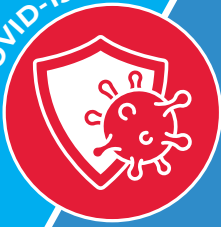


COVID-19



# Safe Visitation Sample Policy Template

Facility Name:

Facility Address:

<b>Policy Name</b>	Safe Visitation Policy		<b>Policy No.</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>		<b>Date of Last Revision</b>	<b>Version No.</b>	
<b>Administrator Signature</b>			<b>Contact Information</b>	

## Version History

Version	Approved By	Revision Date	Description of Change	Author

## POLICY

**Facility Name** will provide indoor and outdoor visitation in accordance with federal, state and local regulations.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of **Facility Name** patients/residents and visitors are maintained at all times through the proper screening of visitors and adherence to safety measures during all visits.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all patients' and residents' friends and family, clergy, lay persons offering spiritual support, volunteers and other visitors. This policy will be revised as required by updates or changes to federal, state and local regulations and guidance.

# VISITATION GUIDELINES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Consider the following in the facility visitation policy:

## **Visitor Screening Principles**

Visitors who have a positive test for COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19 or currently meet the criteria for quarantine should not enter the facility until they meet the criteria used for residents to discontinue transmission-based precautions (quarantine).

(Please add your screening requirements here.)

Visitors who refuse to adhere to the standards for visitation should defer their visitation or be asked to leave. Visitors who do not pass the screening criteria (i.e., those who are COVID-19 positive or experiencing symptoms of infectious illness) should be provided with information on when they will be eligible to return for visitation.

All visitors should be made aware of the risks associated with visitation. This can be accomplished via posted signs at entrances, verbal education or through written material provided to the visitor.

Visitor understanding of the education provided may be assessed through the use of the teach-back method by asking visitors to state in their own words what they understand about the visit process and requirements.

## **Screening Process**

Screening of visitors can range from a thorough, documented assessment to a quick visual assessment or short questionnaire. Documentation and physical screening may not always be required by local, state or federal guidelines; however, a defined screening process that can be quickly modified and implemented in response to a public health emergency is important to maintain.

(Suggested steps are included below. Modify to your facility's procedure.)

1. Ask each visitor to identify themselves, show approved identification and provide contact telephone and address.
2. Ask each visitor the screening questions.
3. Take and record each visitor's temperature.
4. Review visit guidelines and ask each visitor to confirm they are able to follow all visit guidelines.
5. Review education material and confirm visitor understanding using Teach-Back.
6. Complete the screening log.
7. Provide each visitor with a clean surgical/procedure mask and observe the use of alcohol hand sanitizer.
8. Escort visitors to the visiting area.
9. Inform the patient/resident and visitor if there is a time limit to the visit.
10. Review guidelines for exiting the facility at the end of the visit time.

## **Standard Practices for Safe Visitation**

Visitation must be allowed at all times and for all residents, with no length or limit to visitation times. Although there is no limit on the number of visitors that a resident can have at one time, visits should be conducted in a manner that adheres to core principles of Infection Prevention and does not increase the risk to other residents.

1. Facility will provide guidance about actions to take for visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19 or who have had contact with someone with COVID-19. Visitors with

confirmed COVID-19 infection or symptoms should defer any non-urgent in-person visitation until they meet CDC criteria to end isolation in health care settings. For those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection, it is safest to defer non-urgent in-person visitation until 10 days after the close contact and if they meet the criteria described in CDC guidelines for health care settings.

2. Hand hygiene is performed regularly (alcohol-based hand rub is preferred in most circumstances).
3. Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose) in accordance with most current CDC guidance.
4. Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 and general respiratory etiquette.

During peak times of visitation and large gatherings (e.g., parties, events) facilities should encourage physical distancing.

### **Testing and Vaccination**

- All visitors should be strongly encouraged to become vaccinated (for seasonal and novel illnesses such as influenza and/or COVID-19).
- Visitors are not required to be tested or vaccinated for COVID-19; however, during times of substantial or high levels of community transmission, testing can be offered to visitors if feasible. If testing is not offered, visitors may be encouraged to be tested on their own before coming to the facility (preferably within two to three days).
- Link to [\(Add facility visitor testing requirements or offering to test.\)](#)

## **ALTERNATIVE VISITATION OPTIONS**

### **Outdoor Visitation**

1. Should take place in designated accessible and safe outdoor spaces such as courtyards and patios, if available.
2. Infection Control and Prevention practices should still be followed.
3. Keep weather considerations such as inclement weather, excessive temperatures, poor air quality or an individual resident's health status in mind when considering outdoor visitation.
4. The safest practice is for residents and visitors to wear face coverings or masks. The facility's policy regarding face coverings and masks should be based on recommendations from the CDDC, state and local health departments, and individual circumstances.

**Virtual Visitation** – Consider adding virtual options to the visitation policy for future needs. Take into account available equipment available, applications that are

**Offsite Visitation** – Consider a discussion of offsite visitation risks, benefits and any mitigation efforts when the resident returns to the facility.

**Animal Visitation** – Animals in the long-term care community can pose many benefits; however, there are also risks to consider when creating a policy for animal visitation. The facility should include a section in the visitation policy regarding the policy, process, benefits, risks and strategies to mitigate risks as it pertains to companion and therapy animal visitation in the facility.

- Refer to APIC Infection Prevention Guide to Long-Term Care for a comprehensive discussion and guidance on animals in this setting.

### **Visitation of Residents on Transmission-Based Precautions for Quarantine**

Not recommended but should be allowed if the patient requests visitation. The following can be used as guiding principles during the visit:

1. Visit should occur in the resident's room, and the resident should wear a well-fitting facemask (if tolerated).
2. Visitors should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and the precautions necessary in order to visit the resident.

3. Visitors should adhere to core principles of infection prevention such as proper hand hygiene, appropriate use of PPE and physical distancing measures.
4. Facility may offer well-fitting facemasks or other appropriate PPE, if available; however, the facility is not required to provide PPE for visitors.

### **Visitation During an Outbreak or Ongoing Transmission of Novel Pathogen**

1. Policies should be based on local, state, territorial, tribal, or federal guidelines.
2. When a new nursing home onset case of COVID-19 is identified among staff or residents, the following steps are recommended:
  - a. Facilities should contact their local health authorities for guidance or direction on how to structure their visitation to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission during an outbreak investigation.
  - b. Visitors should still be allowed in the facility and should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak investigation. Visitors should still adhere to the core principle of infection prevention.
  - c. If residents would like to have a visit during an outbreak investigation, they should wear face coverings or masks during the visit, regardless of vaccination status, and visits should ideally occur in the resident's room.
  - d. While an outbreak investigation is occurring, facilities should limit visitor movement in the facility. Visitors should physically distance themselves from other residents and staff when possible.

### **Related Policies** (Add additional policies that are specific to your facility.)

- Protocol for visitor use of restrooms
- Environmental cleaning between visits
- Group and communal activities

### **References**

- [QSO-20-39-NH Revised Accessed 10-6-2022](#)
- [Interim infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic Accessed 10-6-2022](#)