Services for Seniors

Visitor Policy

Policy Number: 01-05-08
Core Component: Safe and Secure Home
Program: Administration
Owner: Compliance & IPAC Manager

Date Created: June 2022
Last Reviewed: July 2026
Last Revised: July 2025
Date of Next Review: 2027

Relevant Legislation

- Ontario Regulation 246/22
  - Section 267

Relevant Accreditation Standards

- 2.B: Residential Communities
  - Section 2.B.9
  - Section 2.B.16 d & e

Related Forms

Related Documents

- Halton Region Customer Code of Conduct
- 01-05-07 Prohibited Use of Weapons Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

Halton Region will provide an organized process to allow for safe and secure visitors to regionally owned and operated long- term care homes. Halton Region will 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*.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide meaningful, equitable, flexible, and safe access to visits for all residents to support their emotional well-being.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all individuals visiting the long-term care home.

4.0 Definitions and Acronyms

To assist homes in classifying visitors to the home, the following definitions have been provided by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC):

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 one are also not considered visitors and are excluded from applicable surveillance 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:

- a caregiver, who is a family member, friend of a person of importance to a resident and who provides one or more forms of support or assistance, including direct physical support or social, spiritual or emotional support;
- a support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents;
- a person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons, including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care; and
- a government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.

General visitors: A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons, as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.

Staff: Those employed by the long-term care home, including agency members.

5.0 Requirements

Designation of a caregiver:

- The designation of a caregiver is the responsibility of the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker with authority to make that designation, if any, and not the home.
- Requests to designate a caregiver can be submitted using the contact information below:
    - Allendale: allendale-general@halton.ca
    - Creek Way: creekway-general@halton.ca
    - Post Inn Village: postinngeneralmailbox@halton.ca
- Any individual younger than 16 years of age must receive approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.

Access during non-outbreak situations:

- Essential and General Visitors will have access to the long-term care home during non-outbreak conditions, subject to any applicable laws or as directed by Public Heath or MLTC directive.

Access during an outbreak of a disease of public health significance, an epidemic or a pandemic:

- Essential visitors will continue to have access to the long-term care home during an outbreak of a communicable disease, an outbreak of a disease of public health significance, an epidemic, a pandemic or another emergency, subject to any applicable laws, or as directed by Public Health or MLTC directive.
- General visitor permissions to enter the long-term care home under circumstances of an outbreak of a pandemic disease, will be under the guidance of Public Health, and/or MLTC.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The **long-term care home** will:

- Be responsible for supporting residents in receiving caregivers and visitors during non-outbreak situations and during an outbreak of a communicable disease, an outbreak of a disease of public health significance, an epidemic, a pandemic or another emergency, while mitigating the risk of exposure to infectious diseases.
- Establish and implement visiting practices that comply with applicable laws, including any applicable directives, orders, 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.*
- Communicate visiting procedures with residents and families, including infection prevention and control and approach to dealing with non-compliance.
- Respond to non-compliance of visitors in the long-term care home in a way that aligns with the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021* and applicable directives, orders, advice or recommendations issued by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health or Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health.
- The long-term care home reserves the right to discontinue or restrict visits, should a visitor repeatedly fail to adhere to this policy.
- Maintain a log of all visitors to the long-term care home to be kept for 30 days, which includes the name and contact information of the visitor, date and time of the visit and name of the resident visited.

The **Manager of Resident Care** (MORC) or **Senior Nursing Manager** (SNM) will:

- Ensure staff are aware of the visiting policy and procedures.
- Provide guidance to staff and caregivers as needed on visiting guidelines and processes.

To support essential visitor/caregiver/support worker visits, nursing staff on the home area will:

- Communicate with and assist residents to a visiting area as needed, if not taking place in their room.

- Escort the resident back to their room following a visit, as needed.
- Ensure that residents who are taking part in meals in their room with caregivers are adequately supervised and that residents who are high-risk take part in meals in areas with appropriate access to staff (e.g., common areas).
- Monitor visits to ensure visitors are adhering to all guidelines and requirements, where possible and as needed.

Essential visitors (caregivers and support workers) will:
- Be provided with communication, guidelines and education for visiting, as required.
- Adhere to active and passive screening and surveillance testing requirements, as applicable.
- Be aware that non-adherence to the visitor policy may be the basis for discontinuation of visits.

General visitors will:
- Be provided with communication, guidelines and education for visiting, as required.
- Adhere to active and passive screening and surveillance testing requirements, as applicable.
- Not be permitted to enter if the long-term care home is experiencing an applicable outbreak, if directed by Public Health.
- Be aware that non-adherence to the visitor policy may be the basis for discontinuation of visits.

The **resident** will:
- When able, designate caregivers and support workers.
- Be made aware of visiting guidelines.

The Residents' and Family Councils will:
- Be provided with the current version of the Visitor Policy.

7.0 Approval

This policy was approved by Services for Seniors Management Team (SSMT) in June 2022.

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Halton REGION