

# Essential Visitor Determination Guideline: Seniors Assisted Living

<p><b>Site:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seniors' Assisted Living sites registered with the <a href="#">Assisted Living Registry</a> -Island wide</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audience: registered Assisted Living Site Operators, registered Assisted Living residents, essential visitors/ potential visitors, Island Health clinical visitor decision makers (CHS Clinicians) and Leadership</li> <li>Indications: to support decision making process to determine who is an essential visitor; to define roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Exceptions: not intended for use in determining social visitors</li> </ul>
---	---

## Background:

As per the Ministry of Health, visitation restrictions continue to apply to all registered Assisted Living settings in B.C. The determination of an essential visitor involves identifying an essential need of the resident that cannot be met in the absence of the essential visit. The essential need may be identified by the registered Assisted Living Operator (Operator), registered Assisted Living resident (or substitute decision maker if applicable), family, or a member of the health care team. Based on definitions and criteria included from the Ministry of Health, it is the responsibility of the Operator to evaluate the essential visit in partnership with the resident (or substitute decision maker if applicable) and health care team. Weighing into this decision are current circumstances including:

- Resident's clinical assessment
- Risk of transmission and ability of the proposed visitor's understanding and willingness to abide by details outlined in the Essential Visitor Plan, including:
  - Complete screening upon entering site and provide name and contact information
  - Adhere to agreed-upon visit schedule details
  - Adhere to instructions on wearing a medical-grade mask, practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, go directly to and from designated visit location and follow donning and doffing instructions for PPE

The negative impacts of visitor restrictions on residents' quality of life needs to be balanced with the protection and safety of all residents.

## Essential Visit Definition

Essential visits as defined by the Ministry of Health (MOH) are linked with an essential need that could not be met in the absence of the essential visit. Essential visits include, but are not limited to:

- Visits for compassionate care including:
  - Critical illness, palliative care, hospice care, end of life, and Medical Assistance in Dying.
  - Follow the [Palliative End of Life Care Guidelines for ALL Care Settings](#)
- Visits paramount to the resident's physical care and mental well-being, including:
  - Assistance with medication administration
  - Assistance with feeding
  - Assistance with mobility
  - Assistance with personal care
  - Communication assistance for residents with hearing, visual, speech, cognitive, intellectual or memory impairments
  - Assistance by designated representatives for residents with disabilities, including providing emotional support
  - Provision of cultural or spiritual care as defined by resident or family
- Visits for supported decision making
- Existing registered volunteer providing the services described above
- Visitors required to move belongings in or out of a resident's room
- Police, correctional officers and peace officers accompanying a resident for security reasons

## Principles

- Assisted Living Operators will implement and comply with [provincial direction](#) with regards to the current visitor policy
- Assisted Living Operators will follow all existing infection control procedures required by the MHO and as outlined in [BC CDC & BC MOH Infection Prevention and Control interim Guidance for Long-term Care and Assisted Living](#)
- Assisted Living Operators will determine if a visit is essential in partnership with the resident (or substitute decision maker if applicable) and health care team
- Island Health recognizes that cultural practices and spiritual needs are essential to a person's well-being and should not be limited to end-of-life circumstances only

## COVID-19: Essential Visitor Determination Guideline: Registered AL Sites

---

- Residents may have more than one essential visitor if required
- Where there is an active COVID-19 outbreak, essential visits will continue per direction from the local medical health officer
- Ministry of Health “Visitation Interpretation Guidance: Guideline for Essential Visits” must be used to make the determination (see Appendix A)
- Assisted Living Operators must create and retain the Essential Visitor Plan for each resident visited (Appendix B), which will include information on who the essential visitor is, what essential need is being met and how, and the expected length and frequency of essential visits. Essential Visitor Plans will be documented and reviewed regularly by the Assisted Living Operator

### Roles and Responsibilities

Assisted Living Operator responsibility:

- Have a current visitation safety plan that identifies how many visitors per day, visit location and visiting hours based on operational considerations
- Provide designated visiting areas such as:
  - Resident’s suite
  - Outdoor location dedicated to visiting (seasonally when weather permits)
  - Indoor designated location(s) (summer and especially fall/winter)
- Work in partnership with resident and health care team to identify essential needs and develop a mutually agreed upon Essential Visitor Plan
- Provide medical-grade masks for all visitors

Essential visitor responsibility:

- Complete screening questions and provide contact information for contact tracing purposes
- Perform hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette as needed, follow physical distancing practices and don, doff and dispose of medical-grade mask as directed
- Go directly to the resident being visited and exit facility directly after visit
- Follow the mutually agreed upon Essential Visitor Plan
- Essential visits will be limited to one visitor per resident within the facility at a time

- No children under the 14 (unless exception granted on an individual basis by site leadership)

### Non-Visit Decisions:

Anyone with questions or concerns about an essential visit decision, is encouraged to speak to the Assisted Living Operator at the time of the concern.

Visitors can request an immediate review of any decisions made related to visitor status from site operators.

- See [Visitor Appeal and Review Process for Essential and Social Visits](#)

Residents, visitors or potential visitors may contact the Island Health [Patient Care Quality Office](#) to provide feedback regarding any decision regarding visitors if concerns cannot be resolved at the local level.

Residents and their families may also contact the [Assisted Living Registrar](#) to register a complaint about a decision regarding visitors.

### Resources:

1. [Office of the Provincial Health Officer – Orders and Notices](#)
2. [Ministry of Health-Overview of Visitors in Assisted Living and Seniors' Assisted Living](#)
3. [Island Health Framework for Essential Visits](#)
4. [Assisted Living Registry](#)
5. [Palliative End of Life Care Essential Visits](#)
6. [Island Health Patient Care Quality Office](#)

## Appendix A: Visitation Interpretation Guidance

This guidance supports a consistent approach to the visitors in LTC that enables person-centered care and outlines expectation regarding the provision of essential visits

### Guidelines for Essential Visits

Statement	Application
The Assisted Living Operator, in collaboration with the resident (or substitute decision maker if applicable) and health care team will determine essential visitor status	<p>Essential visits will be evaluated <b>in partnership with the resident</b> (or their substitute decision maker if applicable), based on current circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Clinical assessment</li> <li>-Risk of transmission</li> <li>-The environment</li> <li>-The ability to maintain physical distancing</li> <li>-The availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) if required</li> </ul> <p>Residents can refuse to provide consent for a visit and this will be respected</p> <p>In circumstances where an essential visit is denied, communication with the visitor will be a priority, including rationale for non-visit decision. The person should be informed of how they can appeal the decision.</p> <p>In circumstances where an essential visit is not indicated, consider other options that might meet the needs of the resident. Options for non-physical/virtual visits should be explored.</p> <p>If immediate decisions are required, escalation mechanisms shall be activated without delay (See Visitor Appeal and Review Process)</p>
Essential visits include: Visits for compassionate care, including critical illness, palliative care, hospice care, end-of-life and Medical Assistance in Dying;	<p>Critical illness refers to a significant life-threatening condition or health change event; a condition that could reasonably be expected to have significant complications in the next 12-24 hours (e.g. sepsis, stroke or myocardial infarction requiring interventional procedure).</p> <p>For the purposes of this document, palliative care, hospice care, and end-of-life care pertains to caring for individual whose condition is considered end-of-life, and death is anticipated as imminent (e.g. Palliative Performance Scale 30% or lower, totally bed bound).</p> <p>A physician or nurse practitioner determines if the resident's condition is considered end-of-life</p> <p>When death is anticipated as imminent, family members/support people may have extended visits or a vigil in consultation with the health care team</p> <p>See <a href="#">Palliative End of Life Care Essential Visits for ALL Care Settings</a></p>

## COVID-19: Essential Visitor Determination Guideline: Registered AL Sites

Statement	Application
<p>Visits paramount to the resident's physical care and mental well-being including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance with medication administration, feeding, mobility and/or personal care</li> <li>Communication assistance for persons with hearing, visual, speech, cognitive, intellectual or memory impairments</li> <li>Assistance by designated representatives for persons with disabilities, including the provision of emotional support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal care refers to activities of daily living such as bedding, feeding, and bathing</li> <li>Visits paramount to mental well-being can include situations where a resident's mental health is acutely deteriorating, and the Operator, health care team and/or resident (or substitute decision maker if applicable) believe that a supportive visit may improve resident well-being (e.g. dementia with behavioural issues, delirium, depression, anxiety, psychosis)</li> </ul>
Visits for supported decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the resident requires support to speak on their behalf, share and articulate their wishes and/or inform significant decision making as a substitute decision maker (PGT, Representative, Power of Attorney) such as updating Advance Care Planning documentation (e.g. Medical Order for Scope of Treatment, end of life directives, etc)</li> </ul>
Existing registered volunteers providing the services described above;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facility-specific guidelines regarding volunteers should be consulted</li> </ul>
Visits required to move belongings in or out of a resident's room; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One essential visitor for this purpose</li> </ul>
Police, correctional officers and peace officers accompanying a resident for security reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One or two essential visitors for this purpose (based on agency-specific policy)</li> </ul>
Essential visits shall be limited to one visitor per resident at a time (except when death is anticipated as imminent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visits limited to one visitor per resident at a time</li> <li>Special considerations for additional essential visitors can be made on a case by case basis</li> <li>Special considerations for switching an essential visitor (e.g. in the case an essential visitor is ill or moves) can be made on a case by case basis</li> <li>Cultural practices and spiritual needs essential to a resident's well-being should be considered</li> <li>Visitor ability to adhere to physical distancing in any care environment should be considered.</li> </ul>
Health Care Team composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes Assisted Living Site Operator and staff, Island Health CHS, Primary Care Providers and others</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Essential Visitor Forms

### ASSISTED LIVING ESSENTIAL VISITOR PLAN – Page 1 of 2

(Site Operator or delegate completes and retains this form)

<b>ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENT</b>	
Resident Name and Room Number	
<b>APPROVED ESSENTIAL VISITOR</b>	
Essential Visitor Name	
Contact Information	
<b>ESSENTIAL NEED(S) IDENTIFIED (essential visitor may meet more than one need)</b>	
<b>VISIT SCHEDULE</b>	
Visitation Plan Start Date:	
Review/End Date:	
Visit Schedule, if applicable:	
Plan created in consultation with: (Health care team member name and contact information)	
<b>MUTUAL AGREEMENT</b>	
Plan reviewed with visitor on ____/____/____ (DD/MMM/YYYY)	<input type="radio"/> In person <input type="radio"/> Telephone <input type="radio"/> Other _____
Plan reviewed with resident on ____/____/____ by (DD/MMM/YYYY)	<input type="radio"/> Site Operator <input type="radio"/> Essential Visitor <input type="radio"/> Health Care Team member
_____ Signature of Site Operator	_____/_____/_____ (DD/MMM/YYYY)
_____ Signature of Essential Visitor	_____/_____/_____ (DD/MMM/YYYY)



## COVID-19: Essential Visitor Determination Guideline: Registered AL Sites

### ASSISTED LIVING ESSENTIAL VISITOR PLAN – Page 2 of 2

*(Site Operator or delegate completes and retains this form)*

ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENT	
Resident Name and Room Number	
REVIEW RECORD	
Date:	<div>Update(s):</div> <div>Site Operator or delegate has consulted and communicated changes with resident, essential visitor and health care team member:</div> <div>_____</div> <div>Signature of Site Operator or Delegate</div>
Date:	<div>Update(s):</div> <div>Site Operator or delegate has consulted and communicated changes with resident, essential visitor and health care team member:</div> <div>_____</div> <div>Signature of Site Operator or Delegate</div>
Date:	<div>Update(s):</div> <div>Site Operator or delegate has consulted and communicated changes with resident, essential visitor and health care team member:</div> <div>_____</div> <div>Signature of Site Operator or Delegate</div>
Date:	<div>Update(s):</div> <div>Site Operator or delegate has consulted and communicated changes with resident, essential visitor and health care team member:</div> <div>_____</div> <div>Signature of Site Operator or Delegate</div>

Owner: Sarah Westgate, AL

Date/Time Issued: 2021/MAR/12

**This document is in effect until the end of the COVID-19 response.** It has been prepared solely for use at Island Health. Island Health accepts no responsibility for use of this material by any person or organization not associated with Island Health. A printed copy of this document may not reflect the current, electronic version on the Island Health Intranet.



**ASSISTED LIVING ESSENTIAL VISITOR FORM – Page 1 of 1**  
*(Site Operator completes and retains this form – copy to stay with Greeter)*

<b>ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENT</b>	
Resident Name and Room Number	
<b>APPROVED ESSENTIAL VISITOR</b>	
Essential Visitor Name	
Contact Information	
<b>ESSENTIAL VISIT SCHEDULE</b>	
<b>ESSENTIAL NEEDS MET BY VISITOR (check all that apply)</b>	
Essential care needs due to compassionate care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Critical illness</li> <li>○ Palliative care, hospice care, end of life or medical assistance in dying</li> </ul>	Essential care needs for physical and mental well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assistance with medication administration</li> <li>○ Assistance with feeding</li> <li>○ Assistance with personal care</li> <li>○ Assistance with showering/bathing</li> <li>○ Other _____</li> </ul>
Essential care needs for decision making, advocacy and communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Supported decision making</li> <li>○ Communication assistance</li> <li>○ Advocacy</li> </ul>	Essential care needs for mental well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emotional support required</li> <li>○ Provision of cultural or spiritual care</li> <li>○ Existing registered volunteer for services above</li> </ul>
Essential care needs – moving and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Visits required to move belongings in/out of a resident's room</li> <li>○ Police, correctional officers and peace officers accompanying a resident for security reasons</li> </ul>	Essential care needs – housekeeping/maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dishes</li> <li>○ Personal laundry</li> <li>○ Other _____</li> </ul>
<b>COMMENTS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR GREETER</b>	

## Appendix C: Non-Visit Decision

### REQUEST DENIED FOR ESSENTIAL VISITOR STATUS – Page 1 of 1

(Operator or delegate completes and retains this form and provides a written response to applicant within 24 hrs)

<b>ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENT</b>	
Resident Name and Room Number	
<b>NON-APPROVED ESSENTIAL VISITOR</b>	
Name	
Contact Information	
Connection to Assisted Living resident	
<b>REASONS FOR NON-VISIT DECISION (complete all sections that apply)</b>	
Essential need is already met by an essential visitor (provide name):	
Health Care Team does not support need for essential visit:	
Resident does not wish to receive visits from this applicant (indicate how this was communicated to operator):	
Potential essential visitor does not wish to visit:	
Potential essential visitor declines to adhere to safe visiting requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comply with screening process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leave name and contact information with greeter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wear medical grade mask</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and donning and doffing PPE requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Go directly to and from approved visit location</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adhere to approved visit schedule and/or duration</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNICATION OF NON-VISIT DECISION</b>	
Decision reviewed with potential visitor on ____/____/____ (DD/MMM/YYYY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In person</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Telephone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>
Decision reviewed with resident on ____/____/____ by (DD/MMM/YYYY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Site Operator</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Essential Visitor</li> </ul>
Signature of Site Operator _____ _____ (DD/MMM/YYYY)	