



COVID-19 SAFE VISITING POLICY

Version 23: June 30, 2022



Summary of Key Changes for Safe Visiting Policy Version 23

Effective June 30, 2022:

- CMOH orders in continuing care will be rescinded by June 30, 2022, but some measures in continuing care settings will remain in place through standards and policy. This includes maintaining practices like: isolation of symptomatic residents; outbreak protocols; and continuous masking for staff and visitors on site.
- Daily screening will no longer be required for staff or visitors on entry into the site.
- Anyone with a positive test for COVID-19 should not enter the site until after the recommended isolation period.
 - Although effective June 14, 2022, mandatory isolation is no longer required for those that test positive for COVID-19 in Alberta (isolation has changed from mandatory to recommended), BSF's policy remains that anyone positive for COVID-19 should not enter our sites.
- Anyone with symptoms of any illness should not enter the site until their symptoms are resolved.
 - In line with standard practices for preventing the spread of infectious diseases (including but not limited to symptoms of respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 and influenza or symptoms of gastrointestinal illness such as diarrhea and vomiting).
- Voluntary asymptomatic rapid testing will no longer be available on site for visitors on entry into our sites. We encourage family/visitors to continue to utilize rapid tests available in the community.

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BACKGROUND

The Brenda Strafford Foundation (BSF) welcomes the presence of families and visitors returning into continuing care sites as an essential component of well-being and quality of life for residents – in a safe and controlled manner.

On February 9, 2022, the Government of Alberta announced that public health measures in the community will be lifted in 3 stages as the Omicron wave subsides and pressure on the health-care system eases. Alberta entered into Step 1 on February 9 and entered Phase 2 on March 1. Easing COVID-19 measures in continuing care is part of Step 3 of 'Alberta's path to return to normal'. All existing requirements remain in place in these settings, including continuous masking for staff and visitors.

On June 13, 2022, the Government of Alberta announced the province will take the final step in its plan to ease public health measures throughout Alberta. This includes changes to the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Orders for Continuing Care and Alberta Health Services (AHS) policies for contracted continuing care service operators.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the BSF's 'Safe Visiting Policy during the COVID-19 Pandemic' is to protect the health and safety of residents and staff living and working in our sites, while ensuring residents maintain access to the desired levels of support from persons that are essential in supporting them, and also maintain vital social interactions with family and loved ones.

BSF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Safety of self:** All individuals have a duty to minimize risk of infection to themselves by following all public health guidelines and required BSF policies and procedures.
- **Safety of others:** All individuals have a duty to minimize risk of transmission by following all public health guidelines and required BSF policies and procedures.
- **Responsive:** Recognition that site characteristics, risks and risk tolerance, and resident circumstances can change.
- **Risk informed:** Perceived or actual risk factors are recognized and considered alongside the needs and preferences of residents (at an individual and collective level).

PARAMETERS FOR VISITS

- BSF's regular visiting hours are when reception is available typically between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00/9:00 p.m. (as applicable at each the site). Exceptions may be made to the site's regular visiting hours by request based on the resident's and family/visitor needs.
- BSF will provide any necessary PPE for visitors (including masks) with instructions on usage, and full PPE will be provided for any visitors visiting a resident on contact/droplet isolation.
- Visitors are required to wear a mask at all times when on site during indoor visits.
 - Visitors must wear a surgical/procedure mask provided by BSF OR a well-fitted and unused KN95/N95 mask at all times in all indoor areas of the building (including in resident's rooms).
 - Any visitor bringing their own KN95/N95 mask must be wearing a new and unused mask that is opened from the packaging on entry to site.
 - Anyone unable to wear a mask due to an approved medical condition will require 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 Executive Director for approval and must continue to present their proof of exemption upon each to the visit.
 - Exceptions may be made upon the approval of the Site Executive Director when visiting residents with communication challenges (i.e. hearing concerns), where wearing a mask would inhibit communication. Mask may only be removed when inside a private space inside the building (i.e. resident's suite or private dining room) if the resident consents and a distance of two meters is maintained between the visitor and the resident.
 - Children may wear own masks if the provided surgical/procedure masks provided do not fit the child.
 - Children under 2 years of age are not required to wear a mask (in line with public health requirements in the community).
 - Masks may be temporarily removed when seated in a private/designated area for the purpose of consuming food/beverage if the resident consents and a distance of two meters is maintained between the visitor(s) and the resident at all times. If the resident requires assistance with eating, the visitor must remain masked if coming within two meters to assist the resident. Mask must be worn again as soon as the food/beverage is consumed and cannot remain unmasked for a prolonged period.
- Food may be shared during indoor visits inside a resident's room while remaining physically distanced (sharing meals is not permitted in resident dining rooms or other common areas due to continuous mask requirement).
- Physical distancing is encouraged from other residents and their visitors, and from staff, where possible to the greatest extent possible.
- If a visiting person feels ill or develops any symptoms of COVID-19 while on site, they must leave their mask on, notify their site contact and immediately leave the site.
- The following considerations are guided by standard operational practices and policies:
 - Visiting pets
 - Bringing items, gifts, and food on site
 - Use of resident/family laundry facilities
 - Extended on-site visits and overnight stays
 - Visiting outdoors on site property

OFFSITE OUTINGS

- All residents who are not required to quarantine/isolate residents may leave the site on outings based on their personal needs and risk tolerance.
- Residents must follow the site's standard social leave procedures for outings including sign-out and sign-in upon exit and re-entry to the site.
- Residents who leave the site premises for any outing are no longer required to undergo screening upon their re-entry to the site.
- Should a resident choose to participate in an offsite outing, it is the resident's and their family's or visitor's responsibility to:
 - Understand and follow all mandatory public health measures if applicable in the community
 - Follow masking guidelines in places where applicable (i.e. in AHS healthcare facilities)
 - Maintain good hand hygiene

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR SAFE PHYSICAL TOUCH

- The risk of transmission of COVID-19 increases with close proximity. Residents and their visitors may choose to include physical touch (such as hugging and holding hands) during their visits based on their own risk assessment and risk tolerance.
- Hand hygiene (hand washing and/or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer) is strongly encouraged both before and after direct physical contact.
- Visitors must stop close contact with the resident and inform staff immediately for further direction if they become symptomatic during the visit.
- If resident is isolated due to symptoms of COVID-19, BSF will ensure that the visitors have the required PPE and are trained in the appropriate use of PPE.

RESTRICTED ACCESS

- Temporary limitations on visitors may still occur in situations where the threat of COVID-19 is imminent and in situations where a risk tolerance assessment indicates increased/high risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Upon confirmation of an outbreak, Alberta Health Services Medical Officer of Health (or designate) leading the outbreak response will direct any necessary restrictions to visiting persons.
- BSF reserves the right under any high-risk assessment (i.e. due to high rates of community prevalence, CMOH recommendations or other public health measures, or any other factor that may limit our ability as an operator to safely accommodate visitation) to implement further restrictions that are deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of residents, staff, families and visitors to our sites. Any additional restrictions on access would be communicated to residents, families, visitors and staff as needed and would be monitored on an ongoing basis.

NON-COMPLIANCE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Non-Compliance

- Any occurrence of non-compliance or unsafe visitation (including non-compliance of PPE, not following instructions from staff, or abuse towards staff) will be subject to safety incident reporting and investigation.
- Non-compliance may result in re-education or restrictions for visitors.
- Residents in shared semi-private rooms who are required to quarantine/isolate due to reasons related to non-compliance and exposure to risk may also impose a mandatory quarantine/isolation on their roommate.
- Restrictions will be evaluated after no more than 14 days.
- Executive Director or designate may refuse entry if there is reason to believe an individual is not abiding by the Safe Visitation policies.

Disputes and Concerns Resolution

- BSF will document all disputes related to site process as per existing concern/complaints processes under the Accommodation Standards and/or Continuing Care Health Service Standards (where relevant).
- BSF is committed to working with residents, designated family/support persons and visitors to address any concerns or disputes with respect, compassion and fairness.
- Should you have any disputes or concerns, the following processes are available to resolve your concerns:
 1. In the first instance, contact the direct care team at the site to ideally resolve any disputes/concerns.
 2. If not resolved, escalate the dispute/concern to the Site Executive Director.
 3. If not resolved, or at any time an alternative internal method of resolving the dispute/concern is preferred, contact the BSF Quality and Innovation team (Online form at: www.thebsf.ca/contact/online-feedback.html) and a team member along with a social worker from a BSF site that is not appealing will review the dispute/concern.
 4. If not resolved, escalate the dispute/concern to the President and Chief Executive Officer.
 5. Should the concern still be unresolved after speaking with the operator or senior leadership representation from the organization, Alberta Health Accommodation Standards and Licencing or Alberta Health Services AHS Patient Relations (for designated supportive living or long-term care) may be contacted for support.
 6. If you have serious concerns that you have not been able to resolve with the site (or aren't comfortable discussing), contact ASAL@gov.ab.ca.

ONGOING REVIEW AND EVALUATION

- This policy is to be reviewed on an ongoing and as needed basis
- Any changes to the policy will be communicated to residents, designated family/support persons and visitors as required.
- Residents, families and staff may propose amendments to this policy by contacting BSF Management or the Site Executive Director as required.