

Resident Visitation, Hair Salons and Social Activities in LTC

**A Guideline for Long-Term Care Facilities in Nova
Scotia**

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PURPOSE

Across the province, Long-Term Care Facilities, including nursing homes and residential care facilities, are now allowing visitation, by appointment, for residents and their families. As these clients are more susceptible to acquiring COVID-19 and suffering related complications due to increased frailty and high prevalence of underlying chronic health conditions, it is important to make sure these visitations are conducted in a way that keeps residents safe.

The *Resident Visitation – A Guideline for Long-Term Care Facilities in Nova Scotia* has been developed to support Long-Term Care Facilities to safely implement both indoor and outdoor visitations for their residents.

GLOSSARY

This guideline uses the term **resident** to include clients residing in a Long-Term Care Facility or a Residential Care Facility.

This guideline uses the term **family/social visitor** to include family members and friends of residents.

PREPARING FOR VISITATION

Capture Visitor Information and Be Ready to Communicate

- Create and maintain a visitor logbook including:
 - name of visitor(s) and contact information
 - name of resident visited
 - date, time, and duration of visit
 - COVID-19 screening results

This information is important to ensure service providers are prepared to quickly and effectively communicate with other staff, families, and Public Health in the event that a resident or visitor becomes ill with COVID-19 related symptoms.

Prepare Your Facility for Visitation

- Work with residents or substitute decision makers to identify up to a maximum of three (3) family/social visitors for indoor visits for each resident in the facility.
 - it is suggested that facilities develop a system to record the visitors.
- Establish designated areas for both indoor and outdoor visitation. Facilities should also consider the following:
 - design the indoor visitation space to be as close to the entrance as possible;
 - designate a single-client room for visitation, if possible, for residents with limited mobility;
 - select a space for visitation that is conducive to providing families and residents with privacy;

- install physical markings to indicate the flow of visitors to and from the designated areas to best facilitate physical distancing; and
- install physical markings within the designated areas to indicate the appropriate distance between visitors and residents.
- ❑ Establish a designated area at the entrance of the facility/residence for visitor screening to occur.
- ❑ Establish a designated space and protocol for visitors to wash and/or sanitize their hands and don the required medical mask upon arrival.
- ❑ Establish an appropriate process for visitor flow within the facility.
- ❑ Install signage around the facility, focusing on key areas where you will be accepting visitors when they arrive. Signage should include the following information:
 - how to wash hands and/or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (see **Appendix A**)
 - how to don/doff a mask properly (see **Appendix B**)
 - physical distancing requirement
 - expectations for visitors
 - required protocols for hair salons, if applicable.

Prepare Your People for Visitation – Communication with Staff

- ❑ Establish and communicate protocols for visitations. This should enable all staff to know exactly how to safely receive and screen visitors, as well as manage visitations for residents. Consider making this a visual handout. This should also include:
 - clear, detailed steps on where to meet and screen visitors (i.e., where inside or outside of the facility)
 - how to safely guide visitors to the designated visitation space
 - how to conduct pre-visitation screening
 - how to schedule appointments
 - allowed duration for visitation
 - Note: Visitation must not be restricted to less than 30 minutes.
 - how to monitor visitations
- ❑ Establish and communicate protocols for visitations with residents with mobility issues. This should include:
 - consideration on how many staff are required for the identified visitor
 - which space will be allocated for such visits to allow for physical distancing between staff, residents, and visitors, while minimizing human resource needs.
 - how to schedule appointments to ensure the resident has the required staff supports for visits, while maintaining appropriate staffing levels in other areas of the facility for the duration of the visit
- ❑ Establish and communicate protocols for determining residents who are eligible for visitation, and the process for updating their visitation status to staff and families.
- ❑ Establish a process to communicate the visitation scheduling process and guidelines with residents and families. This process should have built in flexibility for both residents and families and should be designed to allow as much space between individual families as possible to respect privacy.

- Appoint a person within your management team and establish a central email/or phone line to direct all visitation scheduling inquiries from families.
- Establish a process to communicate as a team should a visitor notify the facility that they have become ill with COVID-19 symptoms following a visitation. Be broad and include all staff to keep everyone up to date. Prepare a memo ahead of time, if possible, to be used.
 - Note: This process should align with Public Health directives for notification of any possible contacts.
- Clarify a process (i.e., who and how) for staff to escalate concerns regarding visitors not following visitation guidelines.
- Establish and communicate a protocol for masking requirement for visitations.

Prepare Families for Visitation

- Communicate with families about how and when they can schedule a visitation with their loved one.
- Communicate with families on the permitted duration for visitation.
- Communicate with families the expectations for visitation. This should include the following information:
 - need for visitors to wear a medical mask (provided by the facility) for indoor visitation or to bring and wear a non-medical mask for outdoor visitation).
- Communicate with families the protocols for pre-visit and on-site screening.
- Make above mentioned information easily accessible on facility's website as well as provided to residents and their families in writing/by email.

Service providers can find templates to communicate this information to families in **Appendix C**.

Pre-Visitation Screening

When scheduling a visitation, staff must screen the potential visitor via phone for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

As per guidelines:

- Screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 should be conducted for all family/support visitors.
- Screening must occur prior to the visit.
- Visitors must indicate that they understand the possible impacts of COVID-19 and the need to follow physical distancing and hand hygiene throughout the visit to prevent unknowing transmission of COVID-19 to their loved one.

Note: No visitor will be allowed to visit a resident unless they are determined as eligible based on the pre-visit screening procedure.

A pre-screening tool is provided in **Appendix D**.

VISITORS

Family/Support Visitors

The Department of Health and Wellness acknowledges the need for residents in our Long-Term Care Facilities to see their family members and friends. These new enhanced guidelines will see the introduction of indoor visitations for assigned family/social visitors. In order to balance both the needs of residents, their family and friends with the ongoing risk of Covid-19, each resident may now identify three (3) family/social visitors who will be able to attend indoor visitation.

ON-SITE VISITATION

Long-Term Care Facility operators shall continue to support the inclusion of family/social visitors according to the outlined risk in their facility and the Province. To support ongoing efforts to keep both residents and staff safe, facility operators are asked to complete both an initial and ongoing monthly review of their current visitation practices. This is to ensure ongoing compliance with IPAC guidelines among residents, families, and staff. These guidelines can be accessed at [NSHA Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Infection Prevention & Control for Long-Term Care Settings](#)

As part of the implementation of onsite visitation, facility operators will engage with residents, their families, and care providers on the current IPAC practices in the facility. Operators will ensure there is ongoing engagement with residents and their families to ensure they are aware of the individual and collective risks associated with visitation, as well as ensure they understand their collective accountability and commitment to adhere to the facility's visitation guidelines to minimize the risk of COVID-19 for residents, visitors, and staff.

Visitation Protocol

This visitation protocol is intended to support facilities in implementing safe visitation for residents and their families/social supports. As the pandemic progresses, the below requirements may need to be updated, as required with direction from the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

This resource is a supplemental addition to existing directives from the department ([Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness - Visitor Restrictions in Long-Term Care, Homes for Persons with Disabilities](#)) as well as the [NSHA Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Infection Prevention & Control for Long-Term Care Settings](#) published by the Nova Scotia Health Authority and does not supersede them.

On-site visits are intended to support the emotional well-being of residents and are limited to the following restrictions:

- One (1) identified family/social visitor, per resident, per visit for indoor visitation.
- Up to five (5) visitors, per resident, per visit for outdoor visitation.

Visitor restrictions only apply to external visitors and do not apply to the number of staff who may be required to be present for the duration of the visitation, such as additional support staff required for residents with mobility challenges.

Outdoor and indoor visitation will only be allowed if there is not an active COVID-19 outbreak in the facility and will stop immediately if an outbreak is declared. Visits will resume when the outbreak is declared as resolved.

The approach for visitation (indoor and outdoor) are as followed :

- ❑ Visits will be scheduled in advance between the visitor and facility. The number of visitors allowed within the facility will be guided by the level of risk for COVID-19 in the facility and Province, and will be limited to effectively support physical distancing practice while supporting meaningful social connection with the resident.
- ❑ Staff must receive visitors in the designated waiting area upon arrival and accompany them to the designated visit area either on the grounds of or within the facility.
 - Visitors should be received at the door or entrance to prevent introduction of COVID-19 into the facility, if possible.
- ❑ Staff must screen all visitors for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 using the pre-screening tool (**Appendix D**).
 - Visitors with signs or symptoms of COVID-19, as well as those in self-isolation or quarantine as required by Nova Scotia Health Protection Act Order, will not be permitted to visit.
- ❑ Staff must instruct visitors to perform hand hygiene, practice respiratory etiquette, abide by physical distancing, and wear a mask during their visit. For outdoor visits only, the mask may be removed if negatively impacting communication (at the discretion of the facility) if physical distancing is maintained. Staff will instruct the visitor on any contact and droplet precautions for the site and instruct the visitor on how to put on and remove their mask.
 - If the visitation is indoors, /social visitors must be provided a new medical mask. For outdoor visitation, a non-medical mask is sufficient.
 - If the visitor is unable to adhere to these protocols, the visitor will not be permitted to visit.
- ❑ Staff must sign in and sign out all visitors using the facility's established visitation log.
- ❑ Staff must direct visitors to the designated visiting space, remain in the designated space for the duration of the visit, and will accompany visitors in their exit from the facility immediately after their visit.
- ❑ Staff must assist the resident with proper hand hygiene before and after each visitation.
- ❑ Any furniture and surfaces used in visitation areas will be cleaned and disinfected as per [NSHA Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Infection Prevention & Control for Long-Term Care Settings](#) at the end of each visit. Time should be scheduled between visits to allow for cleaning and disinfecting and supporting in the movement of residents to and from the visiting areas.

It is important that facilities are able to provide safe oversight for visitation, which includes the provision of adequate staffing to provide visitor pre-screening at time of booking and screening upon arrival to facility, education on necessary IPAC procedures, monitoring of visitation, and sanitization of visiting spaces.

Social Activities & Out-of-Facility Activities

On-site Resident Gatherings

On site gatherings of up to 10 people (including residents and staff) will be permitted. Gatherings could be for the purposes of group dining, gathering for recreation activities and for socialization. Facilities are expected to group the same residents together each time and maintain consistent programming staff where possible. Cleaning, hand hygiene and other protocols will be implemented before and after gatherings. At this time, visitors are not permitted to attend or participate in indoor activities/gatherings.

Off-site Bus Trips

LTC facilities will be permitted to use LTC facility owned and operated or leased buses to take up to 10 people (including residents, staff and driver) for “sightseeing” drives off the grounds of the facility. Residents and staff will not be permitted to disembark during the drive. Bus drivers will be required to be screened, as per the protocols identified for indoor visitors. Facilities will be asked to group the same residents together for these outings, minimizing mixing of residents. Cleaning, hand hygiene and other protocols must be implemented by the facility prior to boarding and after disembarking the vehicle.

If leased buses are used, the facility must ensure that driver screening occurs, that buses are cleaned before and after use, and that all public health measures are followed. Close contact between the driver and staff/residents should be limited.

Residents must continue to remain within the facility and its grounds for all other reasons/activities except those previously identified (e.g. essential medical appointments). Other offsite activities are not permitted at this time.

Off-Site Visitation

Off-site visitation is not allowed for long-term care residents and RCF residents. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, new recommendations on best practice for off-site visitation for long-term care residents may emerge. The department will continue to monitor best practice recommendations.

Hairdressing Services

All licensed hairdressing service providers must follow the industry guidelines and protocols set out by the Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia. These guidelines can be accessed at the [Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia](#) website. These guidelines require both service providers and clients to wear a mask, as well as, the use of proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Services are required to be cancelled if either the service provider or the client is experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness. All operators and facilities must retain a list of every resident who has received services and when these services were provided.

Licensed hairdressers wishing to provide hairdressing services onsite in Long-Term Care Facilities must develop and submit safety plans to the facility. The facility operator will review safety plans for feasibility, and if approved, will work with providers to determine a start date for services. All safety plans must follow the guidelines outlined in the [NSHA Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Infection Prevention & Control for Long-Term Care Settings](#). Safety plans must be made available electronically on the facilities website, distributed in writing to residents and their families, and posted in the service area of the Long-Term Care Facility prior to services being implemented.

Prevention Education for Visitors

Upon arrival, staff should provide education to visitors about the requirement of proper respiratory hygiene/coughing etiquette and hand hygiene for the duration of their visit. Staff should ensure visitors wash their hands before and after their visitation.

Staff must communicate to visitors that should they become ill in the two (2) weeks following their visit to the facility, the visitor must contact 811 for screening and testing. Should the visitor test positive for COVID-19, the visitor must inform Public Health during their investigation that they have visited the facility.

Mask Requirement

Visitors who have been determined as eligible to visit their loved one must wear the appropriate mask for their visitation setting. A non-medical mask (including reusable cloth masks) is required for outdoor visits and a medical mask is required for indoor visits. Masks must be worn continuously for the duration of the visit.

For outdoor visitation, once in the designated area, the mask may be removed at the discretion of the facility, if the facility's visitation procedures allow for the removal of masks, if physical distance may be maintained.

Physical Distancing

For the entire duration of the visit, staff must communicate to, and ensure that, visitors maintain physical distancing of two (2) metres between themselves and the resident. The exception to this is for designated family/support persons performing care-related tasks, who then must be wearing appropriate PPE.

Supplies for Visitors

Certain supplies must be made available for visitors, by the facility, including:

- Hand sanitizer
- Waste disposal receptacle
- Medical masks for indoor visitation

Long-Term Care Facilities may want to have additional face masks available for visitors, to ensure they do not need to turn away visitors from seeing their loved one, in the event visitors arrive to the facility without an appropriate mask for their visitation.

Appendix A: Handwashing Poster

PROPER HAND WASHING

Washing your hands frequently with soap and water is the best way to reduce the spread of germs.

- 

1 Wet your hands with warm running water
- 

2 Add soap and scrub for 15–20 seconds
- 

3 Wash backs, thumbs, between fingers, and under nails
- 

4 Rinse off soap under running water
- 

5 Dry your hands with a clean towel
- 

6 Turn off tap with a towel

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used if hands are not visibly soiled.



Appendix B: How to Wear a Non-Medical Fabric Mask Poster

HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

[who.int/epi-win](https://www.who.int/epi-win)

Do's →



Clean your hands before touching the mask



Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty



Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides



Cover your mouth, nose, and chin



Avoid touching the mask



Clean your hands before removing the mask



Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head



Pull the mask away from your face



Store the mask in a clean plastic, resealable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it



Remove the mask by the straps when taking it out of the bag



Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day



Clean your hands after removing the mask

Don'ts →



Do not use a mask that looks damaged



Do not wear a loose mask



Do not wear the mask under the nose



Do not remove the mask where there are people within 1 metre



Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through



Do not wear a dirty or wet mask



Do not share your mask with others

A fabric mask can protect others around you. To protect yourself and prevent the spread of COVID-19, remember to keep at least 1 metre distance from others, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoid touching your face and mask.



World Health Organization

Appendix C: Communication Messaging and Letter Templates

Initial Letter to Families: Appointment to Visit a Resident

We are very pleased to let you know that the Province of Nova Scotia is now allowing both indoor and outdoor visitation, by appointment only, to its Long-Term Care Facilities.

I know our residents and families are eager to see their loved ones. We are looking forward to supporting in-person visits in designated areas within the facility and on facility grounds. For [insert name of facility], visits will take place in the [insert location]. Physical distancing rules apply, and visitors are expected to wear non-medical masks for outdoor visits and medical masks for indoor visits. Medical masks will be provided to families by the facility when you arrive.

Appointments will be scheduled in advance, and time limits will be in effect to ensure all residents who are able have a chance to visit with family. Visitation will be available only to residents who are not required to self-isolate and who are not demonstrating signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or other respiratory-like illness.

If you wish to schedule a visit, please contact [Insert Name of Facility Contact Here] to book an appointment. Please note that only one designated non-essential family/support visitor can visit a resident at a time for indoor visitation. Up to five people can visit a resident at a time during outdoor visitation. You will be required to follow our procedures for visits, which is based on direction from the Department of Health and Wellness and the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Specific instructions will be provided to you when your appointment is booked.

Should you have to cancel your visitation for any reason, please notify the facility in a timely manner to allow the facility to both support you in rescheduling, as well as allow other families to visit their loved ones.

Confirmation Letter: Appointment to Visit a Resident

Dear [insert visitor name(s)]:

This is to confirm that you have an appointment to visit [insert resident name] on [insert date] at [insert time]. If for any reason, you need to cancel your visit, please call [insert number], providing as much notice as possible.

Your visit will take place in the [insert location]. Each visitor will be required to bring your own non-medical mask (homemade or purchased masks are sufficient) for outdoor visits and a medical mask for indoor visits.

Before your visit, and in order for it to happen as scheduled, **you MUST**:

- arrive at your scheduled time and wait in the marked area
- undergo screening by a staff member for signs and symptoms, travel and potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- confirm that you understand the possible impacts of COVID-19 and the importance of physical distancing and hand hygiene to prevent unknowingly transmitting the virus to your loved one

During the visit, you **MUST**:

- allow physical distancing of two (2) metres between you and your loved ones.
- wear a mask
- practice strict respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene (visitors must wash hands/hand sanitize before and after the visit)
- wash hands/hand sanitize before and after visit

Should you become ill in the two weeks following your visit to a LTC facility, you must contact 811 for screening and testing. Should you test positive for COVID-19, you must inform public health during their investigation with you, that you have visited a Long-Term Care Facility.

Note: No visitor will be allowed to visit a resident unless they are determined as eligible based on the pre-visit screen.

Please help keep your loved ones safe.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Appendix D: Pre-Screening Tool for LTCFs Visitors

Staff, please complete this checklist prior to scheduling a visitation for families with residents.

1. Do you have any of the following symptoms?	Yes	No
Fever (or chills or sweats)	Yes	No
New or worsening of a previous cough	Yes	No

Sore throat	Yes	No
Headache	Yes	No
Shortness of breath	Yes	No
Muscle aches	Yes	No
New or worsening sneezing	Yes	No
New or worsening nasal congestion or runny nose	Yes	No
Hoarse voice	Yes	No
Diarrhea	Yes	No
Unusual fatigue	Yes	No
Loss of sense of smell or taste	Yes	No
Red, purple, or blueish lesions (spots) on the feet, toes, or fingers without clear cause?	Yes	No
2. In the last 14 days, have you travelled outside Atlantic Canada?	Yes	No
3. In the last 14 days, have you had close contact (i.e., within 2 metres / 6 feet) with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 infection?	Yes	No
4. Are you awaiting results from a COVID-19 test?	Yes	No

For staff:

If the visitor has answered YES to any one of these questions, the visitor is not able to attend for visitation at this time.

If the visitor answered **YES** to **Question 1**, or if they have any questions, please direct the visitor to **contact 811**.

A visitor with chronic stable cough, sneeze, running nose, or nasal congestion that is unchanged and clearly linked to a known medical condition such as asthma or allergies may still be able to visit. Please discuss with your management team and call back the visitor with the final decision.