

## Italian guide's death at Colosseum in Rome sparks anger

Friday, 22 Aug, 2025  



**The sudden death of an Italian tour guide at the Colosseum** has cast a shadow over one of the world's most visited monuments and ignited protests from colleagues demanding better working conditions.

**Giovanna Maria Giammarino, who was 56, collapsed inside the amphitheater** at 6 pm on August 19, while leading a group of visitors through the 2,000 year-old monument. She was victim of a heart attack.

Giammarino's death has shaken Italy's tourism community. **It reignited debate over working conditions at monuments around Italy.** Only weeks earlier, the [World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations](#) had warned that extreme heat was no longer an exception but "a new reality that demands attention, adaptation, and solidarity within our profession." On August 19, official temperature in Rome reached 32°C (90°F).

As tributes poured in, Italy's **Certified Tour Guide Association (AGTA)** said Giammarino's passing underscored the physical toll guiding takes. **It urged authorities to change opening hours at the Colosseum and surrounding archaeological park.** And allow tours during cooler parts of the day.

Several associations representing tour leaders issued also a joint statement blaming unsafe working conditions at the Colosseum and other major sites. They pointed to **exhausting schedules, extreme summer heat, and a lack of proper facilities for guides who spend hours walking and speaking without breaks.**

### Changing opening times in summer

*"The Colosseum is a treasure of humanity, but those who work there every day are treated as invisible,"* one association leader said. *"This tragedy should never have happened."*

*"First of all, the opening hours need to change during summer,"* AGTA said in a statement. *"It's useless to talk about a 'heat emergency' every year as if this were something new. Climate change is a fact, and for years working at the Roman Forum from 10:00 to 4:30 has been unbearable."*

The group wants the site open from 7 a.m. to 8:15 p.m. between June and August. Current opening hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 7:15 p.m. schedule.

Facing professionals' protests, officials finally reacted. **Rome's City Hall** offered condolences. It said the capital owes *"respect and support to those who contribute daily to the city's cultural identity."* Officials pledged to open talks with guide associations to address safety concerns.

The Colosseum's management expressed *"deep sorrow"* over the death. It announced **it would review existing safety measures for staff and collaborators.** This would include shaded rest areas and access to water during peak summer months.

**Italy's Tourism Minister, Daniela Santanchè,** called the guide's death *"a painful wake-up call"* and promised to meet with unions. *"We must ensure that those who safeguard and share Italy's heritage can do so under dignified and safe conditions,"* she said.



In the wake of the tragedy, unions have called for a demonstration in Rome to demand action.

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