



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

March 17, 2020

AL TSA: ALF #2020-010
COVID-19 INFORMATION AS OF MARCH 17, 2020

Dear Assisted Living Facility Administrator:

The information in this letter is current as of March 17, 2020. Some of this is new and supersedes previous guidance given, while other information repeats and reinforces previous guidance.

We understand you have received a lot of information about COVID-19. The links and materials below will help you find critical information quickly.

Governor's Proclamations 20-05, 20-06, 20-10, and 20-16

On February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee issued [Proclamation 20-05](#), declaring a state of emergency for Washington State due to the COVID-19 outbreak. On March 10, 2020, the governor issued [Proclamation 20-06](#), which amends 20-05 to add significant prohibitions for nursing homes and assisted living facilities to protect residents against COVID-19. On March 13, 2020, the governor issued [Proclamation 20-10](#), which extended those prohibitions to adult family homes.

On March 16, 2020, the governor issued [Proclamation 20-16](#), which amended Proclamation 20-06 to include all long-term care facilities, and prohibits visitation by any person, including friends or family, to enter a facility to visit a resident. The prohibition on visitation does not apply to:

- End of life situations
- Visits by attorneys, administrative law judges, advocates or similar persons who represent a resident
- Vendors or volunteers who supply or work in a facility
- Health care teams such as doctors, behavioral health providers, and home health nurses so that care and service needs of residents are met
- Department of Social and Health Services staff, including staff from the Developmental Disabilities Administration and Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

All visitors who enter a facility must meet the following prohibitions and requirements set out in Proclamation 20-06:

- Persons visiting in end of life situations must be screened and may not be allowed to enter a long-term care facility if they show *symptoms* or *signs* of COVID-19.
- Visitors who meet the prohibition exemptions above must show identification, sign into a visitor's log that includes date, time in and time out, and provide their name and contact information, including phone number and email address if available.
- Operators and staff are prohibited from destroying each day's visitor log for 30 days.
- Staff and volunteers are prohibited from working or volunteering unless screened at the start of every shift and do not show *symptoms* associated with COVID-19.
- Residents under a recommendation or order from the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) or the local health jurisdiction for isolation or quarantine for COVID-19 must be isolated in their rooms. A resident can choose to discharge from the facility at any time.

- Staff and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing protected and confidential information except as provided by law or with the consent of the resident.

Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

Signs of COVID-19

- Contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Contact with a person under investigation for COVID-19

Facilities should be checking with employees regarding any confirmed or suspected outbreaks at any other potential place of employment.

The proclamations also waive and suspend certain training and certification requirements that prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the long-term care worker shortage. Training and certification requirements for Assisted Living Facility administrators or administrator designees, long-term care workers, and volunteers are waived and suspended including requirements for completing long-term care worker training within one hundred twenty calendar days of being hired, and long-term care worker minimum qualifications and continuing education requirements.

In addition to the preceding facility activities affected by the Governor's proclamations, Home and Community Services (HCS) is advising that all assessments conducted by HCS assessors in all programs should be done telephonically or by using other technology in place of in-person visits wherever possible.

All proclamations are effective immediately and will remain in place until midnight on April 9, 2020.

Inspection, Certification, and Investigation Guidelines

Effective immediately, licensing inspections, certification visits, and complaint investigation activities are limited to the following (in priority order):

- All complaints that constitute imminent danger or immediate threat (cases in which serious physical harm to or death of a resident/client has occurred, or there is a serious threat to the resident/client's life, health or safety) and allegations of abuse and neglect.
- Complaints alleging infection control concerns, including facilities with potential COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses.
- Statutorily required licensing inspections or certification visits.
- Any re-visits necessary to resolve current enforcement actions.
- Initial licensing visits.
- Licensing inspections or certification visits of facilities that have a history of infection control deficiencies at the imminent danger or immediate threat level in the last three years.
- Licensing inspections or certification visits of facilities/homes that have a history of infection control deficiencies at less than imminent danger or immediate threat.

Residential Care Services (RCS) is committed to the health and safety of all residents and staff. If a surveyor exhibits signs of illness, they will not be deployed to a facility. RCS will assess facility visits on a case-by-case basis following the DOH quarantine guidelines (Infection Prevention, Control & Immunizations) and the availability of Personal Protective Equipment.

Facilities are encouraged to continue to monitor for compliance with standard hand hygiene practices, using alcohol-based hand rub/hand sanitizer (ABHR/ABHS) as the preferred method of hand hygiene in most clinical situations. If hands are visibly soiled, wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Facilities should ensure that hand hygiene supplies are readily available. Continue to ensure supplies for appropriate personal protective equipment use are available, such as gloves, gowns, respirators, and eye protection. RCS recommends notifying the local health jurisdiction if the facility is having difficulty accessing personal protective equipment (PPE).

Links

- [ALSTA Assisted Living Facilities](#)
- [Provider Letters](#)
- [ALSTA COVID-19 Guidance and Resources](#)
- [Department of Health](#)
 - DOH Hotline: 1-800-525-0127
 - [COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
 - [DOH COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control webinar \(registration required\)](#)
 - [DOH Recommendations for LTC Facilities during COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
 - [Local Health Jurisdiction interactive directory map](#)
- [CDC COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Personal Protective Equipment](#)

Reporting Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

You must report suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to your local health jurisdiction and to the Residential Care Services Complaint Resolution Unit (CRU), in compliance with WAC 388-76-10225. For information on how and when to report, please use this link:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/NotifiableConditions>

For more information about how to best protect residents, staff, and yourself, and to get the most current guidance for your facility, please visit the web sites listed above frequently as the situation is changing rapidly.

If you have any questions about the regulations, please contact Jeanette Childress at (360) 764-9804 or Jeanette.Childress@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"