**Family and Staff**

**Guide for Visits**

Updated as of: Stage 3 reopening

As Ontario continues to re-open, everyone at Agency Name is eager to resume a pre-pandemic level of normalcy.

Agency Name’s Guide for Visits is intended to protect the health and safety and mental wellbeing of people in our supported homes, their families, and our team of staff. All elements of the Guide are in keeping with established principles intended to limit the potential exposure to COVID-19 through practices for social and physical distancing, and the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The Guide reflects Ministry emergency orders and/or guidelines regarding permitted visitor and recreational activities, visits for congregate settings, brief physical contact and recreational activities, including Public Health guidance and the current environment which includes vaccination roll-out.

Agency Name’s Guide for Visits will be reviewed and updated, as required. The Guide will remain in accordance with any future changes in the degree of risk, advice, or recommendations from acknowledged authorities.

Agency Name is excited to support increased opportunities for families to connect in meaningful ways. While adopting broader practices, every effort will be made to protect those who are immunocompromised or at high-risk of severe disease from COVID-19. In these situations, virtual visits should be considered.

**Topics covered in the Guide** (hold CTRL and click cursor on topic you wish to review)

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# Scope

As of stage 3 reopening, indoor social gatherings of up to 25 people are permitted, indoor visits at Agency Name supported homes will be limited. Consistent with the new guidelines, Agency Name welcomes indoor visits at a supported home, within dedicated visit space(s), with maximum capacity limits identified, and where physical distancing can be achieved.

All non-essential indoor and outdoor visits at a supported home continue to require supervision by staff.

Essential visits inside an Agency Name supported home are permitted, in accordance with the current definition of Essential Visitor. An Essential Visitor is generally a person who:

* Performs essential services to support the ongoing operation of a service agency (including a contractor); and/or
* Is considered **necessary** to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or any applicable legal rights of a congregate living person supported.

Agency Name is able to support smaller outdoor social gatherings at a supported home (for example, up to 4 people) but unable to support larger outdoor social gatherings. Agency Name requests that larger events be coordinated at a family home or in a community location, for example, a park, where physical distancing can still be maintained.

Safety must continue to be a top priority during all visits outside a Agency Name supported home. Crowds, etc. should be avoided. The health and safety needs, and overall wellbeing of people supported, staff, and visitors should be considered at all times.

# General Principles

The following principles will be used to guide and determine risk and safety for indoor and outdoor visits, outings, and overnight absences:

**Safety**: Any approach to visiting inside a supported home should consider the health and safety needs, and overall wellbeing of people supported, staff, and visitors. Risks and susceptibility to the virus must be mitigated. Support staff will remain in visual contact with the person, family/friend for the duration of the indoor or outdoor visit. Virtual visits are strongly encouraged and facilitated wherever possible.

**Emotional wellbeing:** Accommodating visits is intended to support the emotional wellbeing of people supported and their families/friends by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.

**Equitable access and rights:** Visits should be conducted equitably and consistent with the person supported’s preference and rights, and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard people supported and staff.

**Flexibility:** Any approach to visits should consider COVID-19 spread in the community and the physical/infrastructure characteristics of the site, its staffing availability, and the current status of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) levels for staff and people supported. Scheduling of all visits and rescheduling of cancelled visits will be at the discretion of the supervisor/manager.

**Immunization:** Agency Name strongly encourages all staff and Essential Visitors, as well as families, friends and people supported, to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

**Zone:** Agency Name is bound by the requirements of the zones of Public Health measures in place at the time of the visit. Risk factors for transmission based on the Zone where the Agency Name home is located, the location to be visited and where visitors are arriving from will be considered for the conditions of the visits. The *MCCSS Visitor and Recreational Activities Community Risk Continuum* will be applied to determine the requirements.

# Visit Guidelines

\*An **At-A-Glance PPE and Visit Requirement chart** is available (see Schedule ‘A’). Chart includes indoor and outdoor visit requirements at a supported home.

**\***Families are reminded that visit requests may not be supported, if reasonable time is not provided and supervisor consultation is required. Please plan in advance.

## Inside a Supported Home

Each supported home will have dedicated space to facilitate indoor visits. Visits within a Agency Name supported home must:

* Be scheduled in advance (ideally 48 hours). Staff should exercise flexibility regarding advance notice, as appropriate. Visits will be supported once the following is confirmed:
  + Ample staff available to oversee the visit
  + Designated visit space is available
  + Visitors can be accommodated within the space, for example, concerning physical distancing
  + Requested visit times do not conflict with planned activities outside of the home
* Include confirmation of completed vaccinations (see details below).
* Be enjoyed only within the designated space. In addition, a dedicated washroom will also be made available.
* Include active screening upon arrival.
* Include a record of all visitor names and contact information. This information will be shared with Public Health for tracing, as needed. This information will be stored at Agency Name for one-month.
* Include the one-time completion of a Visitor Attestation form (Schedule ‘B’)
* Adhere to the following IPAC requirements:
  + Use of a surgical/procedural mask at all times
  + Eye protection (for example, face shield, goggles, safety glasses) must be worn by all essential visitors when providing direct care (care provided within 2 metres) indoors
* Respect provisions for brief physical contact, for example, a hug

## Indoors or Outdoors at a Family Member’s Home

In continuing partnership with families, and to support optimal safety for all, families desiring an indoor visit at their family home are requested to adhere to the following guidelines.

[**Internal use only:** Agencies can update the following to reflect their desired policies. Two scenarios of sample text have been provided re: proof of vaccination, to assist agencies in reflecting their specific policies. This internal use only text should be deleted, along with the scenario below that they do not wish to use.]

**Providing proof of vaccination**

Agency Name has strongly encouraged, and actively supports, full vaccination of all staff and people supported. Staff and people supported have demonstrated an overwhelming commitment to being vaccinated as COVID-19 vaccines, approved by Health Canada, have proven to reduce the risk of people, especially those who are vulnerable, from becoming ill.

Families desiring an indoor visit at their family home are requested to **provide proof of full vaccination and be 14 days post 2nd dose**. Any visitors to be included in a family home visit should also provide proof of vaccination.

* **Forward proofs of vaccination to:** (provide contact person name and contact info).
* All vaccination information provided will be stored on Agency Name’s secure server and not shared with other unrelated parties.
* \*Vaccination receipts can be accessed at [**https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/**](https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/)

**Providing proof of vaccination, if applicable**

Families desiring an indoor visit at their family home are requested to **provide proof of full vaccination, if applicable.**

* **Forward proofs of vaccination to:** (provide contact person name and contact info).
* All vaccination information provided will be stored on Agency Name’s secure server and not shared with other unrelated parties.
* \*Vaccination receipts can be accessed at [**https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/**](https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/)

**Pre-scheduling**

All visits to a family member’s home are to be **pre-scheduled ideally with a minimum of 48 hours notice**, keeping in mind the person’s specific circumstances, needs and requirements. This notice period helps to ensure adequate planning and preparation

**Provincial Parameters**

People supported can access the community in **alignment with provincial parameters** for activities and social gatherings. Details can be found at Reopening Ontario | Ontario.ca

**Masking**

To avoid unnecessary confusion for people supported, Agency Name strongly encourages **masking consistency** be maintained. Agency Name requests that a surgical/procedural mask be worn during all indoor (including family home) and outdoor activities with families. Masks can be removed for eating and drinking. Masks will be provided by Agency Name for people supported for all home visits.

**Other Precautions**

Enhanced safety precautions should be followed for the **sharing of food and beverages**. (Evidence shows that these activities pose higher risks for transmission).

**Staff Support**

* Agency Name **staff are not permitted to assist** with visits to family homes.
  + A **primary caregiver should be identified** (among family members or a third-party) for the provision of any required personal care/direct support during a family home visit. This will support limited extended direct contact. The use of a mask or face shield is strongly recommended, if providing personal care/direct support.
* A family member should arrange to pick their family member up from the supported home. Staff can assist with **transportation**, as needed and when approved in advance by the supervisor

## Planning a Community Outing/Short Stay Absence

* People supported are permitted to leave their supported home for a short-stay (for example, up to 8 hours) absence in the community
* Community outings must be consistent with provincial parameters for activities and social gatherings, as outlined in [Reopening Ontario | Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario)
* Community outings include essential absences (for example, work, school, medical appointment, exercise) and recreational outings (activities for pleasure, visits to a family/friend’s home)

## Planning an Overnight Visit

In planning an overnight visit, consider the health and safety needs, and overall wellbeing of people supported, staff, and visitors. Risks and susceptibility to the virus must be mitigated.

[**Internal use only:** Agencies should update the following to reflect their desired policies. Two scenarios of sample text have been provided. This internal use only text should be deleted, along with the scenario below that they do not wish to use.]

**Providing proof of vaccination**

Agency Name has strongly encouraged, and actively supports, full vaccination of all staff and people supported. Staff and people supported have demonstrated an overwhelming commitment to being vaccinated as COVID-19 vaccines, approved by Health Canada, have proven to reduce the risk of people, especially those who are vulnerable, from becoming ill.

Families desiring an overnight visit at their family home are requested to **provide proof of full vaccination and be 14 days post 2nd dose**. Any visitors to be included in a visit should also provide proof of vaccination.

* **Forward proofs of vaccination to:** (provide contact person name and contact info).
* All vaccination information provided will be stored on Agency Name’s secure server and not shared with other unrelated parties.
* \*Vaccination receipts can be accessed at [**https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/**](https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/)

**Providing proof of vaccination, if applicable**

Families desiring an overnight visit at their family home are requested to **provide proof of full vaccination, if applicable.**

* **Forward proofs of vaccination to:** (provide contact person name and contact info).
* All vaccination information provided will be stored on Agency Name’s secure server and not shared with other unrelated parties.
* \*Vaccination receipts can be accessed at [**https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/**](https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/)

Picking-Up Family Member(for Family Home Visit or Community Outings)

The family member will **call** the location upon arrival.

Agency Name strongly encourages people supported to mask in all vehicles. Masking consistency between Agency Name and family is strongly encouraged while in a vehicle. Surgical/procedural masks will be provided by Agency Name for use by all passengers.

Agency Name maximizes physical distancing in all vehicles. To maintain consistency with Agency Name practice, the person supported is strongly encouraged to sit in the back seat of the vehicle and for windows to be down, when feasible.

The staff will review the IPAC checklist with the family member and sign off after the review.

**Additional Information**

Agency Name strongly encourages the person supported be encouraged, as needed, to follow proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette in the community, and to physically distance and mask, as feasible.

Indoor and outdoor visits must not exceed required maximums as permitted within the province’s guidance on “organized public events and social gatherings.” <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures#events-and-gatherings>.

## Returning to the Supported Home

Before returning to the location, the family member will call the supported home in advance to let them know they are on their way back.

A family member will update the staff on the visit. This will be helpful to support future visits.

Upon arrival, the family member will call the location and let them know that they have arrived.

The staff will meet the person in the driveway.

The person will undergo active screening prior to entering the supported home.

The person will be given hand sanitizer before entering the supported home.

The family member will leave the supported home.

## Active Screening Requirements when Returning from Overnight Visit

All people supported returning from an overnight absence will undergo active screening for COVID-19 signs and symptoms.

**For a fully immunized person supported**, screening is the ONLY return requirement, when returning from a visit. However, if they do not pass screening, staff will follow the protocols outlined below with the person supported.

**For people supported who are not fully immunized**, they must follow additional precautions until they receive a negative result on a COVID-19 PCR test OR 14 days have passed. A PCR test is optional for the person and should take place 5-7 days following return to account for potential incubation period.

If the person supported does pass active screening, the following activities will be done for the 14 days following their return:

* Monitor for symptoms.
* Avoid using common areas; however, if a common area cannot be avoided, the person supported must use a surgical/procedure mask if tolerated.
* Limit contact with other people supported.
* Only participate in group activities if physical distancing is maintained (i.e., 2 metres) and a surgical/procedure mask is used for the duration of the activity.
* Practice proper hand hygiene by washing their hands often (using soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
* Adhere to respiratory etiquette.

If the person supported does not pass active screening:

* Agency Name standard guidelines will be followed regarding screening.

Leaving the setting for a short stay absence/outing will NOT reset the 14-day time period. However, another overnight stay during the same 14-day period will reset the 14-day period.

## Visit/Outing Expectations

All visits/outings are subject to change/cancellation/or rescheduling if necessary by any of the parties involved.

There will be no visits/outings allowed if the supported home is in a COVID-19 Outbreak (one or more probable or confirmed cases) or in a Precaution Phase where full PPE is required.

As we continue to move forward, we must ensure that all visitors (family members and friends) follow these guidelines and requirements for visits at family homes. This includes all Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures including wearing a surgical/procedural mask and a face shield, maintaining physical distancing, and hand hygiene practices.

**Any non-adherence to these requirements could be the basis for discontinuation of visits or outings.**

If you are interested in an outdoor or overnight visit, please contact the supported home staff or supervisor to discuss all the details.

As you know, each supported person is unique and supported home requirements may vary, so planning is crucial for a successful visit.

# Schedules A, B & C (At a Glance Requirements, Visitor Attestation and Public Health Risk Algorithm for PPE Use)

Schedule A: At-A-Glance PPE and Visitor Requirements

**PPE Requirements**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Supported Home Visits | Indoor – Staff | Indoor – Visitor | Outside – Staff | Outside – Visitor |
| Surgical/Procedural Mask | Yes | Yes | Yes | Choice – if all parties fully immunized  Choice – if not fully immunized BUT must physically distance |
| Face Shield/Goggles | Yes – when providing direct care (within 2 metres) or when in an enclosed space, i.e. vehicle | Yes – only if providing personal care as an Essential Visitor | No – unless in an enclosed space, i.e. vehicle | No |
| Gowns | Yes – when in suspected or confirmed outbreak or as indicated in Risk Algorithm to Guide PPE Use | Yes – if providing personal care as an Essential Visitor and as indicated in Risk Algorithm to Guide PPE Use | No – unless working in a suspected or confirmed outbreak | No |
| Physical Distancing | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes – if all parties not fully immunized  Choice – if all parties fully immunized |
| Brief Physical Contact |  | Yes |  | Yes |

**Visit Requirements (see next page)**

**Visit Requirements**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Supported Home Visits | Indoor – Staff | Indoor – Visitor | Outside – Staff | Outside – Visitor |
| Schedule Visit in Advance |  | Yes – 24 hours notice, with flexibility |  | Yes – 24 hours notice, with flexibility |
| Active Screening | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Staff Overseeing the Visit | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Visitor Attestation |  | Yes – one time |  | Yes – one time |
| Visit Logged (names, contact info) |  | Yes |  | Yes |
| Designated Visit Space |  | Yes – program identifies |  | Yes – backyard or porch |

**Schedule ‘B’ Visitor Attestation**

This Attestation is required to be completed by families and other visitors wishing to visit at a supported home. The Attestation will need to be completed once and not as part of every visit.

Agency Name’s relationship with people supported and their families and friends is vital to the agency’s success. When possible, Agency Name welcomes families and friends in all supported homes and will do our best to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for all.

As an employer, Agency Name is responsible for providing its employees with a safe work environment. During COVID-19, this responsibility has become especially important. This Attestation has been put in place to ensure clarity for families and friends, and to ensure a commitment to the following requirements during visits to supported homes.

As a family member or friend of a person supported, the following is required:

1. Scheduling visits in advance (1day/24hrs). Staff will exercise flexibility re: advance notice, as possible

2. Confirmation of full immunization, if applicable

3. Enjoy visits within designated spaces. Do not access other areas of home not designated for visits

4. Complete active screening upon arrival

5. Complete a record of all visitor names and contact information. This information will be shared with Public Health for tracing, as needed. This information to be stored at Agency Name for one-month

6. Adhere to all IPAC requirements, as outlined in the Visits – Family and Staff Guide and the At-A-Glance chart

7. Respect provisions for brief physical contact such as a hug. Physical distancing to be maintained after brief physical contact

8. Respect time limits for visits. This will ensure other visits are not impacted and activities can be planned around visits

Acknowledgement of requirements to support safe and enjoyable visits inside a supported home

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Checkbox HD Stock Images | Shutterstock | I/we agree to follow the requirements in place to support safe and enjoyable visits at a Agency Name supported home. Failure or refusal to respect all requirements may result in the suspension or cancellation of visits at a Agency Name supported home. |

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Name of Visitor Signature of Visitor Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Visitor Signature of Visitor Date

**Schedule ‘C’ Risk Algorithm to Guide PPE Use**

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/c/2013/clinical-office-risk-algorithm-ppe.pdf?la=en>

