

Unofficial Translation

Of the Associazione a Buondiritto's
“Dizionario dei diritti:
Diritti in carcere”

Prisoner's Guide

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Admission into the Correctional Facility

Incarceration

Upon arrival at the correctional facility, prison officials will conduct a personal search, take your digital fingerprints and perform a physical examination. These procedures must be completed on the day of your arrest or the following day, at the latest. You may ask for a copy of the institution's internal rules.

Interview with prison officials

The interview provides you with the opportunity to communicate any personal or family problems in Italy that require immediate attention. Should such problems exist, *Il Centro di Servizio Sociale* (Social Services) will be contacted.

Communication of your Arrest

Immediately upon arrival at the prison, you will be asked whether you want to inform a relative or other person about your arrest, either by letter or telegram. You will be given this opportunity whether it is your initial arrest or if you have been transferred from another institution.

Means of Communicating your Arrest

You can inform your family of your arrest, either by **letter** (in an unsealed envelope) or **telegram**. You must give the letter to the prison officials, who will send it at your expense. The administration will cover the cost for underage and destitute individuals.

If you are not an Italian citizen, your admission will be communicated to the appropriate Consular Section. For example, U.S. citizens may contact the U.S. Embassy in Rome or the nearest U.S. Consulate (Milan, Naples, Florence).

Information for U.S. Citizens

[How to Contact the U.S. Embassy in Rome](#)

American Embassy
Consular Section
U.S. Citizen Services
Via V. Veneto 119/a
00187 Rome
Tel. 06 46741

[Assignment of a Lawyer](#)

A **court-appointed attorney** will be provided for those individuals who have not selected an attorney at the time of their arrest. The court-appointed attorney is not free and must be paid.

If you are not satisfied with the court-appointed attorney, you may select a **different attorney** from the list of qualified attorneys. This list should be prominently displayed in the facility. The prison officials are not permitted to influence your decision in any way.

[Your Personal Belongings](#)

You must turn over all personal belongings to the prison officials.

You **cannot**, for example, keep expensive watches, gold necklaces or other expensive personal items with you. Such items, along with your cell phone, will be collected and retained by the prison officials.

Your **belongings will be returned** to you when you are released from the facility, except those items which are considered evidence. Items that cannot be kept in the facility will be sold. You, or a person of your choosing, will be given the profits of the sale of these items.

Rules for Packages

You are permitted to receive objects from outside the facility. These items, which must be sent in a package, **will be checked** before they are given to you.

Rules specific to each facility determine the number of packages you may receive, the weight limit and the frequency with which you may receive packages.

The rules concerning how the package must be prepared, how it will be checked, which packages will be accepted, and how the package will be delivered will likewise be determined by the individual facility.

During a visit, you can give clothing or undergarments that need to be washed to your visitor. If you do not receive visitors, someone may send you a special package containing exclusively linens and/or clothing. The package should be sent by regular mail.

Permitted Items

You **are permitted** to receive clothing, undergarments, shoes and linens, such as bed sheets and towels.

You **are permitted** to receive newspapers, magazines and paperback books so long as the package does not exceed the weight limit.

Prohibited Items

You are **not permitted** to receive soap, perfume, or items for personal hygiene, detergent, or audiocassettes.

CDs and CD ROMs are **not permitted** unless you are able to demonstrate that the CD pertains to your studies or your work. In such instances, you must submit a request to the prison officials. The package will be given to you by a family member or by an authorized visitor during their visit.

Telephone calls

Placing Telephone Calls

To make a telephone call, you must be granted permission from the prison director. Each facility has at least one telephone that you can use.

You are allowed **one** telephone call per week and each call can last no more than **10** minutes. You may call family members and members of your household once a week. Under special circumstances you may also call non-family members or your lawyer. The one call per week rule does not apply if you wish to call children under the age of ten.

You are permitted to place a call:

In cases of emergency.
If you are transferred to a different facility.
When you return to the facility after leave.

Authorization to Place Telephone Calls

Authorization is granted by the judge (if you have yet to be sentenced) or from the Prison Director (if you have already been sentenced). You should submit a *domandina* (written request) with the name of the family member you wish to call and their telephone number. **You may call family members only.**

You may only call the **personal home phone** belonging to the person with whom you wish to speak. You may not place calls to public phones, office phones, or cell phones.

If your family resides outside of Italy, the telephone numbers must be confirmed by your Consulate. Once you have obtained authorization to call a particular individual, that authorization remains valid for future phone calls.

Cost of Telephone Calls

You are responsible for the cost of **ALL** telephone calls. The cost of the calls will be deducted from your internal account.

The cost of a phone call depends on its length, and fees are different according to the country you are calling. You may request a detailed list of the cost and the length of the phone calls you placed from the *Ufficio conti correnti* (Financial Office).

[Receiving Telephone Calls](#)

When someone calls and asks to speak with you, the prison officials are only permitted to relay to you the name of the caller. If your spouse or partner is also incarcerated, you are permitted to call them, so long as both of you have obtained the necessary authorization.

Written Correspondence

Mail

You can send and receive mail. You should write your first and last name on the envelope, but it is **not necessary** that you include the address; in this way your privacy is protected, as the recipient will not know you are in jail.

For express and certified mail you should complete a *domandina* (request) with your registration number and the number of the account established for you within the jail. This should be attached to the letter you wish to send.

Telegrams and Faxes

To send telegrams and faxes you should complete a *domandina* (request) with your registration number and internal account information and complete the form for the telegram or fax.

If you cannot afford to send a telegram/fax, the prison administration will allow you to send **one letter per week for free**. The facility should always have on sale the materials needed for correspondence.

Inspection of Correspondence

Correspondence sent in a sealed envelope must undergo **inspection** to ensure it does not contain valuables or other prohibited items. This rule applies to mail leaving and entering the facility. Inspectors are not permitted to review the content of what is written in the letter.

The decision to send or block an inspected piece of mail is up to the *Tribunale di Sorveglianza* (Court of Superintendents) and the judicial authorities. This rule also applies for incoming telegrams and faxes.

Inmates must be immediately informed if their letter is blocked.

Mail sent to international organizations in charge of the protection of human rights **will not be inspected**. Mail sent to your defense attorney will not be inspected, so long as you write on the envelope: *Corrispondenza col difensore per motivi di giustizia* (“Correspondence with defense attorney for legal purposes”).

Visitors

When you enter the facility, you may ask for a **first visit**. You should present your request in the following manner: If you have yet to be sentenced, you should present your request to the judge overseeing your case; if you have already been sentenced, you should present your request to the prison officials.

Who can Visit You

If a family member would like to visit you, this individual must contact their respective consulate (i.e. U.S. Citizens should contact the U.S. Embassy in Rome or nearest U.S. Consulate in Milan, Naples, or Florence) and submit documentation which establishes your relationship. For example, a birth certificate would suffice should a parent wish to visit their incarcerated child.

If a non-family member wishes to visit you, this person must not have a criminal record or pending criminal cases. This person should present a certificate of good conduct, which can be issued by the government where this individual resides.

Visiting Rules

You are entitled to **6 visiting hours a month**, unless you are detained in solitary confinement. The visit can last up to an hour. Under special circumstances, it may be possible to extend the visit with your spouse or partner.

You may receive no more than **2** visitors at one time. Each visitor must present identification and submit to a personal search. The visit will occur in a common room equipped with dividing walls.

Under special circumstances, the prison officials may allow the visit to occur in a different location; however, this location will likewise be under the observation of the guards. Inmates confined to the infirmary are permitted to receive visitors there.

You are not required to receive visitors. If, for whatever reason, you feel you should not meet with someone, you have the right to refuse the visitor. Doing so will not prevent you from receiving visitors in the future.

Activities

Use of a Radio and Other Devices

You **are allowed** to use radios, walkmans, pocket radios, and portable CD players. You are **not permitted** to record. Each facility establishes rules which regulate when these devices may be used so that others are not disturbed by the noise.

Personal Property

The facility's internal rules establish the kind and quantity of possessions that you can have, buy or receive. All correctional facilities prohibit inmates from keeping money on their person. All belongings that you cannot keep with you will be collected by the prison officials and returned to you when you are discharged, unless these items are considered to be evidence.

Recreation

The spaces designed for recreation must be equipped for bad weather conditions. During recreation time, you may participate in sports or cultural / recreational activities. It is usually possible to set up playing fields for sports in the outdoor area.

Sports, Cultural and Recreational Activities

The sports program and cultural / recreational activities are usually designed so that everyone may participate; however, the sports program is geared towards young people in particular. Both national and local agencies are involved in the development of these programs.

Library

Prison officials must allow easy access to the facility's library. Inmates should also be given the opportunity to use books from the public library system. The items available in the library must reflect the cultural diversity of Italian society.

Nutrition

[Daily Meals](#)

The facility must provide **three meals a day**. The time these meals are served is determined by each particular facility. Generally, breakfast occurs first thing in the morning; lunch is served 5 hours later; and dinner is scheduled for six hours after lunch.

Minors are given four meals spaced throughout the day.

[Alcohol](#)

At meal time, you can drink a maximum of one half liter of wine or one liter of beer a day. **Outside meal time, alcoholic beverages are not permitted.** It is not permitted for someone to mail you alcohol.

[Hot plates](#)

You are permitted to use battery-operated hot plates to prepare hot beverages or reheat leftover food.

[Where You Eat](#)

Meals are served in the cafeteria; however, organizational or disciplinary problems may require that you eat in your cell.

Money

You are **not permitted** to keep money with you inside the facility; however, you may receive money from your relatives in the form of a **money order**.

When the money order arrives at the prison office, you will be given a receipt by the prison authorities, notifying you that a certain amount of money has arrived. At that point, an **account** will automatically be opened in your name. You will not be given the actual paper money, but you will be able to use that amount within the facility. Whenever you decide to buy any of the items or services available (food, stamps, clothing, etc) you must present a *domandina* (request) and the cost of your purchase will be deducted from your account.

If you have a job inside the prison, **one fifth** of your monthly salary is deposited into a special account. This amount will be returned to you as a lump sum when you are released. The remainder of your monthly salary may be used for authorized purchases, correspondence, lawyer fees, or the payment of tickets, debts, or fines. Alternatively, you have the option to **send money to relatives** or partners through a postal money order.

Education

While in prison you can attend academic and/or vocational classes. These are classes which allow you to learn the skills necessary for a specific profession (carpentry, tannery, etc.). These classes are offered based on the demands of the labor market and whether or not placements can be arranged. The course may include an apprenticeship component. There is a **fee** to participate in these courses.

Medical Assistance

You are entitled to receive medical assistance, according to the rules of the facility. All correctional facilities have an infirmary, which you may visit **free of charge**. Moreover, some jails have clinical and surgical divisions. Additionally, you may request authorization from the prison director to have private visits with a **doctor of your choice**. This only applies if you have already been sentenced. **You will be responsible for the cost** of the visit.

When it is necessary to transfer someone immediately to the hospital and the appropriate judiciary authority cannot be reached, the prison director may approve the transfer. The director will then inform the judicial authorities accordingly.

Time Off for Good Behavior

If you have demonstrated good behavior while in jail, you may earn a reduction of **45 days for every six months** of jail time you have served. This includes time spent in police custody and/or house arrest.

The *Liberazione anticipata* (Time Off for Good Behavior) is granted by the *Magistrato di Sorveglianza* (Superintendent). If your request is rejected you may appeal to the *Tribunale di Sorveglianza* (Court of Superintendents). Neither the time you have left to serve nor the severity of the offense will be taken into consideration when reviewing your request.

Transfer to another Correctional Facility

Transfers can be ordinary or extraordinary.

Ordinary transfer refers to the periodic movement of an inmate from one correctional facility to another.

Extraordinary transfer occurs only in cases of urgent necessity or under unusual circumstances.

When a serious health problem necessitates an urgent transfer, the director of the prison can authorize the transfer. The director then immediately informs the competent authority.

Female guards assist with the transfer of female inmates to ensure their security.

Glossary of Terms

Albo degli Avvocati: Attorneys Admitted to the Bar

Assistenza Sanitaria: Health Assistance

Avvocato Difensore: Defense Attorney

Centro di Servizio Sociale: Social Services

Difensore d'Ufficio: Court-Appointed Attorney

Direzione: Prison Officials

Domandina: Written Request

Liberazione anticipata: Good Time

Magistrato di Sorveglianza: Superintendent

Medico di Fiducia: Personal Physician

Magistrato: Judge

Ora d'aria: Recreation time

Tribunale di Sorveglianza: Court of Superintendents

Ufficio conti correnti: Financial Office