

RIVERVIEW GARDENS

INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

POLICY: Visiting Policy

POLICY CODE: IPAC

Issued: Dec. 26, 2020

Revised: April 3, 2025

Required visiting policy

All homes are required to establish and implement a visitor policy that complies with [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 and O. Reg. 246/22](#).

Guiding principles

Rules for long-term care home visits continue to be in place to protect the health and safety of residents, staff and visitors and are being updated as appropriate to support residents in receiving the care they need and maintaining their mental and emotional well-being.

RVG respects residents right under the [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#), to receive visitors and makes every effort to not unreasonably restrict this right.

The visiting policy is guided by RVG responsibility for supporting residents in receiving visitors while mitigating the risk of exposure to communicable diseases.

Requirements

1. RVG's visiting policy is developed and implemented in accordance with, and reflects 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** – welcoming visitors is intended to support the mental and 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 workforce or human resources availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to consider when setting home-specific policies
- **equality** – residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers

- sets out the parameters, requirements, and procedures prescribed in the current version of this document with respect to visitors, including but not limited to:

- the definitions of the different types of visitors
- the requirement to designate caregivers in accordance with the O. Reg. 246/22
- restrictions with respect to visitors in the event of an outbreak or when a resident is isolating; and
- non-compliance by visitors of the home's visitor policy.

- includes provisions around the home's implementation of all required public health measures as well as infection prevention and control practices.

2. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT UNDER THE STANDARD: Additional Screening

requirements: The licensee shall: Establish and communicate an operational plan including guidance for staff, students, volunteers, support workers, caregivers and general visitors to self-monitor for symptoms of infectious diseases including COVID-19 (passive screening). Provide individuals with information (for example, screening questions) to monitor their health at home for symptoms and inform them that they are not permitted to enter the home if they are feeling ill or would otherwise fail screening (where appropriate). Homes are not required to request verification or an attestation upon entry to the home (nor are homes required to have staff conduct or verify screening at the door). Post signage at entrances and throughout the home that lists the signs and symptoms of infectious diseases for self-monitoring as well as steps that must be taken if an infectious disease is suspected or confirmed in any individual.

[https://ltchomes.net/LTCHPORTAL/Content/Snippets/2023-10-06-01-EN-IPAC Standard Fall 2023 Revisions.pdf](https://ltchomes.net/LTCHPORTAL/Content/Snippets/2023-10-06-01-EN-IPAC%20Standard%20Fall%202023%20Revisions.pdf)

3. RVG maintains visitor logs (records) of all visits to the home. The visitor log include:

- the name and contact information of the visitor
- time and date of the visit, time in and time out
- the purpose of the visit (for example: resident, room #, end-of-life visitation, etc.)

These visitor logs or records are kept for a period of at least 30 days and made readily available to the public health unit for contact tracing purposes upon request.

- 4. RVG ensures that all visitors, have access to the home's visitor policy and with provision to review the policy and applicable updates.
- 5. RVG provides education/training to all visitors about, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE as necessary by posting signage.

RVG's visitor policy includes guidance from the following [Public Health Ontario resources](#) to support IPAC and PPE education and training:

- video: [putting on full personal protective equipment](#)
- video: [taking off full personal protective equipment](#)
- videos: [how to hand wash](#) and [how to hand rub](#)

6. All visitors are to follow IPAC procedures as per Chatham Kent Public Health direction.

Types of visitors

Not considered visitors

Long-term care home staff (as defined under the Act), volunteers, and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee. Infants under the age of 1 are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing requirements.

Essential visitors

As per O. Reg. 246/22 under the [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#), there are four types of essential visitors:

1. **caregiver**, as defined under section 4 of O. Reg. 246/22, see below
2. **support worker** who visits 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:
 - o assessment, diagnostic, intervention or rehabilitation and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
 - o Assistive Devices Program vendors – for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
 - o moving a resident in or out of a home
 - o social work services
 - o legal services
 - o post-mortem services
 - o emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)
 - o 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
 - o food or nutrition and water or drink delivery
 - o Canada Post mail services and other courier services
3. **government inspector** with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.
4. **person visiting resident with end-of-life** care, a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services,

Caregiver

“caregiver” as defined under section 4 of O. Reg. 246/22,

- is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident,
- can comply with all applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice, or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*,

- provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident, including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social, spiritual, or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis,
- is designated by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, if any, and
- in the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.

Designating a caregiver

- Caregivers must be designated and must be at least 16 years of age.
- 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
 - availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (for example, illness) or permanent.
- A resident or their substitute decision-maker may not continuously change a designation to increase the number of people able to enter the home.

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is **the responsibility of the resident or their substitute decision-maker** and not the home. The designation of a caregiver is made in writing to the home. RVG has a procedure for documenting caregiver designations.

In the event that safety is a concern, Riverview Gardens may implement additional measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing for both residents and/or staff. Measures can include but are not limited to visitor restrictions or temporary suspension of visits. Decisions for visitor restrictions will be made in accordance with applicable legislation and in collaboration with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's legal services and the appropriate Riverview Gardens management and/or staff.

Related resources for visitor restrictions include:

- Municipality of Chatham-Kent's Public Conduct Policy
- Professional Codes of Ethics-Respectful workplace policy
- Ontario Health and Safety Association – Workplace violence reporting
- Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter T.21, as amended