

**Ministry of Long-Term Care**

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**Ministère des Soins de longue durée**

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December 14, 2020

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Long-Term Care Home Stakeholders

**FROM:** Sheila Bristo  
Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Operations Division  
Ministry of Long-Term Care

**SUBJECT:** **Celebrate the Holiday Season Safely**

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As long-term care homes prepare for the holiday season, please accept my gratitude for your extraordinary efforts this past year and best wishes for a safe and healthy 2021.

To that end, please be reminded that requirements and restrictions related to COVID-19 remain in place until further notice for all long-term care homes based on their public health unit region level under the [COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#). (See the website for a list of public health unit regions for each level.)

These include restrictions on resident absences; rules for visitor access and testing, and requirements for staff, student and volunteer testing. See Table 1 below for more details.

Long-term care homes are to continue to implement the requirements in the [Minister's Directive COVID-19: Long-Term Care Home Surveillance Testing And Access to Homes](#) and [Directive #3](#) issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Long-term care homes should also implement the guidance in the Ministry's COVID-19 [Visiting Policy](#).

Surveillance testing, active screening, infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices, hand hygiene, physical distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) are important measures that will help keep long-term care home residents, staff and visitors safe during this holiday season. Families wishing to bring outside food, gifts or décor to celebrate the holiday season with their loved ones should work with the long-term care

home to determine how this can be done safely and in alignment with the home's IPAC practices.

I also recognize that staffing shortages can be amplified during the holiday season. For this reason, I am asking that all homes have a staffing plan in place to ensure appropriate coverage between now and January 15, 2021. Please be prepared to provide a copy of the plan when requested by our inspections team.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the dedicated efforts of staff in long-term care homes who continue to support residents and families during these challenging times, often spending time away from their own families. The holidays are an important time and, although celebrations will be different this year, protecting our loved ones from COVID-19 is paramount.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

*(original signed by)*

Sheila Bristo  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Long-Term Care

c:  
Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care  
Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Policy Division  
Brian Pollard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Capital Development

**Table 1**

	LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT LEVEL				
	Green-Prevent	Yellow-Protect	Orange-Restrict	Red-Control	Grey-Lockdown
<b>Resident Absences</b>					
Short Term Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted. A request must be submitted to the home</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only permitted for compassionate reasons. A request must be submitted to the home</li> </ul>		
Temporary Absence					
Medical Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted. Requests to leave the long-term care home for medical visits may not be denied</li> </ul>				
<b>Visitor Access and Testing</b>					
Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past <b>two weeks</b>, and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive (unless previously tested positive)*</li> <li>Maximum of <b>2</b> caregivers may visit a resident at a time</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the <b>past week</b>, and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive (unless previously tested positive)*</li> <li>Only <b>1</b> caregiver may visit a resident at a time</li> </ul>		
Support Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past <b>two weeks</b>, and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive (unless previously tested positive)*</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the <b>past week</b>, and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive (unless previously tested positive)*</li> </ul>		
General Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past <b>two weeks</b>, and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive (unless previously tested positive)*</li> <li>Maximum of <b>2</b> general visitors may visit a resident at a time</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visits not permitted.</li> </ul>		
<b>Staff, Student and Volunteer Testing</b>					
Staff, Students and Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tested every <b>two weeks</b> (unless previously tested positive)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tested <b>weekly</b> (unless previously tested positive)</li> </ul>		
*Except for emergency or palliative situations.					