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Policy Section:		COVID-19	Effective Date: May 2021
Prepared By:		Ministry of Long-Term Care	Revision Date: January 2022
Subject:	COVID-19 Visiting Policy		

Source

LTC COVID-19 Guidance Document_ January 4 2022 _FINAL

Required visitor policy

All homes are required to establish and implement a visitor policy that complies with this document and Directive #3 (as amended from time to time) in addition to all other applicable laws.

Homes are reminded that residents have a right under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, to receive visitors and homes should not develop policies that unreasonably restrict this right.

Requirements

1. Every long-term care home must have and implement a visitor policy that, at a minimum:
 - reflects the following guiding principles:
 - o **safety** – any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated
 - o **emotional well-being** – welcoming visitors is intended to support the mental and emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation
 - o **equitable access** – all residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents
 - o **flexibility** – the physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its workforce/human resources availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to consider when setting home-specific policies
 - o **equality** – residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers
 - sets out the parameters, requirements, and procedures prescribed in the current version of this document with respect to visitors, including but not limited to:
 - o the definitions of the different types of visitors;
 - o the requirement to designate caregivers;
 - o restrictions with respect to visitors in the event of an outbreak or when a resident is isolating; and
 - o non-compliance by visitors of the home’s visitor policy.
 - includes provisions around the home’s implementation of all required public health measures as well as infection prevention and control practices.

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- reflects the requirements related to the active screening, and surveillance testing of visitors, consistent with Directive #3, the current Minister of Long-Term Care’s Directive COVID-19: Long-term care home surveillance testing and access to homes, the vaccination requirements for support workers set out in the Minister’s Directive: Long-term care home COVID-19 immunization policy and this guidance document, as applicable.
2. Per Directive #3, homes must maintain visitor logs of all visits to the home. The visitor log must include, at minimum:
 - the name and contact information of the visitor
 - time and date of the visit
 - the purpose of the visit (for example, name of resident visited)

These visitor logs or records must be kept for a period of at least 30 days and be readily available to the local public health unit for contact tracing purposes upon request
 3. Homes must ensure that all visitors have access to the home’s visitor policy.
 4. Homes must provide education/training to all visitors about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.

The home’s visitor policy should include guidance from the following Public Health Ontario resources to support IPAC and PPE education and training:

- guidance document: recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment
- video: putting on full personal protective equipment
- video: taking off full personal protective equipment
- videos: how to hand wash and how to hand rub

Types of visitors

Not considered visitors

Long-term care home staff (as defined under the Act), volunteers, and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee. Infants under the age of 1 are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing and vaccination requirements.

Essential visitors

A home’s visitor policy must specify that essential visitors are persons visiting a home to meet an essential need related to the operations of the home or residents that could not be adequately met if the person does not visit the home.

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There are no limits on the number of essential visitors allowed to come into a home at any given time.

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak in a home or area of a home or when a resident has failed screening, is symptomatic or in isolation.

There are four types of essential visitors:

- **people visiting very ill or palliative residents** who are receiving end-of-life care for compassionate reasons, hospice services, etc.
- **government inspectors with a statutory right of entry.** Government inspectors who have a statutory right to enter long-term care homes to carry out their duties must be granted access to a home. Examples of government inspectors include inspectors under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Electricity Act, 1998, the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- **support workers:** support workers are persons who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents. Essential services provided by support workers include but are not limited to:
 - o assessment, diagnostic, intervention/rehabilitation, and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
 - o Assistive Devices Program vendors — for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
 - o moving a resident in or out of a home
 - o social work services
 - o legal services
 - o post-mortem services
 - o emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)
 - o maintenance services such as those required to ensure the structural integrity of the home and the functionality of the home’s HVAC mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems, and services related to exterior grounds and winter property maintenance
 - o food/nutrition and water/drink delivery
 - o Canada Post mail services and other courier services
 - o election officials/workers
- **Caregivers:**

A caregiver is a type of essential visitor who is visiting the home to provide direct care to meet the essential needs of a particular resident. Caregivers must be at least 18 years of age and must be designated by the resident or his/her substitute decision-maker. Direct care includes providing support/assistance to a resident that includes providing direct physical support (for example, eating, bathing and dressing) and/or providing social and emotional support.

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- o Examples of direct care provided by caregivers include but are not limited to the following:
 - supporting activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating assistance
 - providing cognitive stimulation ▪ fostering successful communication
 - providing meaningful connection and emotional support ▪ offering relational continuity assistance in decision-making
- o Examples of caregivers include:
 - friends and family members who provide meaningful connection
 - a privately hired caregiver
 - paid companions
 - translator

An important role of the caregiver is that of providing meaningful connection and emotional support. A person should not be excluded from being designated as a caregiver if they are unable to provide direct physical support.

Designating a caregiver

- Caregivers must be designated and must be at least 16 years of age.
- A maximum of two caregivers may be designated per resident at a time. (Note: caregivers who were designated prior to December 15th, 2021, may continue to be designated as a caregiver even if this means the resident has more than two designated caregivers.)
- A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may change a designation in response to a change in the:
 - o resident’s care needs that is reflected in the plan of care
 - o availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (for example, illness) or permanent.
- A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may not continuously change a designation in order to increase the number of people able to enter the home.
- All caregivers newly designated are required to be fully vaccinated in order to enter the home.

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is the responsibility of the resident or their substitute decision-maker and not the home. The designation of a caregiver should be made in writing to the home. Homes should have a procedure for documenting caregiver designations.

A caregiver should not visit any other resident or home for 14 days after visiting another:

- resident who is self-isolating, including those experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are being assessed
- home or area of a home affected by an outbreak

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New: Recognizing there are caregivers who want to volunteer to support more than one resident, in the event of an outbreak, caregivers may support up to two residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers). Caregivers may also support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, with the same expectation regarding resident consent.

Caregivers – scheduling and length and frequency of visits

Homes may not require scheduling or restrict the length or frequency of visits by caregivers. However, in the case where a resident resides in an area of the home in outbreak, is symptomatic or isolating under additional precautions, only one caregiver may visit at a time.

All homes need to create safe opportunities for caregivers who are fully vaccinated to spend time with residents in areas outside the resident’s room including:

- lounges
- walks in hallways (without going outdoors)
- outdoor gardens and patios (if available)

Where a caregiver is not fully vaccinated, or the caregiver has not received required COVID-19 vaccine doses by the deadlines, as set out in the Minister’s Directive: Long-term care home COVID-19 immunization policy, the visit should be restricted to the resident’s room. In these instances, the caregiver needs to ensure they are physically distancing from other residents/ other individuals that are in the same room. This is a time limited provision.

General visitors

A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult (someone who is 18 or older). General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.

Homes should prioritize the mental and emotional well-being of residents and strive to be as accommodating as possible when scheduling visits with general visitors.

Access to homes

- Up to two caregivers per resident may visit at a time.
- Caregivers must meet the vaccination requirements outlined in the Vaccination section in order to gain entry to the home
- When a resident is symptomatic or isolating, only one caregiver may visit at a time.
- No general visitors are permitted at this time unless visiting a resident receiving end of life care

Homes should ensure physical distancing (a minimum of two metres or six feet) is maintained between groups.

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Where permitted, general visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult and must follow all applicable public health measures that are in place at the home (for example, active screening, vaccination requirements, physical distancing, hand hygiene, masking for source control). Restrictions during outbreaks or when a resident is isolating

Essential visitors

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is isolating or resides in a home or area of the home in an outbreak.

General visitors

General visitors are not permitted:

- when a home or area of a home is in outbreak
- to visit an isolating resident
- when the local public health unit so directs

Direction from the local public health unit

In the case where a local public health unit directs a home in respect of the number of visitors allowed, the home is to follow the direction of the local public health unit.

Surveillance testing

All staff, students, volunteers, support workers, visitors and caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, must be tested in accordance with the Minister's Directive. Refer directly to the Minister of Long-Term Care's Directive COVID-19: Long-term care home surveillance testing and access to homes for requirements related to surveillance testing.

<u>Cross References:</u> None	<u>Attachments:</u> IPC-H-50A (General Visitor Information Sheet); IPC-H-50B (Essential Caregiver Visitor Information Sheet)
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General Visitor Information Sheet

"General" Visitors ~~must~~ are NOT permitted at this time unless visiting a resident receiving end of life care (See the foregoing policy or the MLTC's "COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario

- ~~Book visits in advance. Visits will last up to one hour. Two visits per week are permitted at present.~~

~~The guidelines effective July 16, 2021, are as follows:~~

- ~~A maximum of two general visitors and two caregivers per resident may visit indoors at a time, based on scheduling with the homes.~~
- ~~Outdoor visits will be accommodated based on available space and scheduling.~~
- ~~Pass active screening each time they are on the Home's premises.~~
- ~~Wear a mask during the visit. (As always, a medical mask is required indoors.)~~
- ~~Only attend the designated visiting space, and please do not encounter other residents than the one being visited.~~
- ~~Maintain physical distancing (2 metres/6 feet) at all times if you are not fully vaccinated (i.e. 14+ days since the second/final dose). Brief hugs are permitted regardless of immunization status.~~

~~Failure to comply with these protocols may result in you being asked to leave.~~

Visit Protocols

- ~~Put on your mask prior to the visit and leave it on for the duration of your visit. (Visitors are to bring their own.)~~
- ~~Report to the screener, identify yourself, and have screening completed. This includes some simple questions.~~
- ~~Perform hand hygiene (alcohol based hand sanitizer will be available).~~

Fully Vaccinated Visitors:

- ~~Please arrive 5 minutes before your appointment. This allows time for the "screening" process, and we are required to review the visit protocols and safety measures with you. Please see "Visitor Education and Safety" below.~~

Unvaccinated/Partially Vaccinated Visitors:

- ~~Arrive 20 minutes before your scheduled appointment. You will undergo surveillance testing prior to your indoor visit. You are also required to review the~~



~~visit protocols and safety measures with you. Please see “Visitor Education and Safety” below.~~

- ~~• Please follow all protocols, including masking procedure, physical distancing, hand sanitizing, coughing/sneezing etiquette, and use of the designated visiting space.~~
- ~~• Please follow physical distancing guidelines (of at least 2 metres) at all times, except for exception above.~~
- ~~• After blowing nose, touching eyes, mouth, coughing or sneezing and at the conclusion of the visit, clean hands with the hand sanitizer provided.~~
- ~~• Report to reception at the conclusion of the visit.~~

Visitor Education and Safety

As a convenience, the Home’s visitor policy is available at:

<https://www.aoninc.com/visitor-education-safety-requirements.php>

In addition, the following education materials recommended by the Ministry of Long-Term Care are also available on our visitor information webpage:

- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>



Essential Caregiver Visitor Information Sheet

Essential Caregiver Visitors are family members or loved ones of a resident who provide care services to a resident.

As an Essential Caregiver Visitor (or “ECV”), you must:

- Be designated as an essential caregiver by the resident or the Substitute Decision Maker.
- Pass active screening each time you enter the Home.
- Wear a surgical mask, provided by the Home, during the visit, and any other PPE required for the care service you perform on behalf of the resident. Such PPE will be provided to you by the Home.
- Follow personal protective equipment instructions from the home if resident is isolating or home is in outbreak (eye protection, mask at a minimum)
- Attest that in the last 14 days you have not visited: a) a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic; or b) any other LTC Home experiencing an outbreak.
- Prior to visiting any resident for the first time, caregivers are required to confirm that they have read the home’s visitor policy. The policy is available at our front desk or at: <https://www.aoninc.com/visitor-education-safety-requirements.php>

In addition, the following education materials recommended by the Ministry of Long-Term Care are also available on our visitor information webpage:

- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>

Vaccinations

Essential Caregiver Visitors will be required to show proof of having received their third dose to enter the Home, unless they have a valid medical exemption.

- Those who are eligible on or before December 31, 2021 must provide proof of having received a third dose by January 28, 2022.
- The remainder will have until May 23, 2022 to show proof of their third dose.

Individuals will continue to be permitted entry into the home to visit residents receiving end of life care, regardless of vaccination status



Visit Protocols

- When you arrive for each visit, you will need to go through our “screening” process, and we are required to review the visit protocols and safety measures with you.
- Report to the screener, identify yourself, have screening completed, and receive a mask. Screening includes some simple questions.
 - During the screening process, we will also ask you to attest that you have read our Visitor policy as described above.
 - You will require surveillance testing each time you enter the Home and you must wait outside of the Home until we receive a negative result from the rapid antigen test.
- Perform hand hygiene (alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available).
- Please wear the Essential Caregiver Visitor identification badge provided by the Home when you are on the premises. Fully immunized caregivers will be identified with a green sticker on their badge.
- Please follow all IPAC protocols while in the Home, including masking procedure, eye protection (when applicable), physical distancing, hand sanitizing, and coughing/sneezing etiquette.
 - Do not physically embrace with your loved one unless you are both “fully vaccinated”. Otherwise please follow physical distancing guidelines. (Brief hugs are permitted regardless of immunization status.)
 - Clean hands with the hand sanitizer provided after blowing your nose; touching your eyes or mouth; coughing or sneezing; touching the resident or their possessions, and at the conclusion of the visit
- 6. For Dining/Activities: Only Fully immunized essential visitors may join their loved one in the dining area and for activities.
- 7. Return to the screening area at the front of the Home at the conclusion of your visit.

Failure to comply with these protocols may result in you being asked to leave.