

COVID-19 Protocols for Resident Absences

The protocols below reflect changes effective March 14, 2022, that must be followed by all residents who leave for absences, as applicable.

There are four types of absences:

1. **Medical absences** - absences to seek medical and/or health care.
 2. **Compassionate/palliative absences** - absences that include, but are not limited to, absences for the purposes of visiting a dying loved one.
 3. **Short term (day) absences** are split into:
 - I. **Essential outings** – absences for reasons of groceries, pharmacies, and outdoor physical activity; and
 - II. **Social outings** - absences other than for medical, compassionate/palliative, or essential outings.
 4. **Temporary (overnight) absences** refer to absences for two or more days and one or more nights away from the home for non-medical purposes.
- For all types of absences, if a resident is unable to source at minimum a medical mask, one will be provided free of charge by the community.
 - Residents will be reminded to practice public health measures, such as physical distancing (2 meters separation) and hand hygiene, while they are away from the community.
 - All residents on an absence, regardless of the type or duration of the absence, will be actively screened upon their return to the community.
 - The community will not restrict or deny any absences for medical or compassionate/palliative reasons at any time. This includes when a resident is in isolation on additional precautions and/or when a community is in an outbreak; in these situations, community must consult their local public health unit for further advice. Absences for medical or compassionate/palliative reasons are the only absences permitted when the resident is in isolation on Droplet and Contact Precautions (due to symptoms, exposure, and/or diagnosis of COVID-19) or when the community is in outbreak.
 - Residents who are in isolation on additional precautions and/or reside in an area of the community that is in an outbreak cannot participate in essential, social or temporary absences.
 - Residents are permitted to go on Essential Outings, including walks either on or off the premises, at all times except when that resident is isolating and on Droplet and Contact Precautions, or as directed by the local PHU.
 - Residents will not be permitted to start Short Term (Day) Absences and Temporary (Overnight) Absences if the resident is isolating on additional precautions, or when advised by public health.

- Based on absence type, the following requirements apply:

	Requirements
<p>Short term (day) absence Essential outing and Social outing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The residence will allow short term absences regardless of reason. Residents must follow public health measures during the absence Active screening is required on return If the resident has been exposed to a known COVID-19 case during their absence, they must be tested for COVID-19 with a PCR test on return to the home and isolate. If timely PCR tests are unavailable, the residence must perform 2 RATs separated by 24-48 hours, the first of which will be administered within 24 hours of returning to the home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents who are fully vaccinated and boosted (3rd or 4th dose) will be isolated until a PCR or RAT is taken on day 5 (if negative isolation may be discontinued). Residents who are not fully vaccinated and/or have not been boosted (3rd or 4th dose) are required to isolate for 10 days from last contact (regardless of test results).
<p>Temporary (overnight) absence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community will allow overnight absences regardless of reason. Residents must follow public health measures during the absence. Active screening on return. All residents, regardless of vaccination status, are required to perform a RAT and a PCR test on day 5 of return. No isolation is required unless the resident receives a positive test result. If a timely PCR test is not available, on day 5 of return 2 RATs 24 hours apart may be used as an alternative. The community will not deny entry to residents into their home while awaiting testing results and will not impose isolation of residents.

Note: Residents who are isolating under Contact and Droplet Precautions may only receive Essential Visitors.

References:

Directive #3 (March 14, 2022)

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH_HPPA.pdf

Retirement Homes Policy to Implement Directive #3 – March 14, 2022

https://mcusercontent.com/0f7b468f27a8cf1a453f09536/files/7652e7db-b1ea-36dd-f262-5d2adce52008/RHPID_3_2022_March_14_2022_Phase_4.pdf

RHRA Scenario Matrix: Retirement Home Policy to Implement Directive #3 (December 23, 2021)

<https://www.rhra.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Scenario-Matrix-Dec-22-FINAL.pdf>