

Section: COVID-19 PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT	Subject: VISITORS	Policy #: 07-02-01	
		Implemented	Revised
Approved by VP of Quality and Clinical Services	VISITORS POLICY	July 2020	October 14, 2022

POLICY

The home has established and implement a written visitor policy as required under Ontario Regulation 246/22 made under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (s. 267. (1) and Directive #3. This policy is periodically updated to meet requirements of all applicable legislation.

PROCEDURE

This policy is effective October 14, 2022. All previous versions of the visiting policy are revoked and replaced with this version.

VISITORS' ACCESS TO THE HOME'S VISITOR POLICY

The Long-Term Care Home must:

Provide a copy of Visitors Policy to Residents' Council and Family Council (if any)

A copy of Visitors Policy must be included with Resident Information Package

Post Visitors Policy in the Home

Communicate Visitors Policy to residents, families, and staff

Post Visitors Policy on LTC home's website

COVID-19 VACCINATION

The goal of the provincial COVID-19 immunization program is to protect Ontarians from COVID-19. Vaccines minimize the risk of severe outcomes, including hospitalizations and death, due to COVID-19, and may help reduce the number of new cases. The Ministry is taking a guidance-based approach that supports licensees with their employer-led policies and to promotes best practices. The vaccination policy does not apply to visitors; however, the home will collect vaccination information from visitors at the active screening for the purpose of statistics and potential contact tracing. Unvaccinated visitors will not be denied entry – Homes are asked to continue to encourage clients/residents, staff, caregivers and visitors to remain up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. The Up to Date guidance from Ministry of Health (MOH) is located here: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID_19_vaccine_up_to_date.pdf

Per Minister's Directive (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministers-directive-covid-19-response-measures-for-long-term-care-homes>), licensees are required to ensure that the visitor requirements as set out in the COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and Other Congregate Living Settings for Public Health Units Version 8 – October 6, 2022, or as amended, are followed.

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REQUIREMENTS

Residents have a right under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/21f39>), to receive visitors and homes should not develop policies that unreasonably restrict this right.

Requirements

- Every long-term care home must have and implement a visitor policy that, at a minimum reflects the following guiding principles:
 - **safety** – any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated
 - **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
 - **equitable access** – all residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents
 - **flexibility** – the physical and infrastructure characteristics of the home, its workforce or 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
 - **equality** – residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents or their substitute decision-makers, as applicable, have the authority to designate caregivers
- In accordance with section 267(2) of O. Reg. 246/22, homes must maintain visitor logs of all visits to the home. 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. The visitor log must include, at a minimum:
 - the name and contact information of the visitor
 - time and date of the visit
 - the purpose of the visit (for example, the name of resident visited)
- Homes must ensure that all visitors have access to the home's visitor policy.
- Homes must provide education or training to all visitors about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.

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 one are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing requirements.

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ESSENTIAL VISITORS

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.

As per O. Reg. 246/22 under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, there are four types

of essential visitors:

- a caregiver, as defined under section 4 of O. Reg. 246/22
- a support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents
- a person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care
- a government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties

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.

A caregiver should not visit any other home for 10 days after visiting:

- an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- an individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms

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

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 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

All general visitors, including children under the age of five, can enter the long-term care home. General visitors, with the exception of the children under the age of five, will need to follow the vaccination policy of the individual long-term care home.

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There are no ministry limits on the number of visitors (including caregivers) that a resident may visit with at a time for indoor or outdoor visits.

Homes should not restrict individuals from outdoor visits based on vaccination status. Homes should ensure physical distancing (a minimum of two metres or six feet) is maintained between groups.

RESTRICTIONS DURING OUTBREAKS OR WHEN A RESIDENT IS ISOLATING

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 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

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

EDUCATION/TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL VISITORS

- physical distancing
- respiratory etiquette
- hand hygiene
- IPAC practices
- proper use of PPE

Public Health Ontario resources to support IPAC and PPE education and training (<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/long-term-care-resources>)

- guidance document: recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>
- video: putting on full personal protective equipment <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>
- video: taking off full personal protective equipment <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>
- videos how to hand wash <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>
- video how to hand rub <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handrub>
- respiratory etiquette PHO Cover Your Cough ([publichealthontario.ca](https://www.publichealthontario.ca))

Documentation:

Designated staff will document the training provided in Visitor Education Roster

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Caregiver confirms by signing in the respective section on "LTC Visitors & Caregivers Education" form

COVID-19 ACTIVE SCREENING AND ASYMPTOMATIC SCREEN TESTING OF VISITORS

Active Screening:

All visitors regardless of vaccination status, must be actively screened for COVID-19 upon entry of the Long-Term Care Home.

Asymptomatic Screen Testing:

Per the Minister's Directive, licensees are required to ensure that the COVID-19 asymptomatic screen testing requirements as set out in this guidance document are followed.

All staff, students, volunteers, support workers, visitors and caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, must be tested at entry to the home (see "COVID-19 PCR testing-antigen testing policy access to the homes")

Individuals who receive a positive test result for COVID-19 as part of asymptomatic screen testing must follow further testing and isolation requirements as outlined in the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and other Congregate Living Settings for Public Health Units or as directed by the local public health unit.

Minister of Long-Term Care's Directive "COVID-19: Long-term care home surveillance testing and access to homes" sets minimum requirements related to surveillance testing

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-long-term-care-home-surveillance-testing>

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Table: Visitors Training Guide	Essential Caregiver	General Visitor	Frequency
Guidance document: recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled putting on full personal protective equipment** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment. ** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled How to Hand Wash. ** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled How to Hand Rub ** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handrub	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Physical Distancing Poster – City of Toronto https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/9512-COVID19-PhysicalDistancingApr224.pdf	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit and as necessary for re-education
Respiratory etiquette PHO Cover Your Cough (publichealthontario.ca)	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Feeding the resident Video ** (as per Essential Visitors-Caregivers Request Form) https://youtu.be/zZ-6Rp6hkhY	X		Prior to 1 st visit (if applicable)
**Retraining must be provided with each observed noncompliance and based on auditing outcome(s)			

PROVISIONS REGARDING HOME'S IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL REQUIRED PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL PRACTICES (IPAC)

The importance of ongoing adherence to strong and consistent IPAC processes and practices cannot be overstated. The home strives to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring that strong and consistent IPAC practices are implemented and continuously reviewed. Appropriate and effective IPAC practices must be carried out by all people attending or living in the home, at all times, regardless of whether there are cases of COVID-19 in the home or not, and regardless of the vaccination status of an individual.

IPAC audits

The Homes required to complete IPAC audits at least every two weeks unless in outbreak.

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When the Home is in outbreak the IPAC audits are completed at least weekly.

IPAC audits are rotated across shifts, including evenings and weekends.

At minimum, homes must include in their audit the PHO's COVID-19: Self-Assessment Audit Tool for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes (PDF). Results of the IPAC audit should be kept for at least 30 days and shared with inspectors upon request

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Homes must ensure that physical distancing (a minimum of 2 metres or 6 feet) is practiced during program activities. In all other situations, physical distancing is encouraged and recommend individuals to avoid situations like crowded places where COVID-19 can spread

more easily, close-contact settings, and confined and enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.

UNIVERSAL MASKING AND EYE PROTECTION (see “Universal Mask and Eye Protection Policy During COVID-19”

- Masking remains a requirement for long-term care staff, as well as for visitors and others entering long-term care homes. The ministry recommends (but no longer requires) visitors to wear masks when they are alone with a resident in their room. For
- residents living in shared rooms, homes should seek to designate a space to enable
- residents to interact with their visitors without masks. When not in a one-on-one setting
- with a resident in their room or a designated space within the home, visitors and
- caregivers are required to be masked. Outdoor masking is still recommended and encouraged
- where tolerated as an added layer of protection when in close proximity to others.

For visitors, removal of masks for the purposes of eating should be restricted to areas designated by the home (which may include a resident's room (if private).

REFERENCES:

- Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/21f39>
- Regulations under the Act: O. Reg. 246/22 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/21f39>
- Minister's Directive <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministers-directive-covid-19-response-measures-for-long-term-care-homes>,
- COVID-19 Guidance document for long term care homes in Ontario
- https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/LTCH_RH_guidance_PHU.pdf

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RELATED POLICIES AND FORMS

Policies

- 02-01-02 "Zero Tolerance to Resident Abuse and Neglect"
- **07-03-01 "Active Screening"**
- OHS Section 04-01-29- Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention
- **07-03-02 "PCR Testing, Antigen Testing and Access to the Homes"**
- **07-05-05 "Universal Mask and Eye Protection Policy During COVID-19"**

Forms

- "Long-Term Care Visitor, Absences & Social Gatherings Snapshot (07-02-01)"
- "Visiting Schedule (07-02-01)"
- "General Visitors and Caregivers Education- Reopening Homes for Visitations (07-02-01)"
- "Visitors Education Roaster (07-02-01)"
- "How to know when Staff, Students, Volunteers need to be tested (07-03-02)"
- "Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19 (07-02-01)"
- "Screener Sign-in (07-03-01)"
- General Visitors Education Package
- Information Package for Visitors
- "Outdoor Visitors IPAC Adherence Audit (07-02-01)"
- "COVID-19 Policies, what Residents can expect in LTC Homes (07-02-01)"

[Infection Control Manual]

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I read the policy and procedure INF 07-02-01 VISITORS POLICY LONG TERM CARE HOMES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC” and I will obey this policy entirely. Any questions that I had were answered and clarification provided.

Visitor Name (Printed)

Type of Visitor: please PRINT if you are a Caregiver, or a General Visitor

Signature

Date

Witness Name (Printed)

Title/Status/Designation

Signature

Date