

Social Visiting: Long-Term Care Facility (LTCF)

<p>Site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long-term Care Island-Wide ○ Respite ○ Affiliates & Owned & Operated 	<p>Scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience: Managers and Directors of Care (DOC), Charge Nurses, RN/RPN, LPN, Allied Health, LTC Leadership • Indications: Social Visiting • Exceptions: For Essential Visiting, Health Visiting or Palliative & End-Of Life Visiting—please refer to these guidelines specifically.
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Need to know:

- COVID-19 presents a significant threat to the health and safety of all residents in Long-term Care (LTC). Significant measures, including visiting restrictions, have been taken to limit the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19 in LTC homes, given the concerns regarding morbidity and mortality in the long-term care population. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and BC Centre for Disease Control (BC CDC) introduced social visiting on June 30, 2020 in order to support visits between family members and residents of LTC homes.
- This document supplements the [Ministry of Health-Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#) guideline and outlines additional specific direction for sites in Island Health.
- This document serves to provide guidance to all LTC operators regarding **social visiting** and will be subject to changes based on any future and/or additional MOH directives. Any visits relating to end-of life or essential visiting are subject to guidelines relating to those specific matters.

1.0 General Principles

- Designated social visits will be maximized at all sites while ensuring compliance with appropriate safety procedures.
- Sites 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](#)
- Resident and staff safety at the site remains the priority for each site and should not be compromised for unsafe designated social visits.
- Each site will be responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating its own social visiting plan.
- It is expected operators will provide each resident with regular opportunities to engage in social visits.

2.0 Decision-Making: Who is a Social Visitor?

- The decision of who will be the designated social visitor must be made collaboratively (care team must include the resident/family +/- health care rep or Temporary Substitute Decision Maker {TSDM})
- The decision reflects the resident as primary decision maker for determining designated social visitor, unless they have been deemed incapable of making this decision or if they want to include their family, health care rep or TSDM
- Designated Social Visitor will be:
 - One single person per resident ****** (*changes can be considered by the operator based on individual extenuating circumstances; decisions must be documented by care team*)
 - Designated social visitors are not limited by the single site order (i.e. the designated social visitor could have visits in multiple LTC sites provided a site is not in outbreak).
 - Designated social visitors can be health care staff at other facilities and are not limited in social visiting by the single site order
 - Designated social visitor can be a child provided they can:
 - Remain unaccompanied during the visit
 - Is old enough to understand and follow COVID-19 safety protocols (i.e. PPE use, performing strict hand hygiene)
 - Above the age of 14 (*children under 14 could be considered based on individual circumstances)
- Communication about expectations will be provided to resident and family (verbal & written), outlining the following:
 - Importance of facilitating designated social visits
 - Collective Risk (i.e. health and safety for COVID-19 transmission for residents and visitors)
 - Collective Accountability and commitment to adhering to agreed guidelines to reduce risk for other visitors/residents/care providers
 - That the site is committed to maximizing designated social visits within the stated safety guidelines.
- Site leadership should ensure there is clear documentation related to decision-making and the process for social visiting.

3.0 Designated Social Visiting: Operational Considerations

- Visiting Plan:
 - Every site must have a social visiting plan approved by Island Health LTC Leadership.
 - Site Leadership must ensure the social visiting plan is reviewed monthly with updates made in accordance with direction provided by BC CDC, BC MOH and Island Health.
 - The visiting plan must outline safety measures including processes regarding how the site will ensure adherence with safety protocols (i.e. PPE use, hand hygiene and physical distancing).
 - The plan should be accessible for review or audit purposes by Licensing and/or Island Health LTC Leadership.
 - Site leadership should ensure a clear process for scheduling and co-ordinating social visiting, ensuring care team members are aware of process.
 - There are currently no parameters or mandates for sites to provide a specific number of social visits, but sites are expected to consider operations and aim to allow at least one social visit per week per resident.

- Managing Complaints
 - Refer to COVID-19: Long-term Care and Assisted Living Visitor Appeal and Review Process
 - Each site must ensure timely responsiveness to complaints about social visits, collaborating with residents, families and Island Health to resolve any issues.

- Monitoring of Visits
 - Formal supervision of a visit is considered intrusive and there is no expectation or mandate for this practice
 - Staff should be available to porter the visitor at the beginning of the visit to ensure visitor is apprised of expectations and practice regarding PPE, strict hand hygiene, physical distancing and respiratory etiquette.
 - Staff should be available to the resident for a brief check-in during the visit to ensure there are no resident unmet needs or questions from family.

- Gifts, Flowers & Food
 - There is no restriction regarding family who want to bring gifts, flowers and food provided:
 - Food is brought in a container with a wipeable surface
 - Outdoor food is permitted
 - Flowers remain subject to scent free policies
 - There is no requirement to hold any items brought in by the designated social visitor.

- Pets
 - Subject to the LTC Home Pet Policy, pets can be brought in by a designated social visitor during the visit provided:
 - The pet visit is restricted to the resident they are visiting only.
 - The pet is not actively ill.

- Established facility pets are permitted to interact with residents, provided strict hand hygiene and physical distancing is reinforced.
- Visiting Location
 - The location for a social visit can be:
 - Resident's room provided it is a single room;
 - Visiting in a multi-bed room would take place only in exceptional circumstances based on, and taking into consideration, the needs and requirements of everyone in the shared room. See Guideline for Visiting in Multi-bed rooms (in development)
 - Designated visiting room in facility; or
 - Outdoor designated area.
 - The visit should occur on-site in the designated area.
 - The resident should not be taken off-site.
 - Residents can go for a walk around the site (with the designated social visitor), **ONLY IF** the site does not have a courtyard or area on site where the resident and visitor can walk. In this case, a health and safety plan would must be developed by clinical leadership with the designated social visitor.

4.0 Social Visiting: Pre-Visit, Visit & Post-Visit Considerations

Pre-Visit

- The designated social visitor must self-screen with the BC Self-Assessment Tool (<https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>) before attending visit and must cancel visit if screen is positive
- Visiting Location must be cleaned before the visit and identified as such by housekeeping
- The social visiting plan must be reviewed with resident and designated social visitor prior to the visit
- Site staff must instruct the designated social visitor about hand hygiene, personal protective equipment, respiratory etiquette and safe physical distancing (i.e. 2m)
- Site Staff must maintain a Visitor List with Contact Information (phone number or email for Public Health Contact Tracing) and the designated social visitor must provide up-to-date contact information

Visit

- Designated social visitor must be screened at the Greeter Station on arrival (must comply with facility policy)

- Designated social visitor will be guided to the visit location

- Visit length will be based on site's operational requirements as set out in the site-specific visitor safety plan

- The number of daily and weekly visits allowed will be based on operations and the site's ability to safely accommodate visitor numbers

- Designated social visitor must wear appropriate PPE as directed by staff (medical-grade mask provided by site staff)
 - Homemade or other masks brought by the visitor are not permitted. Medical-grade masks must be provided by the site.
 - Medical-grade masks must be worn inside the building at all times. Masks can be removed if the visit is outdoors and physical distance of 2m is maintained.

- Designated social visitor and resident are encouraged to minimize physical touching with the following considerations:
 - Designated social visitor must keep their mask on during the visit at all times (unless outside and >2m apart)
 - Sitting within 2 m is permitted provided a mask is worn
 - Embracing, kissing and holding resident's hand is allowed provided strict hand hygiene, appropriate respiratory etiquette and a medical-grade mask is worn.

Post-Visit Requirements

- Designated social visitor must perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based rub (70%) when leaving the visit location and after removing mask

- Designated social visitor must remove mask at the exit from facility

- Designated social visitor must leave site immediately following visit

5.0 Social Visiting: Persons under Admission Isolation & Respite

In addition to above considerations, for residents who are under admission isolation and for those who are in a facility for respite, visiting is allowed provided adherence to the following:

- A. The resident is not considered a person under investigation (i.e. does not present with any symptoms or signs consistent with COVID-19) and is not on isolation for any other pathogen
- B. The designated social visitor complies with the LTC Social Visitor Policy:
 - i. Only one designated social visitor for each resident
 - ii. The designated social visitor has not had any exposure to COVID-19 in the community setting
 - iii. The designated social visitor has not travelled internationally in the last 14 days (or has completed mandatory 14-day self-isolation)
 - iv. The designated social visitor complies with pre-visit, visit and post-visit requirements (see section 2.0)
 - v. The visit can ONLY occur in the resident's room which must be a private room in which the resident is the only occupant.
 - vi. Visit length based on site operational requirements as per the site specific visitor safety plan
 - vii. There are no facility operational constraints limiting the ability for the visit to occur

Persons/Groups Consulted:

Medical Health Officer, Communicable Disease Nurse, Infection Control and Prevention Practitioners, Long-term Care Executive Leadership, Long-term Care Clinical Experts, LTC COVID-19 Practice Council, Long-term Care Visitor Advisory Committee

Resources

- BC CDC & BC Ministry of Health (2021): [Social Visiting Guidelines Poster](#)
- BC CDC & BC Ministry of Health (2021): [LTC Restricted Visitor Policy Poster](#)
- BC CDC & BC Ministry of Health (2020). [Updated Visitor Guidelines](#)
- BC CDC & BC Ministry of Health (2020). [Infection Prevention and Control Requirements for COVID-19 in Long-term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#)
- Ministry of Health (2020). [Policy Communique: Infection Prevention and Control for Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Ministry of Health (2021) [Ministry of Health-Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#)