



Interim Procedures for Outdoor Visitation, Home Visits, Reintroduction of Individuals after Extended Home Visits, and Community Outings

Effective 7/17/2020

*Edited 9/3/2020 to remove capacity restrictions for housemates transported together in a vehicle

Procedure for Outdoor Visits

On 3/18/2020, OPWDD issued a memorandum titled "Health Advisory: COVID-19 Guidance for Operators of Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs), Community Residences (CRs) and Private Schools Regarding Visitation." This memorandum mandated that visitation to facilities be suspended. As of 6/19/20, visitation to certified residences may resume on a limited basis, in a manner that continues to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The following guidelines must be adhered to in order to ensure the health and wellbeing of residents, staff and visitors while permitting limited visitation:

- The visit will be pre-arranged between the family and the facility manager. No unannounced visits are permitted during this time. The facility sets the appropriate hours during which visitation may occur, based upon the needs of the home.
- The manager or designee should thoroughly discuss the potential risks and benefits of the visitor's presence with the visitor and the resident ahead of a scheduled visit.
- The manager must notify visitors, at the time they are scheduling a visit, whether there are any positive or suspected cases of COVID-19 in the home.
- Visitation must not occur with any individuals who are currently in quarantine due to exposure for COVID-19 or isolation for a positive COVID-19 test
- Only one individual may have visitors at a time, and they may have a maximum of two guests visiting at a time. No guests under the age of 18 are permitted.
- The manager and visitor will develop a plan prior to the visit for where both parties will be situated. For example, two chairs positioned on opposite ends of a patio.
- The manager will communicate the plan for the visit to the staff who will be on shift.
- All other residents should be notified ahead of time that visitors will be present and advised how to remain socially distant from them.
- Upon arrival, the visitor will be screened by staff. People with a temperature over 100F or symptoms of respiratory illness, or those who have had a positive COVID-19 test in the past 14 days, or have had contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case in the past 14 days are not permitted to visit.
- Visitors must have a mask, and agree to wear it any time a distance of six feet or more cannot be maintained. Any visitor who refuses to wear a mask will be asked to leave.
- Guests must sign a visitors log, which shall include names and contact information, as well as the location that visitation occurred.
- Visitors must sanitize their hands upon arrival and maintain good hand hygiene throughout the visit.
- The visit will be conducted outdoors. Visitors are not permitted to enter the facility for any reason.
- Visitation remains prohibited anywhere except within sight of the residential facility and shall not include sitting in a non-agency vehicle or leaving the premises unmonitored by staff
- If any of the above stated guidelines are not followed, staff will politely reinforce the guidelines. If the visitor continues to not follow the guidelines, the staff will ask for the visit to cease and contact the manager for further guidance.
- Any furniture/areas of the facility utilized by the visitor(s) shall be disinfected immediately following the visit.

Procedure for Home Visits

On 3/24/20, OPWDD suspended home visits for individuals living in certified residences. Effective 7/15/20 for regions that have entered Phase Four of the state's reopening plan, home visits may resume with appropriate risk mitigation strategies in place. These include social distancing, use of face coverings when tolerated, meticulous attention to hand washing and proper cleaning and disinfection.

Individuals may participate in home or family visits only if all of the following circumstances are met:

- The individual is not suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, and not under quarantine or isolation
- The individual passes a health screen and temperature check immediately prior to leaving the facility
- The individual washes their hands immediately prior to their departure from and upon return
- The location of the visit does not include: (a) any household member suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19; (b) any household member who has been exposed to COVID-19 in the past 14 days; or (c) any household member displaying symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- Staff should remind families to ensure that individuals are washing/sanitizing their hands throughout the day, social distancing whenever possible, and wearing face coverings whenever social distancing cannot be maintained in public.

The following measures are required for agency vehicles used to transport individuals:

- Only individuals and staff from the same residence should be transported together.
- Individuals and staff should be spaced out to the extent possible in the vehicle to avoid close contact.
- Staff must wear a face covering at all times in the vehicle. Individuals who can medically tolerate wearing a mask should also do so to the extent possible.
- Thoroughly disinfect the vehicle after each trip and document the cleaning on the vehicle log.
- Where appropriate and safe, windows should be rolled down to permit air flow.
- Individuals using public transit should be reminded of social distancing and good hygiene, and be provided with hand sanitizer for use immediately following such transportation.

In order to trace and track any potential COVID-19 exposure, a log of all home visits and other visits off site from the certified residence is required. Daily logs must include the following information:

- The names of the individuals who participated in a home visit, address of the visit, and the dates and times the visit started and ended
- Confirmation that person picking up or receiving the individual denied that anyone in or visiting the household was currently under isolation or quarantine for COVID-19
- Confirmation that person picking up or receiving the individual denied that anyone in or visiting the household had any known exposure to COVID-19 in the prior 14 days
- Confirmation that person picking up or receiving the individual denied that anyone in or visiting the household has exhibited any of the following symptoms within the last 14 days: cough, fever (100F or greater), sore throat, shortness of breath, headache, chills, muscle pain and/or new loss of taste or smell.
- Confirmation that the individual participating in the visit passed their health screen immediately prior to participating in the home visit
- Addresses of any and all places the individual spent time during the home visit, including the names of other people spending time in close contact (within 6 feet) or proximate contact
- Confirmation that the individual passed their health screen upon return from the home visit.
- Logs should be reviewed by the manager, and filed in the COVID-19 binder. Logs may be requested by OPWDD at any time.

Procedure for Reintroducing Individuals to Residences after Extended Home Visits

On 3/24/20, OPWDD issued guidance suspending home visits for individuals living in certified residences, except for those willing to take their family members home for extended visits. Effective 7/15/20 for regions in Phase Four of the state's reopening plan, any individual on a home visit who desires to now return to the residence must be permitted to do so.

To safely accept an individual back to the residence, the following conditions must be met:

- In the 14 days preceding the individual's return, the residential facility must have no known or suspected cases of COVID-19
- The individual must have not knowingly been in contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19
- The family must confirm in writing that for the 14 days prior to the individual's return to the facility, that the individual did not display any of the following symptoms in the 14 days prior to return:
 - Fever of 100.0°F or greater
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Muscle aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Abdominal pain
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Runny nose
 - Fatigue
 - Wheezing
 - New loss of taste or smell
- The residence manager will maintain written documentation of the above in the COVID-19 binder.
- If any of these symptoms are noted, the family should be referred to their medical provider or the Local Department of Health for assessment and testing.
- The Director of Nursing or designee will consult with the Local Department of Health to determine if an individual returning to a residence following an extended home visit may need to follow precautionary quarantine measures upon return.
- The residential facility will follow any guidance issued by the CDC and NYS DOH related to travel and quarantine periods.
- Upon the individual's return to the residence, they will be observed for signs and symptoms illness, consistent with the nursing care plan that is in place for all residents.

Procedure for Community Outings

On 3/24/20, OPWDD issued guidance that restricted community outings for people who live in certified residences. Effective 7/15/20 regions in Phase Four of the state's reopening plan may resume low risk activities for individuals, such as going to medical or professional service appointments and work, and participating in community-based outings, as described below.

To prevent community spread or increased risk of infection, the following conditions must be met:

- Individuals may not participate in community outings if any individual or staff member working in the home is suspected or confirmed positive for COVID-19
- Individuals who have had contact with a confirmed positive individual within the last 14 days, or any person experiencing symptom(s) consistent with COVID-19 may not participate in community outings.
- The number of individuals permitted on an outing should be based on the ability to maintain safety and social distancing, but should be as small as possible. Groups may not exceed 10 people including staff. Groups should consist of people who are already in regular contact (e.g. housemates).
- Low risk, outdoor activities such as going to a park or for a walk, or picking up to-go meals should be prioritized.
- Community outings to stores, outdoor restaurants, salons, etc., should be extremely limited.
- Recreational outings should be limited to one location per day for any individual participating.
- Hands should be washed/sanitized immediately prior to leaving the home and upon return.
- Staff must bring hand sanitizer and ensure all individuals are washing and/or sanitizing hands whenever surfaces such as door handles, counters, public benches, and store shelves are touched.
- Social distancing principles must be adhered to, to the greatest extent possible.
- Face coverings shall be brought on public outings and individuals must be encouraged to wear the covering at all times. Everyone who is medically able to tolerate a mask must wear one when unable to maintain social distancing.
- There should be no unnecessary interaction with other members of the public while on an outing.
- When planning outings, staff should be aware of various capacity restrictions for businesses and should consider calling ahead, where possible, to ensure group size can be accommodated.
- Individuals who participate in community outings without staff present must be provided with hand sanitizer and a face covering and should understand the risks and obligations of public exposure, as well as the expectations regarding reporting.

The following measures are required for agency vehicles used to transport individuals:

- Only individuals and staff from the same residence should be transported together.
- Individuals and staff should be spaced out to the extent possible in the vehicle to avoid close contact.
- Staff must wear a face covering at all times in the vehicle. Individuals who can medically tolerate wearing a mask should also do so to the extent possible.
- Thoroughly disinfect the vehicle after each trip and document the cleaning on the vehicle log.
- Where appropriate and safe, windows should be rolled down to permit air flow.
- Individuals using public transit should be reminded of social distancing and good hygiene, and be provided with hand sanitizer for use immediately following such transportation.

In order to be able to trace and track any potential COVID-19 exposure, a log must be kept of all community outings. Logs must contain the following information:

- The names of individuals and staff members who participate in the community outing

- Confirmation that each person passed the daily health screen and temperature check
- The location, including address, where the community outing occurred
- The times the outing started and ended.
- The transportation that was used for each outing, where applicable.
- Any additional notes that are relevant or may inform increased precaution on future outings.
- Managers must review these logs at least weekly and file them in the COVID-19 binder. These logs may be requested by OPWDD at any time.