

## OUR RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) SPECIAL BULLETIN #49: DECEMBER 24, 2021 UPDATE FOR RESIDENTS, FAMILIES & VISITORS

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On December 23, 2021, Alberta Health issued an updated Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Order for Continuing Care Operators in response to the rise of community transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19. The yet unknown challenges the Omicron variant will present to long-term care, licensed supportive living, and hospices, requires immediate action. As such, BSF is introducing changes to our COVID-19 Safe Visiting Policy in response to the growing prevalence of COVID-19 in the community.

**We understand the Holiday Season is an important time for residents, families and loved ones.** These changes consider minimizing the disruption for residents, families and loved ones at this important time, while managing the significantly increasing risk in the community in line with current CMOH Orders and enhanced public health restrictions and guidance for all Albertans.

**A reminder that all Albertans are asked to reduce their number of contacts by half, limit unrestricted activities where there is a high risk of transmission, and observe all public health measures over the holidays to help limit the spread.** Refer to: [www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx)

### Visitor Rapid Testing Requirements Effective December 27:

- Starting from **December 27, 2021**, BSF will require any visitor (aged 5 years and older) that is **not fully immunized for COVID-19 to undertake a negative rapid test daily upon entry to a BSF site or provide valid proof of privately paid negative test completed within the past 24 hours.**
- In the meantime, between December 24-26, 2021, rapid tests completed within 72 hours remain valid as per current BSF policy. However, it is **strongly recommended that any visitors who are not fully immunized voluntarily consent to a daily rapid test** upon entry to the site before it becomes mandatory daily starting from December 27.
- Please also be reminded that **visitors who are not fully immunized are strongly encouraged to reconsider their need to visit and attend to the resident onsite, indoors and in person** (as per CMOH recommendation) and alternatives to in person visits include virtual visits and phone calls instead.
- BSF also **encourages fully immunized visitors to voluntarily consent to a regular rapid test**, even though it is not a mandatory requirement for entry of immunized visitors.
- **Negative rapid tests completed at home are not valid** and only rapid tests completed on site at BSF or with valid documentation from a privately paid test are accepted.

### Residents Returning from Outings (Greater than 24 Hours) Effective December 27:

- Starting at BSF sites from **December 27, 2021, all residents returning from an outing for an absence of greater than 24 hours** (regardless of immunization status) are required by CMOH Order to:
  - Wear a surgical/procedure mask for 14 days while in common areas of the site except when eating and drinking
  - Actively screen for symptoms daily
  - Rapid test on days 1, 3 and 7 post-return to site

### Update to Visitor and Volunteer Screening Requirements:

- Effective since December 17, 2021, any **visitor or volunteer that has had known close contact with a lab-confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days must not enter the site for 14 days** from the last day of exposure, regardless of their immunization status (in accordance with CMOH Order mandatory screening and restrictions).
  - Note: While fully immunized individuals are not required to quarantine in the community after exposure to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, this is a new and mandatory CMOH provincial restriction for visitors and volunteers entering a continuing care site.

### Clarification to Mask Exemption Policy:

- Any visitor unable to wear a mask due to an approved medical condition requires proof of a medical exemption letter from an authorized health professional (in accordance with Alberta Health requirements for mask exemptions).
- Anyone with a medical exemption must provide their proof of medical exemption to the Site Administrator for approval and must continue to present their proof of exemption upon each to the visit.

### Other Important Visitation Reminders and FAQs:

#### **Visitors must wear a surgical/procedure mask provided by BSF at all times in all indoor areas of the building including in resident's rooms. Can visitors remove masks to eat or drink while visiting?**

- Visitors may temporarily remove their masks when inside a resident's room, a private dining room, or while seated at the Bistro (applicable at Cambridge Manor) briefly for the purpose of eating or drinking.
- They must remain physically distanced from the resident and all others not from their household when unmasked and the mask must be put back on immediately after the meal/drink is finished.
- Visitors are not permitted to remove their masks to eat/drink in the resident common dining rooms or in other common areas of the site.

#### **Can a resident participate in an offsite outing?**

- Residents who are not required to quarantine or isolate are able to participate in outings based on their personal needs and risk tolerance.
- It is the resident's responsibility, along with their family or loved one, to understand and follow all mandatory public health measures that are applicable to all Albertans in the community, including a visit to a business/service provider or when attending a private social gathering at a private residence.
- Refer to: [www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx)

### Reminder - Alberta Vaccine Record with QR Code:

The Government of Alberta's COVID-19 Restriction Exemption Program has transitioned to use the 'Vaccine Record with QR Code' as the only valid Alberta proof of vaccination accepted as of November 15, 2021. Paper records from vaccination appointments or previous Alberta vaccine records without QR codes are no longer accepted. The Alberta Vaccine Record with QR Code is available for download at: [alberta.ca/CovidRecords](http://alberta.ca/CovidRecords). The Vaccine Record with QR Code can be presented electronically on a mobile device or printed as a hard copy paper record.

In alignment with the province's Restrictions Exemption Program in the community, BSF now also requires visitors entering our sites to use the Vaccine Record with QR Code as their proof of immunization since November 15, 2021. Vaccine records will continue to be accepted from: First Nations; Military; Other Provinces; International Travellers.

Visitors that are not fully immunized, or **visitors that do not have the accepted proof of immunization record**, will be required to undergo a negative rapid test before permitted entry into the site.

### Together, we remain BSF Strong!

Find out more by viewing the updated BSF Safe Visiting Policy available at: [www.BSF.ca/COVID19](http://www.BSF.ca/COVID19). Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and understanding.

We wish you a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season. Together, we remain BSF Strong!

