

HOME AND FAMILY/FRIENDS VISITS DIRECTIVE

This Directive was amended on September 14, 2020 to reflect updates to Ministry guidelines regarding Family Visits effective September 9, 2020. This Directive is meant to address family/caregivers and friends visits to Community Living Toronto (CLTO) residential sites (family/friends visits), visits by individuals supported by CLTO to family/friend's homes or other sites (essential overnight absences), and short visits (outings) from CLTO sites.

This Directive will continue to be reviewed and updated as Ministry Guidelines and/or Emergency Orders are updated and released. It will adhere to the advice from Public Health officials.

General Principle

This Directive is meant to protect the health and safety of people in our residential services, their families, and our staff by limiting potential exposure to COVID-19 in keeping with established principles around social and physical distancing.

Per Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) guidelines on Re-Opening of Congregative Living Settings, the continuation of indoor visits, outings, and essential overnight absences should be guided by the following principles:

- **Safety:** Any approach to visiting inside a congregate living setting should consider the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.
- **Emotional well-being:** Accommodating visitors is intended to support the emotional well-being of residents and their families/friends by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.
- **Equitable access:** Visits should be conducted equitably and consistent with resident preference and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents and staff.
- **Flexibility:** Any approach to visits should consider COVID-19 spread in their 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 residents.

Effective September 14, 2020:

- Indoor visits will be permitted with individuals supported by Community Living Toronto subject to restrictions regarding physical distancing, Active Screening, and all parties wearing masks, once per week for a maximum of 30 minutes per visit.
- Though indoor visits are now permitted, outdoor visits are still encouraged and preferred. Outdoor visits will be permitted with individuals supported by Community Living Toronto in the backyard or on the porch of the residence; or, where there is no backyard or porch, in courtyards or a local park, with physical distancing measures in place, once per week for a maximum of 30 minutes per visit.
- Support staff will remain in visual contact with the individual, family/friend for the duration of the indoor or outdoor/porch visit.

- Scheduling of all visits and rescheduling of cancelled visits will be at the discretion of the supervisor/manager.
- Individuals in support with Community Living Toronto will be permitted to visit their families/friends in their home for **essential overnight visits**.
- Visits will be permitted at CLTO sites while individuals residing in that site are under self-isolation upon returning from an essential overnight absence.
- Short visits (outings) in the community will be scheduled by supervisors and permitted in accordance with Active Screening and other Public Health guidelines.
- Residents and/or their substitute decision maker will be able to designate two people at a time as “unrestricted visitors”. Per the principles of flexibility and safety above, unrestricted visitors must contact the site supervisor in advance to schedule their visit. Every attempt shall be made to accommodate the request for a visit from unrestricted visitors within five days of the request.

Requirements for Indoor and Outdoor (Porch and Backyard) Visits

For indoor and outdoor visits to take place, the home must **NOT** be currently in confirmed or suspected outbreak. Visits cannot occur in instances where a symptomatic staff or individual is awaiting COVID-19 test results visitors must wait until those tests results are known. Any individual who has been directed by Public Health to isolate for 14 days will not be permitted participate in family visits during that timeframe.

As required by provincial guidelines, visitors must pass an Active Screening questionnaire that screens for signs and symptoms of and potential exposure to COVID-19. Previous requirements regarding visitor testing are rescinded effective July 22, 2020. To align with the province’s restrictions on social gathering, visits will include only the individual, support staff, and up to two family members/friends. Individuals and visitors must maintain physical distancing restrictions (6 feet, or 2 metres) at all times during outdoor and indoor visits. **All visitors must wear a face covering when visiting the site and maintain proper respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.** The visit will be ended early if it becomes apparent that individuals cannot maintain physical distance or if the individual or other residents in the home are not tolerating the visit well. Visitors will be advised during the pre-screening process to prepare for this possibility. If contact between the individual and family member/friend occurs, as per our protocol in place to prevent the possible risk of infection, the individual will be monitored for symptom development in the home for 14 days. Visitors are also encouraged to self-monitor for a 14-day period should contact occur.

For indoor visits, a designated visiting area will be established in the home. Visitors will only be permitted in the area designated for visits and the nearest washroom **for hand hygiene only**. Visitors will not be permitted elsewhere in the home for any reason.

Active Screening of visitors will be required. Family/friends who plan to visit will be asked a series of pre-screening questions by staff. If Active Screening is not passed, the visitors will be asked to delay their visit.

Upon arrival, visitors will be asked the Active Screening questions by the shift charge staff according to the Active Screening Protocol. Visitor information will be recorded on the Family/Friend Visitor Log and will include the visitor(s) name and phone number; verification that the pre-screening and screening processes were completed, and confirmation that the Family/Friend Visit Guidelines were reviewed and the terms agreed to. If Active Screening is not passed, the visitor will be asked to delay their visit. These requirements are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the individual, the other residents of the home, staff, and visitors. This is also required in the event that an outbreak in the home occurs, for the purpose of contact tracing. If Active Screening is not passed, the visit will be postponed.

Visitors, staff, and the individual (if able) must wear procedural/surgical masks provided by the location, for the duration of the visit. Visitors can bring food, gifts, etc. for their family member to enjoy following the visit. Visitors and the individual will be asked to practice hand hygiene before, during, and after the visit.

Preparing for Indoor and Outdoor Visits

The Guidelines for Family/Friend Visits will be distributed in advance of the visit, allowing as much time as possible for the visitor to review the expectations for the visit. Staff will confirm in advance of the visit that the Guidelines have been received and reviewed by the visitor(s) and that the visitor(s) agree to the conditions of the visit as outlined in the Guidelines.

The Family/Friend Visitor Log will be completed with the relevant information from the point of the visit being scheduled to the conclusion of the visit.

To ensure residential programs are appropriately staffed and provide sufficient time to plan, visits will be scheduled well in advance and according to the operational needs of the home. To the greatest extent possible, consideration will be given to the availability of the visitors when scheduling.

Visits may be cancelled/rescheduled due to weather, an outbreak at the site, if the visitor does not pass the Active Screening questions, if individuals and/or staff are symptomatic, or if operational needs of the home cannot be met. If there is a known exposure at the residence and isolation measures are implemented, all family visits must be suspended until isolation measures have been discontinued.

An exposure means a close contact with an individual within 48 hours of symptom onset and probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.

The indoor visiting area must be appropriately cleaned and disinfected before each scheduled visit. Staff are strongly encouraged to arrange furniture in the visiting area in advance of the visit to ensure physical distancing of at least two metres. Use of social stories and other forms of preparation with individuals to optimize the visit experience is also encouraged. Request support from the Behaviour Services Consultant as needed. Review the Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), if applicable.

Following the Visits

The visiting area must be appropriately cleaned and disinfected after each scheduled visit. Any items brought by the visitor must be set aside, with appropriate disinfecting procedures applied.

If physical distancing was not maintained for the duration of the visit, the individual will be monitored for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days following the visit. Visitors are similarly encouraged to self-monitor for 14 days.

Should an outbreak occur in the home after a visit, the Outbreak Management Protocol will be followed. All future visits to the home will be cancelled until the outbreak is over.

If the visitor(s) experience symptoms of or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days (two weeks) after the visit, they must inform the staff at the home and Toronto Public Health. Future visits will be cancelled until further notice.

Exceptions

Individuals receiving Individualized Supports and individuals supported through the LIGHTS program.

Individualized Supports and LIGHTS

- Family support is a critical component of this model of care
- Managers and supervisors should brief families regarding the following:
 - Signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - When to call Public Health
 - When to seek medical advice
 - Necessity of Active Screening for all visitors
 - Enhanced cleaning and COVID-19 prevention
- CLTO staff are available to support families through the COVID-19 crisis
- CLTO staff supporting these individuals will observe established protocols around avoiding work when ill, reporting symptoms, use of PPE, and other established best practices for personal protection and infection prevention and control (IPAC).

Supported Independent Living

Individuals receiving supports from Supported Independent Living (SIL) should be strongly encouraged to comply with social and physical distancing and applicable public health guidelines. Staff should encourage individuals supported through SIL to use active and passive screening protocols if they have in-person contact with family, friends, and others in community.

Essential Overnight Visits

Effective July 30, 2020 individuals in support with Community Living Toronto will be permitted to visit their families/friends in their home for essential overnight absences. An essential overnight absence (e.g. to a family home) is one considered necessary to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or any applicable legal rights of a resident.

Requirements for Visits

For essential overnight visits to take place, the family's home (host) and the individual's home must **NOT** be currently in confirmed or suspected outbreak. Visits cannot occur in instances where a symptomatic staff, individual, or family member is awaiting COVID-19 test results visitors must wait until those tests results are known.

Hosts are asked to consider if the absence is essential when weighed against the risks associated with the overnight absence and the requirements of the Return Plan. Overnight visits at home will not be permitted if the hosts have recently tested positive for COVID-19. Hosts must pass an Active Screening questionnaire administered by staff that screens for signs and symptoms of and potential exposure to COVID-19 prior to the overnight visit. If pre-screening is not passed, the overnight visit will be cancelled. Previous requirements regarding visitor testing are rescinded effective July 30, 2020.

For the duration of the overnight visit, hosts and individuals are encouraged to follow Public Health guidelines regarding physical distancing, limits on gatherings, essential travel/outings, mask wearing and hand hygiene. Families may be asked to continue to host their visitor longer if anyone in the household becomes symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19 during an essential overnight absence.

It is preferred that the host arrange for the individual to be picked up at the residence for the overnight visit. If the individual is being picked up at the home, hosts will be asked the screening questions upon arrival by the shift charge staff, according to the Active Screening Protocol. Host information will be recorded on the Host Log and will include the host name and phone number, verification that the pre-

screening and screening process was completed, and confirmation that the Essential Overnight Visit Guidelines and Return Plan were reviewed, and the terms agreed to. If Active Screening is not passed, the overnight visit will be cancelled. These requirements are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the individual, the other residents of the home, staff, and visitors. This is also required in the event that an outbreak in the home occurs for the purpose of contact tracing.

Preparing for Essential Overnight Absences

To request an overnight absence:

1. The host must contact the site supervisor to request the overnight absence.
2. The site supervisor will collect the details of the visit and prepare the Return Plan while considering the health and safety of the individual, the needs of the other residents in the site, impacts on staffing, and any medical risk. Risk Assessments for CLTO individuals may be used to inform a safe Return Plan. The supervisor may consult with the Medical Director to plan for and mitigate any issues or risks as needed.
3. The supervisor will follow up with the host to confirm the visit and discuss the Return Plan for when the individual returns to the home.

The Essential Overnight Visit guidelines and Return Plan will be distributed in advance of the overnight visit, allowing as much time as possible for the host to review the expectations for the visit. Hosts are also highly encouraged to review IPAC and PPE resources on CLTO's COVID-19 staff resources website, in the Tools and Training Section. A list of recommended resources will be provided in the Guidelines. Staff will confirm in advance of the overnight visit that the Guidelines and Return Plan have been received and reviewed by the host(s) and that the host agrees to the conditions of the visit as outlined in the Guidelines and Return Plan.

The Host Log will be completed with the relevant information from the point of the overnight visit being scheduled to the individual returning home.

In order for visits to occur, staffing and operational needs of the home will need to be addressed. To ensure residential programs are appropriately staffed and provide sufficient time to plan, visits will be scheduled well in advance and according to the operational needs of the home. If the hosts must cancel an overnight visit, they are asked to give the supervisor and home as much advance notice as possible to ensure adequate staff support.

Visits may be cancelled/rescheduled due to an outbreak at the site, if the host does not pass the Active Screening questions, or if individuals and/or staff are symptomatic. If there is a known exposure at the residence and isolation measures are implemented, all overnight visits must be suspended until isolation measures have been discontinued. An exposure means a close contact with an individual within 48 hours of symptom onset and probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Use of social stories and other forms of preparation with individuals to optimize the visit experience is also encouraged. Request support from the Behaviour Services Consultant as needed. Review the Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), if applicable.

Return Plan

When the host requests a visit, the supervisor will develop and communicate a Return Plan that will include the mandatory criteria (below) to be met when the individual is returning home, additional criteria specific to the circumstances of the overnight visit, and a contingency plan to ensure the safety of the other individuals in the home and staff. The Return Plan will include the results of the health Risk Assessment to help families better balance the risk and necessity of the Essential Overnight Absence. Supervisors may consult with the Medical Director, managers, directors, and any other resource they feel is necessary to

prepare a safe Return Plan.

The plan will be communicated to the host and individual before the overnight visit. The host must confirm that the Guidelines and Return Plan have been received. Both the host and individual must review and agree to the conditions of the visit as outlined in the Guidelines and Return Plan.

This Return Plan **could** include, but is not limited to:

Mandatory Criteria (For visits shorter than one week):

- Pass Active Screening
- Self-isolate/limit contact with other residents for 14 days, including a consideration for how this can reasonably be achieved in the given site (i.e. shared rooms)
- Only participate in group activities if physical distancing is maintained and a mask is worn.
- Using a mask, where possible, in common areas like dining rooms, recreation areas etc.
- Self-monitor for symptoms
- Transportation plan for getting to and from the visit.

Longer Visits (One week or longer)

In addition to the mandatory criteria listed above, return plans for longer visits could also include:

- A negative COVID-19 test and if so, when that test should occur.
- Possible self-isolation in the host's home before returning to their home.

Contingency Plan:

The Return Plan will include a contingency plan in the event that:

- The individual tests positive before or after their return to the home.
- The host tests positive or experiences symptoms before, during, or after an essential overnight absence.

Following the Visit

- The individual must follow the actions outlined in their Return Plan when returning home.
- Only outdoor visits and outings will be permitted for the resident during the 14-day self-isolation period (no indoor visits). These visits and activities will NOT trigger a further 14-day self-isolation period.
- Items, food, gifts, etc. brought from the host's home, including the individual's clothing, must be cleaned/washed and properly disinfected upon entering the home.
- Should an outbreak occur in the home after an overnight visit, the Outbreak Management Protocol will be followed. All future overnight visits and visits to the home will be cancelled until the outbreak is over.
- If the host(s) experience symptoms of or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days (two weeks) after the visit, they must inform the staff at the home and Toronto Public Health. Future visits will be suspended until further notice.

For individuals who previously had a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 and have subsequently recovered, testing/isolation and enhanced precautions following such absences should be done in consultation with the Medical Director and Toronto Public Health.

Short Visits (Outings)

Effective July 30, 2020 families will be permitted to schedule short outings into the community. Neither a negative COVID-19 test nor a Return Plan will be necessary for an outing.

In order to schedule an outing, families should work with the supervisor to find a mutually agreed-upon time that does not impede the operational needs of the CLTO site. Supervisors may consult with the Medical Director, managers, directors, and any other resource they feel is necessary to schedule a safe outing.

Families must make arrangements for picking up residents from their CLTO home. Prior to and again upon arrival, hosts will be screened using the Active Screening Protocol and essential data will be recorded for contact tracing purposes. Outings will be rescheduled if hosts do not pass Active Screening. Hosts and the CLTO resident will be screened again upon return to the CLTO site. Residents must pass Active Screening every time they re-enter the site and perform hand hygiene before leaving and upon return.

While away, residents and their families are encouraged to follow local public health restrictions and guidelines, such as mask usage, physical distancing, and limits on gathering size. CLTO will provide masks for the outing if necessary. Everyone is encouraged to limit their outings to low-risk activities, such as walks in the neighbourhood or a picnic, rather than higher-risk activities, such as large gatherings or indoor dining at a restaurant.

Should an outbreak occur in the home after an outing, the Outbreak Management Protocol will be followed. All future visits to the home will be cancelled until the outbreak is over.

If the visitor or any contacts made during the outing experience symptoms of or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days (two weeks) after the visit, they must inform the staff at the home and Toronto Public Health. Future outings will be suspended until further notice.

Related Documentation

[Active Screening Questions](#)

[Essential Overnight Absence Log](#)

[Guidelines for Essential Overnight Absences](#)

[Guidelines for Family Friend Indoor and Outdoor Visits](#)

[Outbreak Management Protocol](#)

[Resuming Visits in Congregate Living Settings](#)

[Return Plan Template](#)

[Screening Protocol](#)

[Staff/ Essential Visitor Log](#)

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