



Subject: Visitor Policy	Policy #: OP-AM-7.5
Classification: OPERATIONS	Sub Classification: Administration and Management
Section: 7 - Home Operations	Effective Date: May 14, 2021
Reviewed Date: February 11, 2025	Approved Date: February 11, 2025

## PREAMBLE

Omni Quality Living understands the importance of visits by family, friends and visitors in enhancing the quality of life and emotional well-being of our residents. Visitors are welcome to visit at any time that is mutually agreed upon by the resident and that keeps in mind other residents need for privacy and rest.

*Every resident has the right to communicate in confidence, receive visitors of their choice and consult in private with any person without interference. – Fixing Long Term Care Act, 2021, s.3(1) ss.3.*

This visiting policy is guided by the following principles:

**Safety** – Any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.

**Emotional Well-Being** – Allowing visitors is intended to support the emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.

**Equitable Access** – All residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

**Flexibility** – The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its staffing availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to take into account when setting home-specific policies.

**Equality** – Residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.

## PURPOSE

To ensure a safe environment that follows provincially mandated protocols, this policy provides guidance on how visits are to be implemented.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees and all persons, including support workers, essential visitors and caregivers and general visitors attending an Omni Home.

## DEFINITIONS

**Essential Visitors:** Essential visitors are persons visiting a Home to meet an essential need related



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to the operations of the Home or residents that could not be adequately met if the person did not visit the Home. There are 4 types of essential visitors:

- People visiting very ill or palliative residents who are receiving end-of-life care for compassionate reasons, hospice services, etc.
- Government inspectors with a statutory right of entry. Government inspectors who have a statutory right to enter long-term care homes to carry out their duties must be granted access to a home. Examples of government inspectors include inspectors under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Electricity Act, 1998, the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- Support workers: Support workers are persons who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents.

**Essential Caregiver:** An Essential Caregiver is an individual who is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident, provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident, including providing direct physical support or assistance to meet the needs of a resident, including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis. An Essential Caregiver must be designated in writing and be at least 16 years of age.

**General Visitors:** Persons who are not essential visitors and are visiting to provide non-essential services or for social reasons, e.g. family members or friends that are not providing direct care but are providing cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection and relational continuity.

**Support workers:** Support workers are persons who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents. Essential services provided by support workers include but are not limited to:

- Assessment, diagnostic, intervention/rehabilitation, and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
- Assistive Devices Program vendors — for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
- Moving a resident in or out of a home
- Social work services
- Legal services
- Post-mortem services
- Emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)
- Maintenance services such as those required to ensure the structural integrity of the home and the functionality of the home’s HVAC mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems, and services related to exterior grounds and winter property maintenance



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- Food/nutrition and water/drink delivery
- Canada Post mail services and other courier services
- Election officials/workers

**POLICY**

Omni Quality Living encourages visitors to support and enhance quality of life and socialization. Visitors will be permitted to the Home subject to the direction of Public Health and based on the requirements of Ontario Ministry of Health document Recommendations for Outbreak Prevention and Control in Institutions and Congregate Living Settings, and/or other relevant legislation or directive and Omni Quality Living visitor policies as amended from time to time.

**PROCEDURE**

**General Provisions**

1. The Home shall provide communication to Residents, Families, Essential Caregivers and SDMs regarding visiting policies and status of home visitation, including hours, Infection Prevention and Control processes, General Code of Conduct, and potential consequences of non-compliance with established procedures. A copy of the Visitors policy will be provided to the Residents’ Council and posted on the Omni website.
2. Each person attending the Home for a visit shall be responsible for self-screening for symptoms of illness or infection and exposure history prior to entering the Home. Information will be posted at all entrances and exits and throughout the building, listing symptoms of illness/infection and reminding visitors not to attend the home if they are feeling ill or would otherwise fail screening.
3. All visitors are required to sign in as a visitor to the Home using the electronic kiosk at the entrance.
4. The kiosk will prompt and guide visitors through a simple sign in process which will require the guest to select the resident or residents that they are attending the Home to see. Once the sign-in process is completed, a badge will be produced from the printer beside the kiosk. Each guest is required to wear a visitor badge for the duration of their visit in the Home.
5. Before leaving the Home, each guest will be required to sign out at the kiosk to ensure the visitor log is reflective of the number of guests we have in the Home at any time.
6. This process is required for all General visitors, Essential Visitors, Essential Caregivers and



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Support Workers without exception each time they visit.

7. Contract service providers, vendors and agency staff are required to sign in/out using the electronic kiosk and follow the prompts to provide all required information related to the reason for their visit and will be required to wear a visitor badge for the duration of their visit in the Home.
8. Inspectors, EMS or other emergency personnel are not required to complete the sign in process.
9. Staff are not required to sign in as visitors.
10. There are no limits to the number of visitors a Resident can have in the Home, subject to space availability. The Home shall not unreasonably implement restrictions or space limitations.
11. General Visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.
12. The Home may implement designated visiting hours to limit general traffic and access to the Home during times of high community transmission or under other reasonable circumstances. Homes shall have the discretion to designate reasonable visitation periods, in consultation with Omni Home Office and will be required to communicate those hours to Residents and their guests in the Home.
13. General Visitors are not permitted:
  - If the Home is in outbreak
  - To visit an isolating resident
  - At any other time the local public health unit issues restrictions

In larger homes where only one floor or unit is affected by an outbreak, general visitors may be permitted, at the discretion of Public Health, provided the floor or unit they intend to visit is not affected by the outbreak or the Resident they are visiting is not isolating.
14. The Home shall not unreasonably deny access to any area of the Home, including washrooms, dining areas, recreation or worship space, to any visitor or ECG.
15. Any visitor or essential caregiver who develops any signs or symptoms of illness or infection while they are at the Home should leave immediately and be directed to self-isolate at their Home until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 if GI).
16. If an essential caregiver or visitor is symptomatic, it is recommended that they do not enter the home. In some circumstances, the Home, in consultation with the outbreak management team (OMT) and/or Omni Home Office, exceptions may be granted on compassionate



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grounds to support visitation of residents that are end of life.

17. The Home will not restrict physical contact, including for non-care related reasons, between Essential Caregivers or General Visitors and residents.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Visitors**

1. All visitors must comply with the established and required policies for the use of Personal Protective Equipment, as they may be amended from time to time. Though recommended, masking is not mandatory for visitors at this time, subject to the requirements noted below. Medical masks will be provided by the Home; and visitors are encouraged to wear a mask while in the Home. During high-level respiratory illness periods, mandatory masking policies may be implemented.
2. For a total of 10 days after the date of symptom onset visitors with COVID-19 should avoid non-essential visits to the Home. Where visits cannot be avoided, visitors will be required to wear an N-95 respirator, maintain physical distancing, and may have limited access within the Home, e.g., visit the resident’s room only. If tolerated, the resident being visited should also wear a mask for the duration of a visit with a COVID positive visitor or caregiver.
3. If education or assistance is required, a designated Employee will assist all visitors to complete the donning and doffing of PPE and hand-hygiene.
4. Asymptomatic surveillance testing is not required at this time. The Home reserves the right to revise the surveillance testing policy based on risk, including level of community spread, outbreak status, etc.
5. If a resident is self-isolating due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19, or the Home is in outbreak, essential caregivers attending the Home to provide support to a resident will be required to wear an N-95 and eye-protection.
6. If a resident is self-isolating due to other suspected or confirmed respiratory illness, or the Home is in outbreak, essential caregivers attending the Home to provide support to a resident will be required to wear a medical/procedure mask.
7. Additional PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves or eye protection at increased frequency) may be required in some circumstances and will be provided by the Home in such cases.

**Code of Conduct and Safety Procedures**

1. All information observed by visitors regarding other residents in the Home is considered confidential and shall not be discussed with others.



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2. All residents and team members in the Home shall be treated with respect at all times.
3. Yelling, swearing or the use of profanity, including at or about residents or staff, threatening behaviour, hitting, pushing or shoving is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.
4. Candles are not permitted in the Home.
5. Alcoholic beverages brought into the Home for resident consumption must be left with the charge nurse.
6. Over the counter or other medications, including but not limited to creams, ointments, vitamins or supplements shall be supplied only by the Home's pharmacy. Family members shall discuss individual needs with the Director of Care, as the Home must strictly adhere to pharmacy on Ministry policies.
7. No smoking or vaping is permitted in the building. Smoking must occur outdoors beyond 9 meters of any entrance. Smoking is not permitted in outdoor resident recreation space.
8. In the event of a fire or other emergency, visitors shall follow the instructions of staff.

### **Non-Adherence by Visitors**

1. The Home shall respond to all non-adherences by visitors to the above policy requirements promptly and respectfully with verbal redirection.
2. The Home shall have the discretion to end a visit by a visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home's visitor policy, provided the home has explained the applicable requirements to the visitor and the visitor has been given sufficient time to adhere to the requirements.
2. Any incident of non-adherence shall be documented by the Home, including a description of the infraction, redirection or reeducation provided and the resolution.
3. The Home shall have the discretion to temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence with the home's visitor policy. A visitor's lack of adherence to this policy may result in a disruption of the ability to visit the home, up to and including the issuance of a no trespass order. In exercising this discretion, homes should consider whether the non-adherence:
  - Can be resolved successfully by explaining and demonstrating how the visitor can adhere to the requirements;
  - Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff, and other visitors to the home;
  - Is demonstrated continuously by the visitor over multiple visits;
  - Is by a visitor whose previous visits were ended by the home.



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4. Any decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor shall be made only after all reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted. The Executive Director shall discuss this measure with the Director of Operations prior to being enforced.
5. If this prohibition involves an essential caregiver or support staff the SDM may be notified to appoint or hire a new person to ensure the resident's needs continue to be met.
6. If a visitor is found to be exhibiting behaviours of a threatening nature to the residents, another visitor or staff in the home, they will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If the visitor chooses not to leave upon request, the Home shall contact the local authorities.

### Vaccination Requirements

There continues to be an increased risk for severe outcomes as a result of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses in the elderly population due to age and underlying medical conditions, particularly in shared living spaces like long-term care homes. Vaccination remains the best defense against COVID-19.

Vaccination has shown to be very effective against severe illness and outcomes. Staying up-to-date with recommended doses restores protection that wanes over time. More specifically, booster doses help to increase protection against symptomatic infection and severe outcomes, such as hospitalization and ICU admission.

While there is no mandatory requirement for visitors and/or essential caregivers to receive a COVID-19 or other vaccine, all individuals entering long-term care homes, including residents, caregivers and visitors, are **strongly encouraged** to get vaccinated for COVID-19, RSV and Influenza and stay up-to-date with recommended doses.

Visits or access to the Home shall not be restricted on the basis of vaccination status.

### RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all individuals entering an Omni Home to adhere to the requirements of this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure compliance with the obligations of this policy.

### COMMUNICATION



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The Home's visiting policies will be communicated to the Residents, Families, Essential Caregivers and General visitors on a regular basis as updates and new directives emerge.

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be evaluated annually or more frequently as required.