



# Department of Health

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**DATE:** March 25, 2021  
**TO:** Adult Care Facility Operators and Administrators  
**FROM:** New York State Department of Health

## Health Advisory: Revised Adult Care Facility Visitation

**Please distribute immediately to:  
Operators, Administrators, Case Managers**

### Summary

While New York State guidance has focused on protecting adult care facility (ACF) residents from COVID-19, we recognize that physical separation from family and other loved ones may take a physical and emotional toll on residents and their loved ones. Residents may feel socially isolated, leading to increased risk for depression, anxiety, and other expressions of distress. Residents living with cognitive impairment or other disabilities may find visitor restrictions and other ongoing changes related to COVID-19 confusing or upsetting; and the Department of Health (“Department”) understands that ACF residents value the physical, emotional, and spiritual support they receive through visitation from family and friends. In alignment with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Department is revising the guidance regarding visitation in ACFs during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

The information contained in this guidance supersedes and replaces previously issued guidance and recommendations regarding visitation. Please be advised that the Department continues to emphasize the importance of maintaining infection prevention practices given the continued risk of COVID-19 transmission.

### Purpose

This guidance is based upon the guidance issued by the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services guidance for nursing homes](#). The information contained in this directive supersedes and replaces previously issued guidance and recommendations regarding general adult care facility (ACF) visitation and activities, including the guidance recently issued on March 2, 2021 and the Department’s November 24, 2020 Holiday Guidance; each facility is therefore required to have appropriate policies and procedures in place that address infection control and prevention when residents leave the facility for outings and that are respectful of resident rights.

Please be advised that nothing in this directive absolves the ACF of responsibility to perform regulatorily required supervision services and ensure that resident and family communication is ongoing and supported by virtual visits, whenever possible, nor does it change the guidance previously issued relative to visitation for medically necessary or end-of-life services.

Since the release of prior iterations of visitation directives, including that issued as recently as March 2, 2021, new COVID-19 vaccines have received Emergency Use Authorization from the Food and Drug Administration, and millions of vaccinations have since been administered to adult care facility (ACF) residents and staff across the country. These vaccines have shown pronounced efficacy in helping to prevent symptomatic spread of SARS-CoV-2 infection (i.e., COVID-19). ACFs in New York State should be committed to ensuring all eligible and consenting residents and staff have the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Based on the needs of residents and consistent with adult care facility staffing and the physical plant, visitation can be conducted through a variety of means, such as in resident rooms, dedicated visitation spaces and outdoors (weather permitting). Regardless of how visits are conducted, there are certain core principles and best practices that reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and as such must be followed.

### **Core Principles**

Regardless of how visits are conducted, there are certain core principles and best practices that reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission including, but not limited to:

- Screening of all who enter the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., temperature checks, questions about and observations of signs or symptoms), and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status).
- Hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred).
- The use of face coverings or masks (covering mouth and nose).
- Social distancing at least six feet between persons.
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene).
- Cleaning and disinfecting high frequency touched surfaces and designated visitation areas in the facility often, and after each visit.
- Appropriate staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Effective cohorting of residents (e.g., separate areas dedicated to COVID-19 care).
- Residents in isolation or observation, and residents with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 status, irrespective of vaccination status, should not have visitors outside of compassionate care or end-of-life situations.

These core principles are consistent with federal guidelines and must be adhered to at all times. Additionally, visitation should be person-centered and consider the residents' physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being, and support their individual quality of life.

### **Limitations**

Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention should not be permitted to visit or should be asked to leave. The adult care facility must document this occurrence in accordance with Title 18 of New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, §485.14(h).

Facilities should consider how the number of visitors per resident at one time and the total number of visitors in the facility at one time (based on the size of the building and physical space) may

affect the ability to maintain the core principles of infection prevention. If necessary, facilities should consider scheduling visits for a specified length of time to help ensure all residents are able to receive visitors or capping the number of visitors accepted at any one time.

Principles of cohorting and physical distance should be central components of plans to restart communal activities for residents who have fully recovered from COVID-19 and for those not in isolation or observation, or with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 status. The adult care facility should consider creating small cohorts (10 or less) of residents to be tablemates or “activities buddies.”

As of April 1, 2021, out-of-town visitors traveling from other U.S. states or territories are no longer required to test or quarantine upon arrival in New York State. These travelers are still encouraged to test before entering adult care facilities for visits. Please understand that [international travelers](#) are required to follow guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and must quarantine upon arrival in New York State.

Questions related to the guidance, which is effective immediately, should be submitted in writing to [covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov](mailto:covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov).



# NY FORWARD SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

Each business or entity, including those that have been designated as essential under Empire State Development's Essential Business Guidance, must develop a written Safety Plan outlining how its workplace will prevent the spread of COVID-19. A business may fill out this template to fulfill the requirement, or may develop its own Safety Plan. **This plan does not need to be submitted to a state agency for approval** but must be retained on the premises of the business and must be made available to the New York State Department of Health (DOH) or local health or safety authorities in the event of an inspection.

Business owners should refer to the State's industry-specific guidance for more information on how to safely operate. For a list of regions and sectors that are authorized to re-open, as well as detailed guidance for each sector, please visit: [forward.ny.gov](http://forward.ny.gov). If your industry is not included in the posted guidance but your business has been operating as essential, please refer to ESD's [Essential Business Guidance](#) and adhere to the guidelines within this Safety Plan. Please continue to regularly check the New York Forward site for guidance that is applicable to your business or certain parts of your business functions, and consult the state and federal resources listed below.

## COVID-19 Reopening Safety Plan

Name of Business:

Industry:

Address:

Contact Information:

Owner/Manager of Business:

Human Resources Representative and Contact Information, if applicable:

## I. PEOPLE

A. Physical Distancing. To ensure employees comply with physical distancing requirements, you agree that you will do the following:

- Ensure 6 ft. distance between personnel, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance. Any time personnel are less than 6 ft. apart from one another, personnel must wear acceptable face coverings.
  
- Tightly confined spaces will be occupied by only one individual at a time, unless all occupants are wearing face coverings. If occupied by more than one person, will keep occupancy under 50% of maximum capacity.

- Post social distancing markers using tape or signs that denote 6 ft. of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas on the site (e.g. clock in/out stations, health screening stations)
- Limit in-person gatherings as much as possible and use tele- or video-conferencing whenever possible. Essential in-person gatherings (e.g. meetings) should be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.
- Establish designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

*List common situations that may not allow for 6 ft. of distance between individuals. What measures will you implement to ensure the safety of your employees in such situations?*

*How you will manage engagement with customers and visitors on these requirements (as applicable)?*

*How you will manage industry-specific physical social distancing (e.g., shift changes, lunch breaks) (as applicable)?*

## **II. PLACES**

**A. Protective Equipment.** To ensure employees comply with protective equipment requirements, you agree that you will do the following:

- Employers must provide employees with an acceptable face covering at no-cost to the employee and have an adequate supply of coverings in case of replacement.

*What quantity of face coverings – and any other PPE – will you need to procure to ensure that you always have a sufficient supply on hand for employees and visitors? How will you procure these supplies?*

- Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled, may not be shared, and should be properly stored or discarded.

*What policy will you implement to ensure that PPE is appropriately cleaned, stored, and/or discarded?*

- Limit the sharing of objects and discourage touching of shared surfaces; or, when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched areas, wear gloves (trade-appropriate or medical); or, sanitize or wash hands before and after contact.

*List common objects that are likely to be shared between employees. What measures will you implement to ensure the safety of your employees when using these objects?*

**B. Hygiene and Cleaning. To ensure employees comply with hygiene and cleaning requirements, you agree that you will do the following:**

- Adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [Department of Health \(DOH\)](#) and maintain cleaning logs on site that document date, time, and scope of cleaning.

*Who will be responsible for maintaining a cleaning log? Where will the log be kept?*

- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.

*Where on the work location will you provide employees with access to the appropriate hand hygiene and/or sanitizing products and how will you promote good hand hygiene?*

- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection at least after every shift, daily, or more frequently as needed, and frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects (e.g. tools, machinery) and surfaces, as well as high transit areas, such as restrooms and common areas, must be completed.

*What policies will you implement to ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of your worksite and any shared objects or materials, using [products](#) identified as effective against COVID-19?*

**C. Communication. To ensure the business and its employees comply with communication requirements, you agree that you will do the following:**

- Post signage throughout the site to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Establish a communication plan for employees, visitors, and customers with a consistent means to provide updated information.
- Maintain a continuous log of every person, including workers and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means; excluding customers, who may be encouraged to provide contact information to be logged but are not mandated to do so.

*Which employee(s) will be in charge of maintaining a log of each person that enters the site (excluding customers and deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means), and where will the log be kept?*

- If a worker tests positive for COVID-19, employer must immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as workers or visitors who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations.

*If a worker tests positive for COVID-19, which employee(s) will be responsible for notifying state and local health departments?*

### III. PROCESS

**A. Screening.** To ensure the business and its employees comply with protective equipment requirements, you agree that you will do the following:

- Implement mandatory health screening assessment (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) before employees begin work each day and for essential visitors, asking about (1) COVID-19 [symptoms](#) in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Assessment responses must be reviewed every day and such review must be documented.

*What type(s) of daily health and screening practices will you implement? Will the screening be done before employee gets to work or on site? Who will be responsible for performing them, and how will those individuals be trained?*

*If screening onsite, how much PPE will be required for the responsible parties carrying out the screening practices? How will you supply this PPE?*

**B. Contact tracing and disinfection of contaminated areas.** To ensure the business and its employees comply with contact tracing and disinfection requirements, you agree that you will do the following:

- Have a plan for cleaning, disinfection, and contact tracing in the event of a positive case.

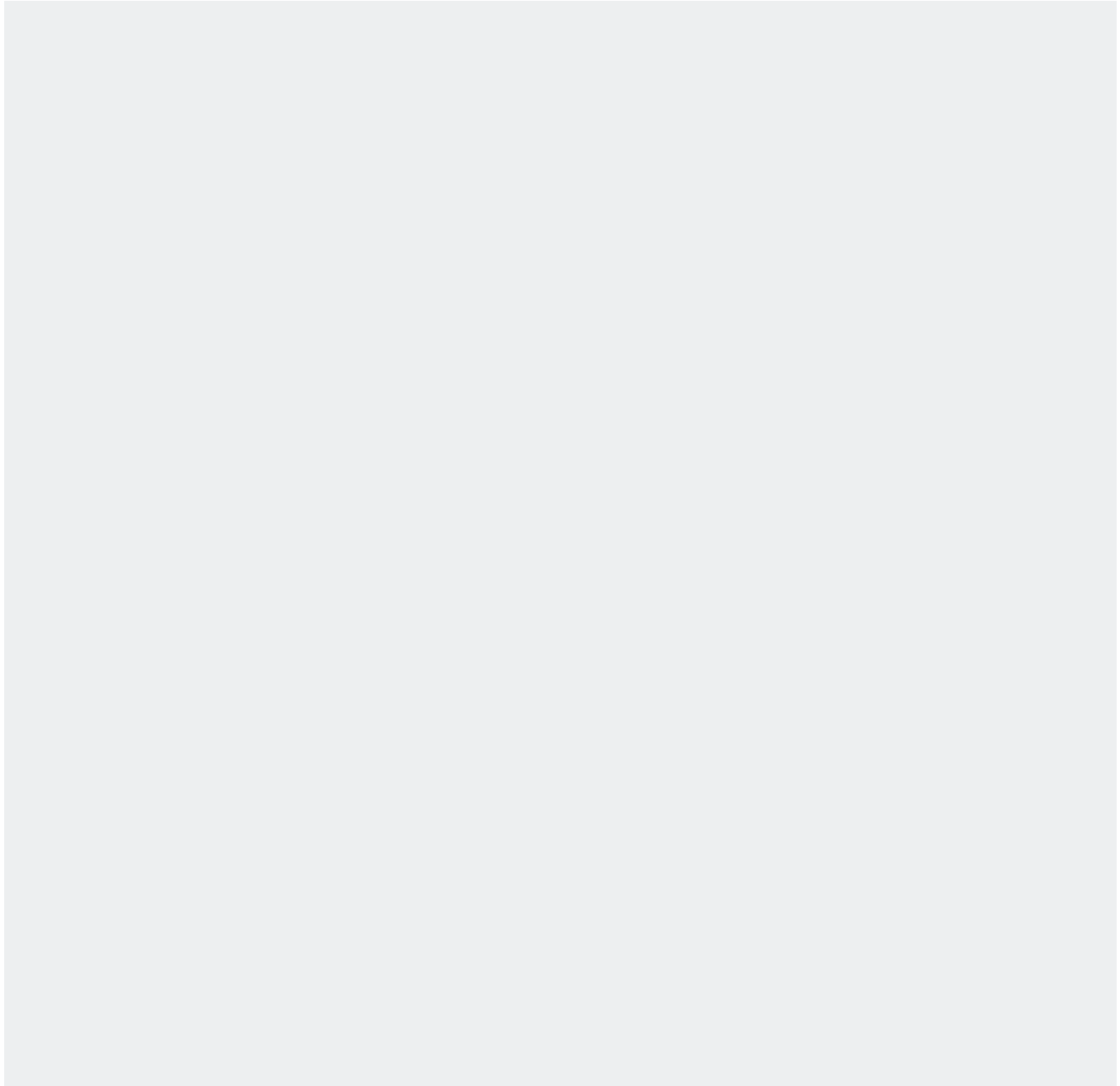
*In the case of an employee testing positive for COVID-19, how will you clean the applicable contaminated areas? What products identified as effective against COVID-19 will you need and how will you acquire them?*

*In the case of an employee testing positive for COVID-19, how will you trace close contacts in the workplace? How will you inform close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19?*



## IV. OTHER

Please use this space to provide additional details about your business's Safety Plan, including anything to address specific industry guidance.



Staying up to date on industry-specific guidance:

To ensure that you stay up to date on the guidance that is being issued by the State, you will:

- Consult the NY Forward website at [forward.ny.gov](https://forward.ny.gov) and applicable Executive Orders at [governor.ny.gov/executiveorders](https://governor.ny.gov/executiveorders) on a periodic basis or whenever notified of the availability of new guidance.

**STAY HOME.**

**STOP THE SPREAD.**

**SAVE LIVES.**

## State and Federal Resources for Businesses and Entities

As these resources are frequently updated, please stay current on state and federal guidance issued in response to COVID-19.

### *General Information*

[New York State Department of Health \(DOH\) Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Website](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Website](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) COVID-19 Website](#)

### *Workplace Guidance*

[CDC Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

[OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

### *Personal Protective Equipment Guidance*

[DOH Interim Guidance on Executive Order 202.16 Requiring Face Coverings for Public and Private Employees](#)

[OSHA Personal Protective Equipment](#)

### *Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance*

[New York State Department of Environmental Conservation \(DEC\) Registered Disinfectants of COVID-19](#)

[DOH Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19](#)

[CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Facilities](#)

### *Screening and Testing Guidance*

[DOH COVID-19 Testing](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

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