

# Outdoor Visitation Guidance for Long-term Care (LTC) Settings

## Safe Start Plan

The Washington State Department of Health recognizes the serious effects isolation can have on the health and well-being of residents in LTC facilities/agencies. The risk of COVID-19 transmission in LTC facilities and the need for family, partner or close friend interaction can be balanced under certain conditions. This document contains recommendations that LTC facilities/agencies are encouraged to follow and implement to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission when allowing visits according to the Washington State Phased Reopening Recommendations and Requirements for long-term care facilities.

### Facility/Agency Criteria

- Establish a schedule for visitation hours. Facilities/homes should work with prospective visitors individually.
- Ensure adequate staff are present to assist with outdoor transition of residents/clients, and to assist with disinfection of any visitation areas as necessary.
- Ensure staff maintain visual observation but provide as much distance as necessary to allow privacy for the resident/client and the visitor(s).
- Develop a system to ensure visitors are screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at a screening location designated outside the building. Facilities may use this [Visitor Log](#), or another similar log, to track visitor screening.
- Develop a system to ensure residents/clients and visitors wear a mask or other face covering at all times unless exempted due to a medical or mental health condition or disability or to facilitate communication with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. See [Cloth Face Covering and Mask FAQ](#).
- Select outdoor visitation spaces that are accessible without having visitors walk through the facility/home.
- Select outdoor visitation spaces that support social distancing of at least 6 feet between the visitor and resident/client.
- Provide alcohol-based hand rub to visitors and provide instruction (e.g., signage, verbal reminders, etc.) on correct use.
- Establish additional guidelines as needed to ensure the safety of visitations and their facility/home operations. These guidelines must be reasonable and must take into account the individual needs of residents/clients.

## Resident/Client Criteria

- Residents/clients in isolation for COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19, who have [signs or symptoms](#) of COVID-19, or are in a 14-day quarantine or observation period are not eligible for outside visits.
- Residents/clients who had COVID-19 and are no longer considered infectious according to the [CDC's Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings](#) are eligible for outside visits
- Residents/clients must wear a mask, or other face covering, during all visits, as tolerated.

## Visitor criteria

- Visitors must wear a mask, or other face covering, during the entire visit unless medically contraindicated or to facilitate communication with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. See [Cloth Face Covering and Mask FAQ](#).
- Visitors must use alcohol-based hand rub upon entering and exiting the visitation area.
- Facilities/agencies must actively screen visitors for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Visitors must attest to COVID-19 status if known. Facilities may use this [Visitor Log](#), or another similar log, to track visitor screening.
- Screening must be done at a designated location outside the building/home.
- Visitors should not walk through the facility/home to get to the outdoor visitation area.
- Visitors must sign in at entrance to the facility/home and provide contact information.
- Due to the risk of exposure, holding hands, hugging, kissing, or other physical contact is not allowed during visitations.
- Visitors who bring children under the age of 12 are responsible for supervising the children and ensure they comply with handwashing, hand sanitizing, masking and social distancing requirements.
- Visitors who bring pets are responsible for supervising the pet(s) during a visit and are responsible for any associated sanitation requirements. Consult with the facility/home prior to bringing a pet and follow the facility/home's policy regarding pets.
- All visitors must maintain 6 feet social distance.
- Visitors must stay in designated visitation locations.

**Weather:** Visits should occur only on days when there are no weather warnings that would put either the visitor or resident/client at risk.

**Visitation Denials:** Facilities/homes can deny outdoor visitation if they believe:

1. Circumstances pose a risk of transmitting COVID-19 in the facility/home because the resident/client or visitor does not comply with infection control guidance, or
2. The resident/client or visitor is at risk of abuse/harm.

Residents and their loved ones may contact providers with questions about outdoor visits. Facilities and agencies should ensure residents/clients and their loved ones, have access to the Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care at <https://www.waombudsman.org/>

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email [civil.rights@doh.wa.gov](mailto:civil.rights@doh.wa.gov).