



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600*

October 11, 2021

ALTSA: AFH #2021-057  
ALTSA: ALF #2021-057  
ALTSA: CCRSS #2021-082  
ALTSA: ESF #2021-051  
ALTSA: ICF/IID #2021-048  
ALTSA: NH #2021-082

**SAFE START FOR LONG-TERM CARE PLANS UPDATED**

Dear Administrator/Provider/Superintendent:

On October 7, 2021, the Department of Health and the Department of Social and Health Services released updates to the *Safe Start for Long-Term Care Recommendations and Requirements Documents*. These plans have been designed and used throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to limit COVID-19 exposure in long-term care residential care settings and certified supported living agencies. The updates to the plans go into effect immediately. The changes clarify guidance around use of personal protective equipment (PPE), dining and activities, and visitation. They also include the use of an essential support person based on passed legislation from the 2021 legislative session.

The changes to the plans:

- Update PPE and source control requirements to comply with the [Washington State Face Covering Requirement](#), which requires all individuals to wear a well-fitting facemask or other source control in congregate settings. “Source control” is the use of well-fitting facemasks, respirators, or cloth face coverings to cover a person’s mouth and nose to prevent spread of potentially infectious respiratory secretions;
- Replace specific dining and activity guidance with direct links to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health;
- Use a high community transmission rate to replace the use of the 10% county case rate as the threshold for restricting visitation. The transmission rate is found using the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#); and
- Define the essential support person and the requirements for designating and allowing visitation by the essential support person when visitation is otherwise restricted. Please note that the regulations for an essential support person do not apply in the Certified Community Residential Services and Supports (CCRSS) setting, unless the CCRSS program is also licensed as an adult family home or an assisted living facility.

You can find the new plans by following the links below:

- Click here to view the [Safe Start for Long-Term Care Recommendations and Requirements Document for AFH, ALF and ESF](#)
- Click here to view the [Safe Start for Long-Term Care Recommendations and Requirements Document for CCRSS](#)
- Click here to view the [Safe Start for Long-Term Care Recommendations and Requirements Document for NH and ICF/IID](#)

AL TSA Provider Letter: **Updates to Safe Start for Long-Term Care Recommendations and Requirements Document**

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The impact of COVID-19 vaccines on community transmission rates may allow for future changes to the recommendations and requirements in the *Safe Start for Long-Term Care Recommendations and Requirements Document*.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact [RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Anbesse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "A".

Mike Anbesse, Director  
Residential Care Services

*DSHS: "Transforming Lives"*