



**Essential Visitor / Caregiver
Policy and Guide
at the Odd Fellow & Rebekah
Long Term Care Home
During the COVID-19 Pandemic
(Effective July 7, 2021)**

On Sept 2, 2020 The Ministry of Long-Term Care announced an update to visits in Long Term Care Homes to clarify essential visitor definitions to include caregivers whether private or family designated by the Resident or POA within the defined parameters of Directive #3.

"Bringing comfort and care, caregivers make a vital contribution to the overall well-being of long-term care residents," said Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care.

Direction on safety in long-term care homes will continue to be updated as Ontario's experience with COVID-19 evolves.

November 3, 2020 Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, ordered:

- Immediately limit all indoor visits at the facility with residents to one (1) "essential visitor", at a time, regardless of whether the facility is currently experiencing an outbreak of a communicable disease;

November 16, 2020 Colour Tiered Visiting Restriction and November 23, 2020 Testing Requirements for Designated Caregivers.

Feb 15, 2021 Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, expanded order to include enhanced screening questions regarding household members

February 16, 2021 with further revised update on March 15, 2021 Minister's Directive: Covid 19: Long Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes – Rapid Antigen Testing

NEW Effective June 9, 2021 - Close Contact, Resident Absence and visiting in programs and dining space based on Vaccination Status

NEW Effective July 1, 2021 – Covid 19 – Immunization Policy

NEW Effective July 7, 2021 – Limit of 2 designated essential caregivers is removed. Process to apply and testing requirements remain.

Definition of Fully Immunized:

Where applicable, a person is fully immunized against COVID-19 if:

- They have received the total required number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada (e.g., both doses of a two-dose vaccine series, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series); and
- They received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.

All individuals, whether or not they have received a COVID-19 vaccine, must continue to practice the recommended public health measures for the prevention and control of COVID-19 infection and transmission.

There are many steps involved with essential visiting.

As community spread of COVID-19 continues and risks are elevated especially in particular areas of the Long Term Care Home we are implementing additional measures for Infection Prevention and Control and appropriate stewardship of PPE supply. A heightened risk in the home is in common spaces including in dining rooms, as the vast majority of Residents do not tolerate wearing a mask. Essential Caregiver Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether visiting a long-term care home is appropriate.

This updated Essential Visitor and Caregiver policy and guide takes effect July 7, 2021 and outlines that:

Quick Facts

- Examples of caregivers include family members who provide direct care, privately hired caregivers, paid companions or translators over 18 years of age.
- Each resident and/or their substitute decision maker may designate caregivers for direct care. The limit of two designated caregivers per resident is removed. Processed to designate persons as caregivers continue to be in place.
- Up to two (2) essential visitor may visit at a time with up to two (2) general visitors indoors may also visit at the same time.
- When a Resident is symptomatic or isolating only one (1) caregiver may visit at a time
- Essential visitors do not need to schedule their visit but indoor general visitors due.
- All Indoor visitors are subject to testing at a frequency determined by the Ministry of Long Term Care and appropriate PPE including masking at all times.
- We ask that essential visitors do not visit during meal times; Breakfast 8:30-9:30am, Lunch 12:00-1:00pm and Dinner 5:00-6:00pm, unless you have been designated as an essential feeder and therefore are fully vaccinated
- Please do not arrive at the screening desk during shift change between 1:45-2:15pm.

- All visitors must pass active screening before entering a home. This includes questions on symptoms and exposures to COVID-19.
- Rapid Antigen Tests are available on site and will be required the day of or if visiting more frequently up to 3 times per week preferably on non-consecutive days (unless you have proof of test the previous day)
- If Designated Caregiver is entering 2 or less days per week, only first day testing required as Antigen test result is valid for 2 days
- You do not need to go to an assessment center unless a positive rapid test occurs and the home would direct you if a positive test result were to occur. You will be directed to the swabbing area when you arrive at the home and you must wait for 15 minutes while we process the test results. Once the result is read and you are negative, you will be directed to the home area to visit your loved one.
- When a Rapid antigen test is required please note that the visiting times and availability to be tested is 09:30 am to 1:00pm and from 3:00pm to 6:00pm.
- We are no longer accepting PCR tests as the full implementation of Rapid Antigen Testing is now in effect.
- All staff and essential caregivers are required to wear appropriate eye protection (for example, goggles or face shield) when unable to maintain two meters of physical distancing, such as when they are providing direct care or interacting with residents when indoors.
- Eye protection is not required for outdoor visits.
- Fully Immunized individuals are allowed to have close physical contact with appropriate PPE.
- Follow all directions from the screener regarding PPE and wait for screener to advise to proceed directly to the Testing Area or Home area as applicable.
- Please proceed directly to the Home Area Resident Room where your essential visit will take place. There would be exceptions for Residents on Kempfenfelt Court who wander.
- Essential Visitors who are fully immunized may be able to use common areas such as the lounges, courtyard, attend programs and assist during mealtimes.
- Required PPE must be on for the entire visit including in the Resident room where your visit will take place.
- No congregating at the nurse's station or the administration offices. If you require to speak to a nurse or manager please call as phone conversations are safer.
- No eating or drinking during the visit
- Resident rooms are routinely disinfected following essential visits. Y
- You must sign out at the front entrance.
- It is recommended that you keep your visit to a maximum of 2 hours between the hours of 9:30am-7pm Monday-Sunday once per day to manage routine

disinfecting and PPE supply and to minimize the frequency of in and out screening and supplies.

- Pets are not permitted in the Home
- Further, if a home is in outbreak, or the resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, the local public health unit will give directions regarding any essential visits. We ask that you consult with Nursing Management on a case by case basis.
- Essential Caregivers have been prioritized to receive their Covid 19 Vaccine. Even following their 2nd dose, we still need to maintain the infection control practices that are currently in place (screening and testing requirements, wearing of PPE, hand hygiene, staying in room to visit, no wandering the home areas)

Essential Visitor Definitions

Under Directive #3, essential visitors are defined as including a person performing essential support services (e.g., food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health care services (e.g., phlebotomy)) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident.

For clarity the new Ministry of Long-Term Care Guidelines, specify that in addition to the Directive #3 requirement above, essential visitors include support workers and caregivers as defined in this policy. However, an essential visitor does not need to be a support worker or caregiver, as long as they meet the definition under Directive #3.

A support worker is a type of essential visitor who is visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home.

Examples of support workers include physicians, nurse practitioners, maintenance workers or a person delivering food, provided they are NOT staff of the LTC home as defined in the *LTCHA*.

A caregiver is 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).

A designated caregiver must be at least 18 years of age

Effective July 7, 2021 there is no limit to designating essential caregivers however the process must be adhered to.

For Essential Visitors / Caregivers an Essential Visitor /Caregiver Designation Form must be completed and approved by the Resident Care Management Team and

Medical Director or Nurse Practitioner. Once formally approved this documented record will be placed on the Resident's Chart as well as noted in Point Click Care.

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is entirely the remit of the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker.

A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may change a designation in response to a change in the: Resident's care needs that are reflected in the plan of care and the availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (e.g., illness) or permanent.

Examples of caregivers include family members who provide meaningful connection, a privately hired caregiver, paid companions and translators.

Access to Homes and Outbreak Areas

Under Directive #3, essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, or the home is in an outbreak.

During an outbreak, and/or a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the local public health unit will provide direction on visitors to the home, depending on the specific situation.

Testing

NEW February 16, 2021 with further revised update on March 15, 2021 Minister's Directive: Covid 19: Long Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes – Rapid Antigen Testing

Effective March 15, 2021 a Rapid Antigen Test in conjunction with frequency requirements will be required.

The Full implementation of Rapid Antigen Testing for Essential Visitors is now in effect as per Directive.

Long-Term Care Visitor, Absences & Social Gatherings Snapshot
Effective July 7th

Items in **Red** are changes since June 9th

REQUIREMENTS		FULLY IMMUNIZED	PARTIAL/ UNIMMUNIZED	OUTBREAK/ RESIDENT IN ISOLATION
VISITORS *Masks required at all times	ESSENTIAL – CAREGIVER ← 2-Designated • Participate in surveillance testing for indoor visits	May be indoors (2 per visit) or outdoors (max 10 including general visitors) May have physical contact, including for non-care related reasons with fully immunized resident. No eye protection required indoors or outdoors May support in dining room, join in activity	May be indoors (2 per visit) or outdoors Physical distancing 2m required when not providing direct care, however brief hugs are permitted Eye protection required when physical distancing is not maintained Unable to enter dining room/ join activity	May support in resident's room / isolation room (1 per visit) If resident unaffected by outbreak, may support outside of resident's room
	NON-ESSENTIAL GENERAL VISITOR • Participate in surveillance testing for indoor visits with negative screen confirmed prior to going beyond entry point	Outdoor visits (max 10 including caregivers). No eye protection required Indoor visits (max 2) Close contact with fully immunized resident allowed. No eye protection required	Outdoor visits (max 10 including caregivers). Indoor visits (max 2) Physical distancing 2m required however brief hugs are permitted	Not permitted unless resident in area unaffected by outbreak
ABSENCES *Medical mask required, follow IPAC, active screening on return *Overnight absences require following Testing and Isolation requirements as set out in Admissions section of Directive 3	MEDICAL	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
	COMPASSIONATE/ PALLIATIVE	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
	SHORT TERM - ESSENTIAL	Permitted	Permitted	Not permitted
	SHORT TERM – SOCIAL (<24 hrs)	Permitted	Not permitted	Not permitted
	TEMPORARY (2+days/ overnight)	Permitted Prior approval from home required; request does not have to be in writing	Not permitted	Not permitted
REQUIREMENTS	IMMUNIZATION THRESHOLD MET	BELOW IMMUNIZATION THRESHOLD	OUTBREAK/ ISOLATION	
SOCIAL GATHERINGS *Residents wear face coverings if tolerated, IPAC adherence, cleaning prior/ after	ORGANIZED EVENTS/ SOCIAL GATHERINGS Physical distancing can be relaxed Cohorting can be relaxed when resident activities are outside	Enhanced precautions required Physical distancing (2m) must be maintained; limited capacity in a room Maintain same activity groups as much as possible Cohorting can be relaxed when resident activities are outside	Individual/ door to door programming only for area(s) in outbreak and isolated residents (caregiver permitted)	
DINING	COMMUNAL DINING	Consistent seating of residents at same table – physical distancing can be relaxed. 2m distancing between diners at different tables as much as possible	Decreased dining room capacity Physical distancing, 2m maintained between all diners as much as possible	In-suite dining

The document is meant to be used as snapshot of the visitor, absences and social activities section of the Long-Term Care Guidance Document and Directive 3. Readers should refer to [Directive 3](#) and the [Long Term Care Guidance Document](#) for full details of the policies and requirements including exceptions.

Essential Visitors

Visits for essential visitors are permitted as follows, subject to direction from the local public health unit:

Where the home is not in an outbreak

- A maximum of two (2) caregiver per resident may visit at a time.
- A maximum of ten (10) caregiver and/or general visitors may visit outdoors on property
- Up to 4 Visitors at the front of the Home
- Up to 10 Visitors at the partitioned patio
- Masks are required at all times.

Where the home is in an outbreak, a maximum of 1 caregiver per resident may visit at a time and will be discussed on a case by case basis

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

- Resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic; and/or
- The Home is in an outbreak.

Caregivers

Caregivers must pass an active screening questionnaire administered by the Home's staff and have tested negative for COVID-19 as per the most current directives.

For Public Health tracing requirements you will sign in with contact information and confirm the date of your last test and results. Please have this information available at the time of screening to provide proof.

Caregivers must verbally attest to the home that, in the last 14 days, they have not visited another:

Resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic; and/or
the Home is in an outbreak.

Prior to visiting any resident for the first time after this policy is released, the home will provide training to caregivers that addresses how to safely provide direct care, including putting on and taking off required PPE, and hand hygiene.

Prior to visiting any resident for the first time after this policy is released, and at least once every month thereafter, essential visitors must verbally attest to the home that they have read/re-read the home's visitor policy as changes in directives are evolving.

All essential visitors and caregivers must attest to reading these guidelines as well as reviewing the following materials (Public Health Ontario PDF and YouTube Links) before the next visit.

<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>

PPE for Essential Visitors and Caregivers

The Home will provide all necessary PPE including surgical/procedure masks and where applicable, gloves, gowns and eye protection (i.e, face shield or goggles) for essential visitors as required in Directive #3.

Please contact the Resident Care Management Team if you have questions and to arrange for caregiver designation at NursingManagement@ioof.com

Virtual visits still remain the safest option and can be booked by appointment by contacting Recreation@ioof.com