



Texas State Veterans Home VISITATION

Purpose:

To allow residents to visit with their families and friends following these guidelines for safety and infection control. The following requirements are required by Title 26, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 554, Nursing Facility Requirements for Licensure and Medicaid Certification, new 554.2803, regarding emergency rule in response to COVID-19 requirements for limited indoor and outdoor visitation in a facility.

Definitions:

- **Outbreak-** One or more laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 in either paid or unpaid staff, or one or more laboratory confirmed facility-acquired case of COVID-19 identified in a resident.
- **Essential Caregiver Visits-** A personal visit between a resident and a designated essential caregiver. This type visit is allowed in all areas of the facility for all residents.
- **Indoor Visit-** A personal visit between a resident and one or more personal visitors that occurs in-person in a designated indoor space. This type visit is only in COVID-19 Negative areas of the facility.
- **Outdoor Visit-** A personal visit between a resident and one or more personal visitors that occurs in-person in a designated outdoor space. This type visit is only with residents residing in COVID-19 Negative areas of the facility.
- **End-of-Life Visit-** A personal visit between a visitor and a resident who is receiving hospice services; who is at or near the end of life, without receiving hospice services; or whose prognosis does not indicate recovery. A nursing facility should not wait until death is imminent to allow end-of-life visit.
- **Unknown COVID-19 Status-** The status of a person who is a new admission or readmission, has spent one or more nights away from the facility, has had known exposure or close contact with a person who is COVID-19 positive, or who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 while awaiting test results.
- **Fully Vaccinated-** CDC defines fully vaccinated to be at least two weeks after receiving a single-dose vaccine, or at least two weeks after receiving the second dose of a two-dose vaccine.

Requirements for SVH Visitation:

- Staff testing is occurring according to "CMS directive QSO-20-38-NH revised."
- There are no local ordinances that prohibit such visitation as described.
- There is no requirement that a personal visitor provide documentation of a COVID-19 negative test or COVID-19 vaccination status as a condition of visitation.
- Visitation will occur according to facility scheduled hours.
- Visitation will be scheduled in advance and by appointment only to allow for cleaning and sanitization of the visitation area between visits.

- Facility must ensure equal access by all residents to visitors.
- All visitors must be screened at entrance of the facility prior to being allowed to visit. Visitors who exhibit the following screening criteria will not be allowed to visit and will be instructed to leave the facility campus and reschedule the visit:
 - Temperature greater than 99.6° F;
 - Signs or Symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as cough, shortness of breath or sore throat;
 - Signs or Symptoms of COVID-19, including chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea;
 - Additional signs and symptoms as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in symptoms of Coronavirus at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov);
 - Close contact in the last 14 days with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, is under investigation for COVID-19, or is ill with a respiratory illness; or
 - Has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 10 days.
- Facility screener will complete the screening form.
- Visitor will sign acknowledgement form they have read, understand, and will follow visitation guidelines.
- The resident will wear a facemask, exceptions to facemask worn by resident by written physician authorization only.
- Visitors must wear a facemask over their nose and mouth throughout visit. At a minimum 3 ply non-medical mask or N95/KN95 type face mask. Note: Surgical ASTM Level 3 or Medical Procedure Mask ASTM Level 1 or 2 are also acceptable. Cloth facemask will not be approved
- Designated areas will be provided for visits to assure access is safe for visit and provides adequate space to maintain distancing from other residents and staff. The site will be communicated to visitor when appointment is made
- To allow for each resident to have equal access to receive visitors, visits will be limited to 2 hours.
- To ensure all residents can have equal access to visitors, the facility may limit the number of visits per resident each week.
- During times of high demand for visitation i.e. holidays, time length of visits may be reduced to allow for visits for all residents.
- Resident and visitors must perform hand hygiene before and after visit. Hand sanitizer will be provided by the facility.
- Instructional signage will be placed throughout the facility with proper visitor education regarding:
 - signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
 - hand hygiene, social distancing, respiratory hygiene, and personal protective equipment (PPE),
 - specified entries and exits, routes to visitation areas and other applicable facility processes;

Process for Visitation:

- Each Facility will determine visiting hours.
- The Facility must limit the number of visitors per resident per week and the length of time per visit, to ensure equal access by all residents to visitors. This will be determined by individual facility.
- Each Facility will determine safe areas for visits dependent on facility layout and resident room location. This area will be communicated when appointment is made.
- Families will be notified about the start of visitation and guidelines through mass communication using dial my calls.
- Families will schedule visit by calling receptionist between the hours of 9:00AM and 5:00PM.
- Receptionist will maintain schedule, direct families of visitation location and their scheduled time.
- Nursing, activities and housekeeping as well as other facility designated personnel will be provided with visit schedule to facilitate resident being at designated area as well as monitor for infection control practices and time limits.
- Upon arrival at facility screening site at scheduled time, all visitors will complete facility COVID-19 screening and be wearing a facemask. If the visitor fails, the COVID-19 screen they will be asked to immediately leave the facility and may be advised to self-quarantine or seek proper medical attention. NO visit will occur.
- Hand hygiene will be performed.

Essential Caregiver Visits

- There may be up to two permanently designated Essential Caregivers per resident.
- Up to two Essential Caregivers may visit a resident at the same time.
- The visit may occur outdoors, in the resident's room or in another area of the facility.
- Essential Caregivers do not have to maintain physical distancing between themselves and the resident they are visiting but must maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet between themselves and all other residents and staff.
- The Essential Caregiver must wear a face mask over both the mouth and nose throughout the visit.
- The Essential caregiver may visit their designated resident regardless of COVID-19 status
- The Essential Caregiver no longer requires COVID-19 testing.
- Please refer to Essential Caregiver Policy for detailed information regarding this type of visitation.

End-of-Life Visits

- End-of-life visits are allowed for all residents regardless of COVID-19 status.
- End-of-life visitors do not to maintain physical distancing between themselves and the resident they are visiting but must maintain physical distancing between themselves and all other persons in the facility.
- When resident's situation does not meet the definition of end-of-life. Nursing facilities, visitors and residents are encouraged to make use of essential care giver visits, indoor visits, and outdoor visits.

Indoor and Outdoor Visitation

- To permit indoor or outdoor visitation the facility must:
 - Have separate areas, units, wings, halls, or buildings designated for COVID-19 positive, COVID-19 negative, and unknown COVID-19 status resident cohorts.
 - Ensure separate dedicated staff are working exclusively in the separate areas, units, wings, halls, or buildings for residents who are COVID-19 positive, COVID-19 negative or unknown COVID-19 status.
 - Ensure staff are designated to work only one resident cohort and designation does not change from one day to another.
 - Not have a COVID-19 confirmed case in the last 14 days in staff working a COVID-19 negative area.
 - Not have a facility-acquired case of COVID-19 in a resident residing in a COVID-19 negative area of the facility.
 - In the event of an outbreak, one case of COVID-19 in either staff or resident:
 - Outbreak testing is conducted in accordance with 42 CFR 483.80(h);
 - First round of outbreak testing reveals no additional COVID-19 cases in areas that accommodates COVID-19 negative residents;
 - Indoor visitation is suspended for affected area of facility that that accommodates residents who are COVID-19 negative until facility meets criteria to discontinue outbreak testing. (14 days without a new positive resident or staff); and
 - Outdoor visitation may continue for COVID negative residents.
 - Follow COVID-19 county positivity rate as additional information to determine indoor and outdoor visitation.
 - A facility in a county with a positivity rate of 10% or lower must allow indoor and outdoor visitation.
 - A facility in a county with a positivity rate greater than 10% and at **least** 70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated, must permit outdoor and indoor visitation.
 - A facility in a county with a positivity rate greater than 10% and **fewer** than 70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated must:
 - Limit indoor visitation to fully vaccinated residents
 - May permit outdoor visitation
 - Indoor and outdoor visitation is permitted only for residents who are COVID-19 negative.
- A fully vaccinated resident wearing a well-fitting face covering or facemask may choose to have close or personal contact with their visitor during an indoor or outdoor visit.
- A resident who is **NOT** fully vaccinated and their visitor must maintain physical distancing during an indoor visit or an outdoor visit.
- Personal visitors, Essential Caregivers, and end of life visitors must maintain physical distancing of at least six feet between themselves and all other persons in the facility.
- Visits are permitted where adequate space is available to ensure physical distancing between visitation groups and safe infection prevention and control practices, including the resident room.
- The nursing facility must limit movement of the visitor through the facility to ensure interaction with other residents is minimized.

- The visitor must wear a facemask over both mouth and nose throughout the visit and while in nursing facility.
- A resident must wear a facemask over both nose and mouth (if tolerated) throughout the visit. However, may remove facemask to eat or drink during the visit.
- The nursing facility will perform cleaning and disinfection of the visitation area, furniture, and other items, per CDC guidance, before and after each visit.
- The nursing facility must ensure a comfortable and safe outdoor visitation area considering outside air temperatures and ventilation.
- The facility must provide stations for hand hygiene for both resident and visitor before and after each visit.

The facility must allow Essential Caregiver visits, end of life visits as well as persons providing critical assistance and persons with legal authority to enter facility provided that they pass required screening regardless of facility outbreak status, county positivity rate and resident vaccination percentage and resident COVID-19 status.