

TITLE:	Visitors (COVID-19) (ON)	POLICY #:	XXII-N-10.60
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MANUAL	RET Infection Prevention & Control	APPROV. AUTH:	VP Services & Engagement
ORIGINAL ISSUE:	June 2020	SCOPE:	ON Residences
PAST REVISIONS:	Sep/20, Oct/20, Dec/20, June/21, Jul/21, Dec/21, Jan/22		
CURRENT REVISION:	November 2022		

POLICY:

Each Retirement Residence has a responsibility to ensure residents receive visitors safely to help protect against the risk of COVID-19. This policy balances mitigating measures to protect the health and safety of residents, team members, and visitors, with the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of residents for their quality of life and in consideration of the mental health and emotional well-being of residents and their loved ones. All visitors must comply with the requirements set out in this policy.

Note:

- Visitor protocols may change across regional jurisdictions as per the Chief Medical Officer of Health’s direction and will supersede this policy requirement.
- **Retirement team members, volunteers, physicians, and placement students are not considered visitors, as their access is determined by the retirement residence.**
- Any non-compliance with the visitor responsibilities in this policy will result in discontinuation of the visit for the non-compliant visitor
- In co-located long-term care and retirement residences that are not physically and operationally independent, the policies for the long-term care community and the retirement residence should align where possible, or follow the more restrictive requirements, unless otherwise directed by the local public health unit (PHU) based on COVID-19 prevention and containment.
- Visitors have access to the Visitor Information Package upon request.

Passive Screening:

- Residences should post signage that lists the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for self-monitoring and steps that must be taken if COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed in a team member, visitor, or resident.
- Residences should post signage throughout the residence to remind all persons in the residence of masking, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.

Visitor Requirements

COVID-19 screening process to be followed by visitors:

- Complete the active screening questionnaire upon entry at each visit to Retirement Residence and perform hand hygiene, don/doff PPE as required, and abide by any other Infection Prevention & Control protocols in place during the visit.
- Must attest in screening process to not subsequently testing positive or undergoing surveillance testing as directed by a local public health unit.
- Any visitor who fails active screening must not be allowed to enter the residence, must be advised to follow current case and contact recommendations, and must be encouraged to be tested.

- Visitors are not permitted access if they do not pass screening, but residences should have a protocol in place that assesses entry on a case-by-case basis which includes the assurance that resident care can be maintained if entry is refused.
- Exemptions to active screening apply to first responders and visitors for imminently palliative residents who are not required to pass screening but must remain masked and maintain physical distance from other residents and team members.
- For the safety of residents and team members, any visitor who is on self-isolation, awaiting COVID-19 test results, or is positive for COVID-19 will not be permitted to visit until the visitor has completed the isolation period and symptoms are resolving.
- An individual who has previously had laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 AND was cleared should generally not be re-tested before 90 days unless there are clinical indications that are determined by their physician or advised by public health.
- Must practice physical distancing with other residents whom they are not visiting and with team members.
- Can participate in recreation activities, both indoor and outdoor, unless otherwise directed by Public Health. Caregivers and general visitors may accompany a resident for meals.
- Must adhere to personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements in place at the retirement residence.

Masking

- Masks are not required for outdoor visits, but are encouraged when and if in close proximity to others
- Medical masks are required for indoor visits upon entry and duration of visit to the retirement residence.
- Visitors may remove their masks if they are visiting in a resident's room
- Exemptions:
 - Children who are younger than two years of age;
 - Any individual (team member, student, volunteer, visitor, or resident) who is being accommodated in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* or the Ontario Human Rights Code; or
 - If entertainment provided by a live performer (that is, a visitor) requires the removal of their mask to perform their talent.
 - Are unable to put on or remove their mask without assistance from another person.

Requirements for Home Visits

The residence adheres to any directions from their local PHU. This may include direction to take additional measures to restrict access and duration of visits during an outbreak, or when the PHU deems it necessary. The residence must facilitate visits for residents and must not unreasonably deny visitors based on the frequency of visits and their vaccination status.

PROCEDURE:

The General Manager or designate will:

- 1) Monitor and follow provincial directives related to Visitor Protocols.

- 2) Notify their VPRO and RWP if they are contacted by RHRA.
- 3) Establish designated outdoor/indoor area(s) for visits to occur, while respecting the requirement of physical distancing **when required**.
 - a. Establish the flow of team member, resident, and family movement to and from visiting area(s), ensuring minimal traffic through the location/resident suite areas.
 - b. Ensure there is an outdoor/indoor space designated to greet and screen visitors prior to the visit.

The outdoor space will:

- Provide for 6 feet/2 metres physical distancing between individuals;
- Ensure privacy for the resident and family; and
- Utilize physical barrier(s) such as planter boxes, half wall, table, etc. to support facilitation of physical distancing requirements.

The indoor space will:

- Have an active screening location and process;
 - Be a designated location in the residence, preferably a space close to main entrance/resident home area i.e. lounge area, multipurpose room, empty resident suite. Location for designated for indoor visits to be clearly identified with signage; if required.
 - Determine if a resident suite is appropriate for an indoor visit. Take into account the activities to be performed during the visits, if the resident is sharing a room, and whether isolation precautions are in place;
 - Provide for 2m/6 feet physical distancing between individuals;
 - Ensure privacy for the resident and family; and
 - Use physical barriers such as furniture spaced to meet physical distancing requirement.
- 4) Communicate with residents and families the process for indoor/outdoor visits, prioritizing emotional and/or clinical decline of residents.

The Retirement Leadership Team will:

- 1) Develop a process of scheduling family/visitor visits **when required**.
- 2) Document essential visitors who are designated as caregivers in the resident's electronic health record. This can be done by identifying the caregiver in the resident's profile section of the chart (contacts) if applicable, as well in the resident's service plan in each task for which the caregiver is providing support. Keeping track of who is the designated caregiver is important, especially as the designated caregiver may change as the resident's service needs change.
 - Also document designated caregivers on the Designated Caregiver Tracking Form
 - Inform the resident/SDM that the retirement residence needs to be notified of any changes in who is assigned as the designated caregiver(s)
- 3) Ensure visitors are educated about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.

- 4) Ensure caregivers have attested prior to visiting any resident for the first time and at least once every month thereafter that they have read and reread the following documents:
 - The Visitor policy
 - Public Health Ontario's document entitled Public Health Ontario's Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Watched/Re-watched the following Public Health Ontario videos:
 - i. • [Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment](#);
 - ii. • [Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment](#); and
 - iii. • [How to Hand Wash](#)
- 5) Provide a process for both active and passive screening, provide education to all visitors when required. Passive screening signs are to be posted.
- 6) Ensure the visiting area is cleaned between visits, including cleaning and disinfection of all chairs, rails, and other surfaces.
- 7) Ensure the visit is documented in the resident's electronic health record **when required**.
- 8) Maintain all records related to the family visiting process, including all changes to designated caregiver(s).
- 9) Cancel and reschedule the visit for any of the following reasons:
 - The retirement residence goes into outbreak
 - Resident is experiencing symptoms or is self-isolating
 - Inclement weather (i.e. heat wave or rain)
 - Operational needs require team members to support resident care
 - Other emergencies (i.e. Code Red)
 - As directed by Public Health during an outbreak

The Active Screener Process will:

- 1) Ensure all visitors who are required, complete the required Safety Reviews. General visitors review IPAC on entry to the residence.
- 2) Ensure every visitor has access to read and acknowledge the Visitor Acknowledgement Posting
- 3) Be aware of Visitor Definition Protocols that will reflect screening or testing changes (see XXII-N-10.60(a) Visitor Definitions & Protocols).
- 4) Ensure visitor is wearing appropriate PPE based on at minimum provincial standards. This is inclusive of a surgical mask and eye protection. PPE is required at times. Eye protection is not required if fully vaccinated except when providing care to a suspect or confirmed COVID-19 resident.
- 5) Ensure visitor completes hand hygiene at screening station and prior to entering the residence.
- 6) **Note: In outbreak** – Inform the visitor/essential caregiver on arrival that they are to go directly to the resident's suite, with no stops to speak with residents or team members.
- 7) Remind essential caregiver to complete hand hygiene/sanitizing upon leaving the suite and prior to exiting the property. **In Outbreak:** Essential Caregivers/visitors are to then leave the building directly.

All Team Members will:

- 1) Participate in and support visiting of residents as needed.
- 2) Guide any visitor with PPE utilization as needed.
- 3) Seek support from nurse in charge and/or leadership team(s) to address questions and concerns, including immediate advice to support individual resident and family needs.

When required, the Visitor will:

- 1) Contact the residence during scheduled times to arrange a date and time to visit.
- 2) If the visitor is a designated essential visitor/caregiver, or personal caregiver, attest to the requirements listed above regarding training. The designated essential caregiver along with the applicable resident must sign the Designated Essential Caregiver Attestation Form.
- 3) Contact the residence with the name(s) of designated essential caregivers; the designation must be made in writing.
- 4) Refrain from bringing any pets to the retirement residence *unless clearance is obtained from General Manager*.

Complaints Process

If a visitor has a complaint about the administration of the residence's visiting policies, they will be directed to share their complaint by phone or email with the General Manager. Concerns may be escalated to the RHRA via the RHRA email or phone number.

References:

- <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>
- COVID-19 Screening tool for Long Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes – [Screening Tool for LTCH-RH - English \(gov.on.ca\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and Other Congregate Living Settings for Public Health Units](#)
- [Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility Covid-19 Guidance Document for Retirement Homes in Ontario – June 24.2022](#)

Attachments: XXII-N-10.60(a) Visitor Definitions & Requirements (ON)

- XXII-N-10.60(b) Designated Caregiver Attestation Form (ON)
- XXII-N-10.60(c) Visitor Acknowledgement Posting (ON)
- XXII-N-10.60(d) Visitor Acknowledgement Form (ON)
- XXII-N-10.60(e) Visitor Information Package (ON)