Wiesbaden. Referring to vaccines brought to temperature for use in a window of time but not used in time. Every time we have vaccinations available, we have additional people identified just in case we have extra vaccines available, so every day we have 100 percent usage, nothing goes back to the clinic. Actually we are getting more than a 100 percent usage because we can sometimes get 11 doses out of a vial instead of 10. Bottom line is that we have not wasted a single dose, so if you are hearing that, that is categorically false.

If complications happen from the vaccine on or off duty for Army civilians and it affects their ability to work, is the workers' comp on the table, since the vaccines are experimental and voluntary? Is there a chance DoD will not pay workers' comp? We don't know how to address that -- this is something a legal expert would have to address.

Can you please specify realistic expectations for Tier 2 or general population vaccinations? Should we consider going home to get vaccinated? I cannot tell you when Tier 2 will get vaccinated. I certainly don't want to give you false hope that you will be vaccinated the end of April or the end of May. I just don't know if we are going to have doses come in. As far as going back to the States, if you are a healthy individual I don't see a need for that. If you go back to the States, you need to be mindful of where you are going, the availability of the doses of where you are going, plus you still have ROM requirements when you go there and when you come back, so there are a lot of things to factor in. The protocols we have in place are effective in the infection rate, wearing your mask, washing your hands and watching your distance has been very beneficial in the reduction of the virus. I think you need to take that into consideration and make an informed decision.

If we get the first Moderna shot, is the second one guaranteed or will there be a chance there will not be enough? The way the system works is when we are allocated the first round shots, the second ones are already on the shelf. So as long as you make yourself available, we will have the second dose for you.

The president has said that by June 1, all Americans will be able to receive the COVID vaccine, can leadership provide an assessment when all of USAG Wiesbaden will be vaccinated, i.e. not a date, Summer, Fall, Winter, and will we abide by what the president has said? I don't have an assessment beyond 3 weeks. I wish I could say that we can have the entire community vaccinated by 1 May, or 1 June, but I cannot say that within a degree of certainty. We are prepared to vaccinate the community as long as vaccines are available.

Can my German wife get the shot if I have had mine? If she is a DoD dependent, and has a DOD ID card, she can have the shot, otherwise we are not vaccinating local nationals. Anyone with a DoD Identification Card can get the vaccination.

Hessen has stated they plan to close schools if indicator numbers go over 100. Right now they are at 89 and rising daily. Will our schools in that instance follow host nation rules? We maintain contact with the State of Hessen and the schools across Europe. There are already differences in what we do in Wiesbaden and what Hessen is doing. I imagine there will continue to be differences. If DODEA and leadership assess that we are at risk and we need to go back to virtual learning, then we will go back to virtual learning. But, we have seen the re-opening of schools have been very successful, and I have not heard of any cases at least in this community of COVID in any of our four schools. So, I would be very resistant at this time to change what we are doing now based on the numbers I am seeing.

Wiesbaden High School does not offer driver's education, and we have students needing to get a driver's license and they don't speak German, what is the Garrison doing to help the kids get a driver's license? Due to COVID we can't just hop on a plane and fly back to the States? This has been forwarded to DODEA for a response.

Are there any plans to keep the CDC open later than its current pickup time? The CDC is based off of manning and FP CON Levels, which kind of drives what we can and cannot do.

Do we get documentation on receipt of the vaccination? Yes, you get a card and it does document that you received a COVID vaccine. There is also an electronic record of your vaccine, but we recommend you treat that card as a sensitive item though. If you lose it, come by to the clinic and we can print out a copy for you, but do not laminate the card because we cannot document it if you have to have a booster shot.

Are there plans to stop quarantine for those who are fully vaccinated? We have had a lot of senior leader discussions on this, but neither Germany nor DoD have published any changes to quarantine or ROM based on having vaccinations and currently we are not changing our guidance to follow suit.

Is there a plan to get local nationals vaccinated? There has been a lot of discussions about this but there are certain legal barriers and there are a lot of people working on that, but right now there is no plan but that is being actively worked at higher levels of leadership.

What is leadership doing to fight for more vaccines here in Wiesbaden and Europe? I know what USAREUR and Africa leadership is doing, and that is Gen. Cavoli is directly engaging the Vice Chief and the Chief of Staff of the Army in making sure that all installations across Europe are getting their fair share of the vaccinations.

Why is ROM different from both CDC and host nation? Our ROM requirements we are keeping the same. We are not looking to change our ROM requirements whether we have the vaccinations or not. The travel restrictions that exist is something we still have to follow. There is specific guidance on where you can travel to and right now you really cannot travel outside Germany, and Germany is pretty much the country with the lowest numbers in Central Europe.

Why is it a security concern for cases to be known? It violates Army OPSEC policy.

When you are 65 when do you get the shot? Contact your chain of command or Retirement Services for guidance.

If not discussing numbers, are you at liberty to discuss general rationale? No, bottom line is, it violates Army OPSEC policy.

I am a widow. Am I eligible? It depends on your status. If you have a valid DoD ID card and are Tricare eligible you can be vaccinated.

How does the directorate rank people within each category? Our teams are prioritizing personnel based on the established DOD Schema.

When can family members get the vaccinations? It is difficult to establish a specific timeline at this point, but we are doing everything in our power to get you COVID Vaccines as quickly as possible.

Is hypertension in the high-risk list of conditions? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions, such as cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, heart conditions, among several others, are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Medical history will be looked at to determine if an individual is high-risk. Please check the CDC website for more detailed information.

Can we get the MP's to the bus stops more often in the afternoons? DES has been contacted and we will make that happen.

When will the commanders address the distressing and out of control costs of pet shipping. Can you address the need for more vet services and boarding? We understand that this issue is very important to the community. Part of our Army Family Action Plan addressed that concern and it went up to the Department of the Army about having pets added to orders so hopefully that will help defray the cost of shipping pets. Currently we are looking for space to address the boarding and vet service issues.

Is the Garrison planning charging stations for electric vehicles? Another great initiative and we will look forward to working that in the future.

If our post office box is difficult to open (e.g., requires a vice like grip to pull open), who in the post office can resolve this? Can the boxes be serviced to make them easier to open? Please understand that the post office is fairly new so if you are having problems with the mailboxes, go to in and out processing and they can help you with any issues you are having.

If there are any road closures, can a map be attached? We will work that action.

Why is CYS only able to offer "E-sports" and not able to hold in person non-contact sports when host nation is allowing much of these sports to take place? We are closely aligned with the host nation but not identically. We are currently in the process of reinitiating our CYS and sports program, we have to get volunteers certified and teams built, we believe we will be able to get these teams built and sporting events by late Spring. But these are conditions-based decisions, if conditions worsen we will have to adjust and I just want everyone to understand that.

Col. Washington, what can you do for people bringing their trash on post and dumping it? McCully is becoming full of household trash. We can put a policy out about that but we have to hold each other to a standard. One of the Sgt. Major's pet peeves is catching people putting stuff in the trashcans. He drives around to our installations to ensure trash is being picked up, but we just don't have the manpower to watch people put things in the trashcans. There is a policy on that but the enforcement piece is a sticking point to us but we recognize that and it is one of the Sgt. Major's priorities. We will try to enforce it if we see it.