

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

February 8, 2021

INFORMATION SHEET ON MEASURES IN FORCE SINCE FEBRUARY 8, 2021, FOR FAMILIES AND INFORMAL OR FAMILY CAREGIVERS WHOSE LOVED ONES RESIDE IN A PRIVATE SENIORS' RESIDENCE (RPA)

Due to the current epidemiological situation in Québec and in order to limit the spread of COVID-19, it is recommended the measures must be pursued aimed at limiting, in particular access to a limited number of people in living environments for vulnerable individuals. Additional measures are planned to limit contacts among residents of the same RPA.

The following infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures must apply at all times in the above facilities:

- Physical distancing of 2 meters at all time
- Handwashing
- Availability of all required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- A mask (medical mask or face covering, depending on guidelines in effect) must be worn at all times.
- A protocol must be strictly applied for cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment and physical premises, including elevator buttons, door handles, etc. High-touch surfaces in common areas and shared bathrooms must be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day (or more often depending on traffic and the epidemiological situation) and up to 4 times a day during an outbreak.

These measures are easier to apply with a stable team.

The following informal caregiver and visitor definitions will facilitate the understanding and their implement instructions:

Informal caregiver:

Anyone who on a regularly or occasionally basis provides supports to a member of their close entourage who has a temporarily or permanently disability and with whom they share an emotional relationship whether this member is a part of the family or not. In this case, support is provided on a non-professional basis regardless of the ages, living environment or the nature of disability (physical, psychological, psychosocial or otherwise) of the supported individual. This care can take a variety of forms, for example, helping with personal care, emotional support or coordinating care and services.

This means that close and immediate family members must be able to access the living environment of their loved one as for informal caregivers.

Visitor:

Anyone who is not close or immediate family member and who does not fall within the definition of an informal caregiver and wishes to visit a resident. This may be a person known by the resident with whom the contacts are occasional and not essential to that individual's physical and/or psychological integrity.

INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO VISITS BY INFORMAL CAREGIVERS TO PRIVATE HOMES FOR SENIORS

1. Guidelines since February 8, 2021

- In regions at the red alert level or if the RPA has an outbreak, a single informal or family caregiver per day may visit the resident.
- In regions at the orange alert level, a single informal or family caregiver may visit at a time, for a maximum of two per day.
- Only informal or family caregivers known to the facility can visit, namely those who have been trained in and are already familiar with the IPC measures that must be followed. No more than two informal and family caregivers identified by the resident and known to the RPA may visit the facility.
- It is strongly recommended to have informal or family caregivers make an appointment before visiting the facility to touch base and go over the IPC measures to be followed at all times in accordance with the guidelines in effect.
- A known and identified informal or family caregiver can visit the resident more than once a day, by appointment, if applicable.
- Only informal or family caregivers from nearby areas will be allowed access.
- Informal or family caregivers who visit residential facilities during the period concerned must follow the guidelines for the general public, reduce contacts to a minimum, and comply with the curfew. However in certain specific situations, informal or family caregivers can obtain a letter from a health and social services institution allowing them to break curfew if it is clinically required for the resident.

Instructions for the general population in the context of COVID-19 are available at the following address: [Confinement in Québec](#).

2. General information

- Support for informal caregivers who access a CHSLD or an RI with 20 places and more and that welcomes seniors is necessary in order to validate the absence of exclusion criteria related to symptoms associated with COVID-19. The exclusion criteria are as follows:
 - a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and who does not meet the other criteria for ending self-isolation
 - a person who has symptoms consistent with COVID-19
 - a person who has been advised to self-isolate because they are suspected of being infected, because they are waiting to get tested or for a test result or because they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19
 - a person who has been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

- a person who has been instructed to self-isolate because they have returned from travel outside Canada
- a person who has been instructed by the public health to self-isolate

Anyone who is presenting one of these criteria will be refused access to the living environment.

Informal or family caregivers and visitors who do not follow the rules, despite having received all the information and having been assisted with applying IPC measures, may be denied further access to the RPA.

Relations between people and their loved ones must be continued and even intensified during the confinement virtually or through telephone contact.

Informal caregivers and visitors will be permitted entry to all [palliative and end-of-life facilities](#). Please refer to the current directives on the MSSS website at:

https://msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/documents/coronavirus-2019-ncov/COVID-19-Directives_SPFV_2020-10-05.pdf.

3. Informal or family caregivers and visitors must comply with the following instructions:

3.1. Isolation, symptom monitoring, and screening:

- You must self-monitor for symptoms at all times. If any symptoms appear, do not visit a RPA (see appendix for symptoms).
- If you have been asked to self-isolate or you have any of the above exclusion criteria, you may not visit a RPA.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you may go to a RPA only once you are considered recovered according to the recognized criteria confirmed by the public health department.
- Any visitor or informal or family caregiver who so wishes may be tested at the facility on request. Under no circumstances may the RPA require an informal or family caregiver to test negative to have access to the residential facility.

3.2. Infection prevention and control (IPC) measures:

- Sign the visitors log so that you can be quickly contacted by public health authorities and isolated if necessary in the event of an outbreak.
- Read the information provided on symptom monitoring, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Perform hand hygiene when entering and leaving the RPA as well as the resident's room and a hot zone, if applicable.
- Correctly wear a medical mask during your entire visit to a RPA. Medical masks may not be reused for a subsequent visit.
- Use personal protective equipment correctly according to the guidelines in effect.
- Two metres physical distancing must be maintained in RPA at all times, with no exceptions, especially when clients/residents share a room, but also throughout the residential facility.
- Arrive at the facility in clean clothing and change and wash it (in the usual way) on returning home afterwards.

3.3. Moving around inside a RPA

- Avoid common areas in the residence (e.g., lounge, dining room) except to go to a rental unit or help a resident walk in a corridor. Keep two metres away from other residents and wear a mask at all times.
- Stay two metres away from residents, staff, and other informal and family caregivers at all times.
- Stay out of equipment storage areas.
- Leave the residents' room if aerosol-generating medical procedures are to be conducted and follow the staff's instructions as to when you can return.
- Ask which washrooms informal or family caregivers can use and what health precautions and guidelines must be followed. For example, washrooms in hot zones should not be used.

You are invited to consult the following Québec.ca website which is intended for informal caregivers: [Informal and family caregivers and visitors to facilities during the coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

This site brings together a lot of information, videos clips and references to support you in your role, help you to better understand and remember the important hygienic measures that you must observed during visits and answer some of your questions.

You have dissatisfaction or disagreement with the interpretation and application of ministerial directives?

- A manager or other designated individual at a private home for seniors
- is responsible for answering the questions and the dissatisfaction of informal caregivers related to the interpretation and application of ministerial directives. You are welcome to ask who this designated person is.
- If your dissatisfaction or disagreement persists, you have the right to confidentially contact the Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner per the facility's complaints review procedure.

MEASURES APPLICABLE TO RESIDENTS IN RPA

Specific measures in place since February 8, 2021, for RPA without an outbreak in regions at the red alert level

- Someone living alone in a RPA can meet with one other person (always the same person). This also applies to residents living alone in two different rental units in the RPA, as long as it is always the same two people. Meals are not allowed in the dining room in RPA. Meals must be served in the rental units and infection prevention and control measures must be strictly applied. Please note: Tray delivery charges are not permitted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain exceptions are allowed, where meals can be served in the dining room if IPC measures are strictly applied:
 - RPA where the operator shares the living space with residents (often RPA with 9 beds or fewer)
 - Residents requiring monitoring or feeding assistance
 - Residents in care units where the bubble concept can be used
 - Residents living in a bedroom-type rental unit without proper furniture for eating appropriately and safely

- In the case of an exceptional situation, the RPA can ask the institution in the region concerned for an exemption. The institution will assess the request in collaboration with Direction régionale de santé publique. The institution will monitor the RPA closely and the situation will be re-evaluated regularly. The CEO of the institution must inform MSSS of any requests that have been approved and the duration of the exemption.
- Activities aimed at preventing mental, cognitive, and physical deconditioning are permitted with a maximum of 10 residents as long as there is strict adherence to infection prevention and control measures, including two-metre physical distancing and no sharing of objects between residents.
- Walking indoors along corridors, outdoor walks, and essential trips (e.g., grocery store and drugstore) are permitted, but contact with other residents must be avoided and the two-metre distancing rule and the curfew must be followed.

2. Specific measures for RPA with an outbreak in regions at the red alert level or for a resident in isolation

- Residents must follow the measures required for the requested isolation, including taking their meals in their unit.

3. Specific measures in effect since February 8, 2021, for RPA without an outbreak in regions at the orange alert level

- Someone living alone in a RPA can meet with one other person (always the same person). This also applies to two residents living alone in two different rental units in the same RPA, as long as it is always the same two people.
- In RPA in regions at the orange alert level, meals can be eaten in the dining room if strict sanitary measures are applied:
 - The operator must ensure that all measures have been put in place to respect the two-metre physical distancing rule and other IPC measures at all times inside and in the vicinity of the dining room.
 - To reduce the number of people in the dining room at the same time, there must be several seatings for the same meal.
 - Maximum of two people per table.
 - Depending on the size of the room, no more than 35 to 50 residents can be in the dining room during the same seating to avoid bottlenecks going in and out.
 - The bubble concept can be used in care units.
 - Buffet meals and salad bars are not permitted.
 - Monitor movements to make sure residents are wearing their masks (medical mask or face covering, depending on the guidelines in effect) and following the two-metre physical distancing rule and to prevent too many people from gathering at the entrance, at elevators, etc.
- Activities aimed at preventing mental, cognitive, and physical deconditioning are permitted with a maximum of 10 residents as long as there is strict adherence to infection prevention and control measures, including two-metre physical distancing and no sharing of objects between residents.
- Walking indoors along corridors, outdoor walks, and essential trips (e.g., grocery store and drugstore) are permitted, but contact with other residents must be avoided and the two-metre distancing rule and the curfew must be followed.

- A limited number of residents (maximum 10 people at a time) can use the pool and fitness room under the supervision of a staff member to ensure strict application of IPC measures, including two-metre physical distancing at all times, masks (medical masks or face coverings, depending on the guidelines in effect) worn when moving around, and no sharing of objects. In addition, special attention must be paid to high-touch surfaces and surfaces at high risk of contamination in common areas so that they are cleaned and disinfected at least between each use. The changing room must remain closed, except for the bathrooms.

4. Specific measures for RPA with an outbreak in regions at the **orange alert level or for residents in isolation**

- Residents must follow the measures required for the requested isolation, including taking their meals in their unit.

USEFUL REFERENCES

Informal caregivers

- [Informal and family caregivers and visitors to facilities during the coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)
- [Answers to questions about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Caregiver Support](#): 1-855 852-7784 or info-aidant@lappui.org

APPENDIX 1: Symptoms self-monitoring grid

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

☐ Asymptomatic

Symptoms associated with a COVID-19 episode			
Recent onset or worsening of chronic cough	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 100.4°F ; seniors: $\geq 37.6^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 98.6°F)	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Sudden loss of smell (anosmia) without nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste (ageusia)	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Difficulty breathing, out-of-breath or difficulty speaking	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Intense fatigue and major loss of appetite	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Feverishness/shivering (temperature not taken)	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Sore throat	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Headache	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Generalized weakness	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Muscular, chest, stomach and other pain	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Irritability/confusion	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Diarrhea	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Other (Please state)			

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