

Ministry of Long-Term Care

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MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Home Stakeholders

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

SUBJECT: Amendments to Ontario Regulation 79/10 under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* related to enhanced cooling requirements

I am writing to provide you with a summary of recent changes to Ontario Regulation 79/10 (Regulation) under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* to help protect the safety and comfort of long-term care residents. These changes come into force on May 15, 2021.

In July 2020, the government committed to taking action to ensure adequate air-conditioning systems were in place for all long-term care (LTC) homes across the province. To support LTC home licensees in installing adequate cooling solutions in their homes, the Ministry of Long-Term Care (Ministry) promptly implemented funding and communications strategies. These include the launch of the Long-Term Care Minor Capital Program in July 2020, Infection, Prevention and Containment (IPAC) Minor Capital Program in October 2020, and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program in November 2020 as well as the release of the updated *Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Hot Weather-Related Illness in Long-Term Care Homes* in July 2020 in collaboration with public health. In March 2020, the government announced that LTC homes would be provided up to **\$85.3 million** in funding for 2021-22, including **\$23.9 million** under the Long-Term Care Minor Capital Program, and **\$61.4 million** under the IPAC Minor Capital Program. This funding is available to support homes in purchasing, installing, upgrading, or repairing air conditioning in common areas and resident rooms,

and for other eligible minor capital priorities. In addition to these initiatives, the Ministry has made amendments to the Regulation to enhance cooling requirements for LTC homes.

These amendments ensure that designated cooling areas of LTC homes are maintained at safe and comfortable temperature levels, enabling LTC homes to provide a safe and comfortable environment to their residents. To further ensure safety and comfort of LTC residents, the amendments require licensees to identify and implement procedures to protect residents from high temperatures and to respond appropriately to risk factors and symptoms of heat related illness.

Effective May 15, 2021:

- Every designated cooling area in the LTC home is required to be served by air conditioning which is operated as necessary to maintain the temperature in designated cooling areas at a comfortable level for residents during specified periods.
- The written “hot weather related illness prevention and management plan” was renamed as the written “heat related illness prevention and management plan”.
- The written heat related illness prevention and management plan must be developed in accordance with evidence-based practices, and at a minimum, include:
 - Identification of specific resident risk factors that may lead to heat related illness and the requirement for staff to regularly monitor whether residents are exposed to such risk factors and take appropriate actions in response;
 - Identification of symptoms of heat related illness and the requirement for staff to regularly monitor whether residents exhibit those symptoms and take appropriate actions in response;
 - Identification of specific interventions and strategies that staff are to implement to prevent or mitigate the identified risk factors that may lead to heat related illness, including preventing or mitigating the identified symptoms of such an illness in residents;
 - The use of appropriate cooling systems, equipment and other resources, as necessary to protect residents from heat related illness; and
 - A communication protocol to communicate the heat related illness prevention and management plan to residents, staff, volunteers, substitute decision-makers, visitors, the Resident’s Council of the LTC home, the Family Council of the LTC home (if any), and others where appropriate.
- The amendments require licensees to evaluate and update their heat related illness prevention and management plan, at a minimum, annually in accordance with evidence-based practices.

- Licensees are required to measure and document the air temperature, at a minimum, in certain specified areas in the LTC home at specified intervals.
- Licensees are required to implement their heat related illness prevention and management plan for the LTC home every year during the period from May 15 to September 15, and
 - any day on which the outside temperature forecasted by Environment and Climate Change Canada for the area in which the home is located is 26 degrees Celsius or above at any point during the day; and
 - anytime the temperature in areas of the home in which measurements are required by the Regulation reach 26 degrees Celsius or above, for the remainder of the day and the following day.
- Licensees are required to incorporate in residents' care plans, an interdisciplinary assessment of the seasonal risk relating to heat related illness, including protective measures required to prevent or mitigate heat related illness.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Operational Policy & Development Branch of the Long-Term Care Operations Division at LTC.Info@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to enhance cooling requirements in long-term care homes to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and staff.



Sheila Bristo
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 Ministry of Long-Term Care

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