

Visiting Residents during COVID-19 Policy and Procedure

Manual	COVID-19	Policy Number	COV 01
Authority	<i>Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007; Ontario Regulation 79/10; Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care Homes, released September 2, 2020; Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 issued August 28, 2020 under Section 77.7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA), R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7</i>		
Applies to	All Long-Term Care Staff, Essential Visitors and General Visitors		
Effective Date	September 9, 2020	Replaces	N/A

PURPOSE: This policy provides guidance on conducting visits for residents in long-term care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DEFINITIONS:

Essential Visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person performing essential support services (e.g., food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health care services) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident. • Essential visitors include support workers and caregivers. However, an essential visitor does not need to be a support worker or caregiver.
	<p>Support Worker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A type of essential visitor who is visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home. • Examples: physicians, nurse practitioners, maintenance workers or a person delivering food, provided they are not staff.
	<p>Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A type of essential visitor who is designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker and is visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g. supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making). • Examples: family members who provide a meaningful connection, a privately hired caregiver, paid companions and translators.
General Visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-essential services, who may or may not be hired by

	<p>the home or the resident and/or their substitute decision maker; and/or,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For social reasons (e.g., family members or friends) that the resident or their substitute decision-maker assess as different from direct care, including care related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection and relational continuity.
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POLICY: the key points of this policy are as follows:

Managing visitors is based on principles of safety, emotional well-being, and flexibility.

- The Homes will determine the number and location of visits and work to provide each resident with an opportunity to visit. Visits may be prioritized based on consideration of a resident’s clinical or emotional needs.

Requirements for the Homes: To resume visits, the Home must meet the following requirements:

- Have a visitors list to track and maintain all visitors
- Actively screen visitors upon entry for symptoms and exposure to COVID-19, including temperature checks
- Obtain verbal attestation for testing negative for COVID-19 within the previous two weeks from essential visitors and general visitors who are visiting indoors.

Exception for when verbal attestation to a negative COVID19 test result is not required:

- An essential visitor: visiting a very ill or palliative resident
- Support worker who requires immediate access for an emergency situation
- If a visitor has a disability that requires a support person, the support person will also be accommodated and will not count towards the maximum number of visitors
- Permit a maximum of two (2) caregivers per resident at any given time, and at least one to two general visitors per week, lasting a minimum of 30 minutes
- Provide surgical masks and required PPE for indoor visits
- Ensure visitors and residents wear masks and maintain physical distancing (2 metres/six feet) at all times
- For general visitors only:
 - Conduct visiting in a designated area that is cleaned and disinfected before and after each visit and secured with physical barriers
 - Have visits supervised by a staff member
- Staff are not subject to the COVID-19 Visiting Policy or restrictions on visits to

- homes (e.g. attending physician, registered nurse in the extended class, or a hairdresser who meets the definition of staff under the Act.)
- Volunteers or students on placement are not subject to the COVID-19 Visiting Policy. Access will be determined at the discretion of the Home.

When visiting may not occur or be restricted:

- **Outbreak:** If the Home is considered in any type of outbreak (including suspected or confirmed COVID-19 outbreak), or a home area is in outbreak due to resident illness
Exception: during an outbreak, a maximum of 1 caregiver per resident may visit at a time. Any number of support workers may visit
- **Discretion of Homes:** To ensure a safe and secure environment, the Home has the discretion to limit the number of visitors and/or times of visits in consideration of the following:
 - Physical infrastructure/characteristics of the Home
 - Needs of residents, including their clinical and emotional well-being
 - The total number of visitors in the Home
- **Changes to resident condition:** If resident cannot tolerate visits due to clinical condition, is self-isolating or symptomatic, a maximum of 1 caregiver may visit at a time. No general visitors will be permitted
- **Failed Screening:** If visitor fails screening
- **Inadequate Personal Protective Equipment:** If the visitor will not wear a mask
- **Non-compliance:** If visitor does not follow the visiting requirements further visits may be discontinued until guidelines can be followed

Visit Schedule: Visits must be scheduled as follows:

For General Visitors:

- General visitors will not be scheduled during meals or staff shift changes to allow for staffing coverage, appropriate physical distancing, and the safety of residents, staff and visitors; and will be no less than 30 minutes

For Essential Visitors:

- Essential visitors, other than caregivers, must be pre-approved by the Home's Director of Care

For Caregivers

- There is no time limit for caregiver visits. Caregivers are asked to provide advance notice of when they will be visiting the Homes.

Visitor Requirements: Visitors must:

All Visitors:

- Consider their personal health and susceptibility to the virus to determine whether a visit to the Home is appropriate
- Attest to testing negative for COVID-19 within the last 14 days and not subsequently testing positive
- Answer screening questions accurately for symptoms and risk factors of COVID-19 and allow temperature taking
- Not bring any outside food or beverages in the Home. Exceptions may be assessed and determined based on the residents care plan and the Homes infection prevention and control measures.
- Adhere to physical distancing guidelines (2 metres/six feet) and refrain from physical contact with the resident.
- Follow infection prevention control measures, including wearing a mask appropriately covering mouth and nose at all times, and proper hand hygiene and disinfection protocols at all times during the visit

For General Visitors

- Must be accompanied by an adult if younger than 14 years of age
- Attest to not visiting another home in an outbreak or a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic in the last 14 days
- Attest to having read and re-read this policy prior to a first visit and at least once a month thereafter
- Follow staff instructions during the visit and remain in designated area
- (If applicable) Keep pets leashed at all times, away from the resident area and clean up after the pet
- Keep to the designated visiting area and not move about Home to minimize crossing paths with other visitors or staff
- Use designated washroom for general visitors
- Wear the surgical mask provided by the Home, appropriately covering mouth and nose at all times
- Attend scheduled appointments and provide notice of a cancellation, where possible
- Only visit the person they are scheduled to visit
- In situations where PPE is not feasible, the Homes will work with visitors to determine a resolution

For Caregivers:

- Must be 18 years of age or older
- Must be designated by the resident or substitute decision maker, and complete the [Designation of Caregiver Form](#)
- Keep to the resident's room and use designated washroom for caregivers and visitors. Limit movement inside the Home to minimize crossing paths with other visitors or staff

- Keep meal service in the resident’s room
- Wear provided surgical mask (appropriately covering mouth and nose), gowns and gloves as required. In situations where PPE is not feasible, the Homes will work with caregivers to determine a resolution
- Attest to not visiting another home in an outbreak or a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic in the last 14 days
- Attest to having read and re-read this policy prior to a first visit and at least once a month thereafter, and attest to completion of required training

Resident and/or Substitute Decision Maker will:

- Designate in writing a maximum of two caregivers
- Change a designation as needed to reflect the plan of care
- Advise caregiver(s) of any outbreaks in the Home/Home area

Communication and Education:

- Staff and visitors will receive and review information regarding scheduling, visiting requirements, screening criteria, infection prevention and control protocols (e.g. proper use of personal protective equipment, hand hygiene, physical distancing) and non-compliance protocols
- Prior to visiting any resident for the first time, the home will provide training to caregivers that addresses how to safely provide direct care, as well as retraining to caregivers once a year

Evaluation of the Visiting Process:

- The visiting process will be informed by the ongoing COVID-19 situation in the community and the Home and may be reassessed and revised as circumstances change

PROCEDURES:

1. Scheduling:

<p>General Visitors</p> <p>General Visitors will:</p> <p>Contact Access York to schedule an indoor visit</p>	<p>Essential Visitors</p> <p>Resident or SDM will:</p> <p>Complete the Designation of Caregiver Form to designate a maximum of two caregivers and submit to the Home’s social worker and/or nursing clerk</p>
<p>Access York or LTC Home will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule visit and advise requirement to attest to testing negative for COVID-19 within two 	<p>Social Worker or delegate will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request essential visitors provide their visiting schedule, as well as any foreseeable schedule changes

weeks prior to the visit

- Advise essential visitors of their requirement to attest to testing negative for COVID-19 within two weeks prior to the visit

LTC Home Reception or delegate will:

- Organize the Homes' visit schedule based on staff and visitor availability (including holding spots for last minute changes)
- Monitor weather alerts and notify families as required regarding cancellations due to poor weather conditions
- Update voicemail with details on how visitors can schedule an appointment
- Contact visitors to reschedule visits as needed

Charge Nurse will:

- Maintain a list of all essential visitors scheduled to visit and advise the screener

The Social Worker will:

Provide emotional support for visitors and/or clarity for visitors not following protocols during all visits as needed

2. Screening Visitors

The Screener or designate will:

	General Visitor	Essential Visitors
Arrival:	Meet visitor(s) at their vehicle at the designated drive-through screening area.	Confirm visitor as Essential, Support Worker or Caregiver and screen in
Ensure Personal Protective Equipment:	Ensure visitor(s) put on a mask for screening.	
Screen Visitor:	Actively screen visitors for symptoms of COVID-19, including temperature taking	

- Attestation:**
- Have indoor visitors attest to testing negative for COVID-19 within the previous two weeks and subsequently not tested positive and verbally attest to not visiting another home in an outbreak or a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic in the last 14 days.
 - Have essential visitor attest to testing negative for COVID-19 within the previous two weeks and subsequently not tested positive
 - Have caregivers also verbally attest to not visiting another home in an outbreak or a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic in the last 14 days.

If screening passed, direct visitor to next step:	Direct visitor to park in visitor parking and to make their way to the designated visiting area.	Not applicable
Ensure Hand Hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment:	Indoor – Ask visitor to sanitize their hands, disinfect personal items as needed, and to put on a gown and surgical mask prior to entering the Home.	Ask visitor to sanitize their hands, disinfect personal items, and to put on a gown and surgical mask prior to entering the Home. Contact the charge nurse to escort the visitor into the Home.
Track Visitors and PPE:	Maintain a visitors list and track number of masks provided for indoor visits.	Track visitors using the sign-in binder prior to entry and track number of masks and PPE provided to visitors.

3. Staff Preparation

General Visitors

Essential Visitors

Registered Nursing Staff will:

- Confirm the resident is asymptomatic and can tolerate a visit (e.g. consider clinical status). If the resident is symptomatic and/or unable to tolerate a visit, advise the

Not applicable

reception or designate to notify the visitor to cancel the visit and reschedule.

- Provide screener or designate with disinfectant wipes, masks, and additional personal protective equipment as needed
- Assign a personal support worker to prepare the resident for the visit

Screener or designate will:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don proper personal protective equipment prior to getting the resident from the home area • Carry a phone or walkie talkie for emergencies | <p>Not applicable</p> |
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4. Resident Preparation:

General Visitors	Essential Visitors
Personal Support Workers will:	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the resident as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the resident with a surgical mask and ensure resident performs hand hygiene • Provide fluids or beverages to ensure the resident is hydrated, as needed • Provide resident with instructions for the visit (e.g. physical distancing, etc.) • Ensure resident has adaptive devices as needed | <p>Not applicable</p> |
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The Social Worker may:

- Provide support to the resident: speak with the resident prior to the visit and advise nursing staff

of any concerns where applicable

Screener or designate will:

- Escort resident to/from their room to the designated visiting location

5. Visiting Area Preparation

General Visitors

Essential Visitors

Environmental Services will:

Complete setup and disinfection of visiting area as follows:

Not applicable

- Set up the visitor area with chairs for each person with a physical distance of 6 feet apart and/or behind designated barriers
- Audit the visiting area daily to make sure it is clean, tidy and properly disinfected

6. During Visits

General Visitors

Essential Visitors

Screener or designate will:

Essential visitors will:

- Observe the visiting area to support and ensure the visitor is following infection prevention and control guidelines and safe distancing
- Monitor the resident's safety, health and overall well-being
- Contact management immediately if protocols are not followed by the visitor and/or the resident
- Maintain a clean visiting area by using disinfectant wipes to clean chairs and nearby surfaces between visits

- Maintain physical distancing and/or leave the room if required when staff are providing care to a resident in their room
- Limit movement throughout the Home

7. After a Visit:

General Visitors

Essential Visitors

Screener or designate will:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask visitors to leave directly from the visiting site at the completion of the visit • Return the resident to their room/home area and inform nursing staff/personal support workers that the resident has returned and document as needed • Doff own personal protective equipment before exiting the home area (except the mask) and perform hand hygiene • If necessary, disinfect adaptive devices used during the visit | <p>Not applicable</p> |
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The Personal Support Worker will:

- Remove personal protective equipment from the resident prior to entering the Home area and dispose PPE in designated bins

Registered Nursing Staff will:

- Continue to monitor the resident’s clinical status post visit

8. Non-Compliance during visiting:

The Administrator or delegate will document any decision to end a visit and/or temporarily prohibit a visitor due to non-adherence.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Role	Responsibilities
Registered Nursing Staff	Oversee staff and infection prevention control measures in the homes
Social Worker	Inform essential visitor of changes to visiting schedule and support resident as needed
Access York	Schedule general visitors
All Staff	Arrange visitor accommodations as needed



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PARAMEDIC AND SENIORS SERVICES BRANCH
Long-Term Care**

Screener	Screen visitors; ask general visitors and caregivers to attest to reviewing this policy upon entry to the Home; assist residents to visiting area; monitor visits; and sanitize area after visit
Personal Support Worker	Prepare resident for visitors following IPAC protocols
Maintenance	Assist with setup of visiting area
Environmental Services	Supply items required to sanitize visiting area
Education	Provide required training materials to caregivers and track caregivers that have attested to reviewing training materials
Logistics	Track PPE inventory and consumption
Resident/SDM	Delegate caregivers, and advise caregiver(s) of any outbreaks in the Home/Home area
Administrator	Document incidence of visitor non-compliance

Related Resources	Resident Absence during COVID-19 Policy and Procedure		
	Designation of Caregiver Form Visiting Your Loved One in the time of COVID-19 Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment. How to Hand Wash		
Approvals	Program Manager, Policy and Planning; Recreation Supervisors; Directors of Care; Administrators		
Policy Contact	Senior Program Analyst	Review Period	As needed during COVID-19 Pandemic