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| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY

Policy

Rubidge has a responsibility to ensure residents receive visitors safely to help protect against the risk of COVID-19. This policy balances mitigating measures to protect the health and safety of residents, staff and visitors, with the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of residents for their quality of life and in consideration of the mental health and emotional well-being of residents and their loved ones. All visitors must comply with the requirements set out in this policy.

If anything in this policy conflicts with requirements in applicable legislation or regulations or any other provincial requirements, including any applicable emergency orders, directives or directions, guidance, recommendations or advice issued by the CMOH and applicable to retirement homes, those requirements prevail, and Rubidge will follow them.

Guiding Principles

Protection of Rubidge residents and staff from the risk of COVID-19 is paramount. Guidance in place to protect the health and safety of residents, staff, and visitors, while supporting residents in receiving the care they need and in consideration of their mental health and emotional well-being.

This guidance is in addition to the requirements established in the Retirement Homes Act, 2010 (RHA) and its regulation (O. Reg 166/11) and MOH's COVID-19 Guidance for Public Health Units. This policy is guided by the following principles:

- **Safety:** Any approach to visiting, absences, and activities must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks of infection are mitigated.
- **Mental Health and Emotional Well-being:** Welcoming visitors, absences, and activities is intended to support the overall physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.
- **Equitable Access:** All residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors and participate in activities consistent with their preferences and within restrictions that safeguard residents, staff and visitors.
- **Flexibility:** The physical characteristics/infrastructure of Rubidge, its staffing availability, whether in outbreak and the current status with respect to infection prevention and control (IPAC) including personal protective equipment (PPE) are all

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

variables to take into account when administering policies for visiting, absences, and activities.

- **Autonomy:** Residents have the right to choose their visitors. Residents also have the right to designate their caregivers. If a resident is unable to do so, substitute decision-maker(s) may designate caregivers.
- **Visitor Responsibility:** Visitors have a crucial role to play in reducing risk of infection for the safety of residents and staff by adhering to visitor policy requirements related to screening, IPAC and PPE and any precautions described in this policy.
- **COVID-19 Vaccination:** The goal of the provincial COVID-19 vaccination program is to protect Ontarians from COVID-19. Rubidge continues to promote vaccinations and boosters to all eligible residents and visitors. Staying [up-to-date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines help reduce the number of new cases and, most importantly, severe outcomes including hospitalizations and death due to COVID-19. All individuals, whether or not they have received a COVID-19 vaccine, must continue to practice the recommended public health measures and comply with all applicable laws for the ongoing prevention and control of COVID-19 infection and transmission. Visitors will not be denied entry into Rubidge based on vaccination status. **All Rubidge staff is fully vaccinated.**

Requirements for Rubidge Visits

Rubidge is responsible for ensuring that residents receive visitors safely by implementing visiting practices that help to protect against the risk of COVID-19. It remains critical that Rubidge continues to implement and enforce preventive measures to protect the health and safety of residents and staff. High community rates of COVID-19 coincide with increasing numbers of resident cases and outbreaks.

Rubidge will implement and ensure ongoing compliance with the IPAC measures set out in this guidance. Rubidge will ensure that all staff, students, volunteers, visitors, and residents abide by the health and safety practices in MOH's COVID19 Guidance: LTCH/RH/CLS for PHUs and this guidance.

Pursuant to subsection 60(4) of the RHA, Rubidge is required to have an IPAC program as part of its operations. Rubidge is also required to ensure that staff have received IPAC training.

Rubidge must have a COVID-19 Outbreak Preparedness Plan, according to the requirements outlined in the MOH's COVID-19 Guidance: LTCH/RH/CLS for PHUs.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Rubidge will adhere to any directions from Peterborough Health Unit. This may include direction to take additional measures to restrict access and duration of visits during an outbreak, or when the PHU deems it necessary.

Rubidge will facilitate visits for residents and will not unreasonably deny visitors based on the frequency of visits or their vaccination status.

The following minimum requirements will be maintained to continue to accept any visitors:

- Procedures for visits including, but not limited to infection prevention and control (IPAC) and any Rubidge specific policies.
- Rubidge will **share this policy** with visitors and residents by email or mail/pickup, if no email is on file.
- Should a visitor have a complaint about the administration of Rubidge's visitor policy, they may contact the General Manager by phone at 705-748-4000 or email ehewitt@rubidge.ca and the complaint will be responded to in a timely manner. If your concern is not resolved to your satisfaction with Rubidge's management, visitors may contact the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) by email (info@rhra.ca) and/or phone (1-855-275-7472).
- Protocols to maintain best practices for IPAC measures prior to, during and after visits.

Additional factors that will inform decisions about visitations at Rubidge include:

- **Adequate Staffing:** Rubidge must have sufficient staff to implement the policies related to visitors and to ensure safe visiting as determined by the General Manager.
- **Access to adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Rubidge must have adequate supplies of relevant PPE required to support visitors.
- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) standards:** Rubidge must have appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies and adhere to IPAC standards, including enhanced cleaning.

If Rubidge restricts visits based on any of the above factors, the decision will be communicated to residents, including the reasons for the decision.

Types of Visitors

Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether visiting Rubidge is appropriate. Outlined below are the **three types of visitors**. Note that Rubidge staff, students and volunteers as defined in the Retirement Homes Act, 2010 are not considered visitors.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

The Peterborough Health Unit may require restrictions on visitors in part or all of Rubidge, depending on the specific situation. Rubidge and visitors must abide by any restrictions imposed by the PHU, which override any requirements or permissions in this guidance if there is a conflict, in accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

When a resident is isolating and not permitted General Visitors, Rubidge must provide supports for their physical and mental well-being to mitigate any potential negative effects of isolation. This includes individualized mental and physical stimulation that meet the abilities of the individual. Rubidge will use sector best practices wherever possible.

Essential Visitors

Essential Visitors are permitted regardless of vaccination status and are the only type of visitor permitted while a resident is isolating under Droplet and Contact Precautions.

Essential Visitors are persons performing essential support services (e.g., food delivery, inspectors, maintenance, or health care services (e.g., phlebotomy) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident).

External Care Providers (ECPs) are employees, staff or contractors of Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) (formerly Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs)) and provide services to residents. They are considered Essential Visitors and must comply with applicable requirements under MOH's COVID-19 Guidance: LTCH/RH/CLS for PHUs and this policy.

General Visitors

General Visitors are individuals who are not Essential Visitors and visit:

- For social reasons (e.g., family members and friends of resident);
- To provide non-essential services (may or may not be hired by the home or the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker); and/or
- As a prospective resident taking a tour of Rubidge.

Personal Care Service Providers

A Personal Care Service Provider is a person who is not an Essential Visitor and visits to provide non-essential personal services to residents.

Personal Care Services include those outlined under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, such as hairdressers, nail services and aesthetician services, services that are not being provided for medical or essential reasons.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

When providing services, Personal Care Service Providers must:

- Follow required public health and IPAC measures while at Rubidge;
- Follow the masking requirements and
- Practice hand hygiene and conduct environmental cleaning after each appointment.

Rubidge's Visiting Protocols

- The Peterborough Health Unit (PHU) may require restrictions on visitors in part or all of Rubidge, depending on the specific situation. Rubidge and visitors must abide by any restrictions imposed by the PHU, which override any requirements or permissions in the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility COVID-19 Guidance.
- All visitors to Rubidge must follow public health measures (e.g., screening, masking, and IPAC) for the duration of their visit. If Rubidge is in outbreak, eye protection is required when providing direct care to residents.
- Residents who are not self-isolating may receive Essential Visitors, General Visitors and Personal Care Service Providers.
- Residents who are self-isolating under Droplet and Contact Precautions may only receive Essential Visitors (e.g., residents may not receive General Visitors or Personal Care Service Providers). Rubidge will provide supports for their physical and mental well-being to mitigate any potential negative effects of isolation (including individualized mental and physical stimulation that meet their abilities), using sector best practices wherever possible.
- All Visitors will be passively screened.
- All residents, families, visitors and staff will be provided with this policy. All visitors must review the contents of the information package prior to their visit and comply with the policy. Additional applicable policies and procedures will also be communicated as needed.

Any non-adherence to the protocols, procedures and requirements will be the basis for the discontinuation of visits.

Asymptomatic Testing

In an abundance of caution asymptomatic, testing using RAT tests may be conducted for staff, students, contractors, volunteers, Essential Visitors, General Visitors and External Care Providers at random frequencies determined by the General Manager.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Personal Protective Equipment Training and Use

Visitor Training

1. Safety Review for Essential Visitors, General Visitors and Personal Care Service Providers

Prior to visiting any resident for the first time, or if there are any updates or changes Rubidge will ask Essential Visitors, General Visitors and Personal Care Service Providers to:

- i. Read the following documents:
 - Rubidge's visitor policy; and
 - Public Health Ontario's document entitled [Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#).
- ii. Watch the following Public Health Ontario videos:
 - [Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment](#);
 - [Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment](#); and
 - [How to Hand Wash](#).

2. Safety Review for Essential Visitors During an Outbreak

If Rubidge is **declared in outbreak**, prior to visiting any resident for the first time, Rubidge may provide training to Essential Visitors who are not trained as part of their service provision or through their employment.

Training must address how to safely provide direct care, including putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) required PPE, and hand hygiene. Alternatively, if Rubidge does not provide the training, Essential Visitors must be directed to appropriate resources from [Public Health Ontario](#) to acquire this training.

Personal Protective Equipment

Visitors must wear PPE as required in PPE as required in MOH's COVID-19 Guidance for Retirement Homes for PHUs:

Essential Visitors

Essential Visitors are responsible for bringing their own PPE to comply with requirements outlined in MOH's COVID-19 Guidance: LTCH/RH/CLS for PHUs. Rubidge may provide access to PPE to Essential Visitors if they are unable to acquire

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

PPE independently, including to medical (surgical/procedure) masks, eye protection (e.g., face shields or goggles) and any additional PPE when providing care to residents who are isolating on Droplet and Contact Precautions. Rubidge will intervene and reinforce appropriate uses of PPE if improper practices are alleged or observed. Essential Visitors must also follow staff reminders and coaching on proper use of PPE.

General Visitors and Personal Care Service Providers

General Visitors and Personal Care Service Providers must wear a medical mask for indoor visits and should either bring their own mask or may provided one by Rubidge. General Visitors are not required to wear a mask while outdoors.

Rubidge will intervene and reinforce appropriate uses of PPE if improper practices are alleged or observed. General Visitors must also follow staff reminders and coaching on proper use of PPE.

Masking

Indoors

- Rubidge must ensure that staff, students and volunteers wear a medical mask for the duration of their shift indoors.
- Rubidge must ensure that visitors wear a medical mask for the duration of their visit in indoor common areas. Visitors may remove their masks if they are visiting in a resident's room.
- Besides being outside of a high-risk exposure, an outbreak or any advice and direction from a PHU, there is no requirement for residents to wear a mask inside Rubidge. However, Rubidge will ensure that its policies encourage residents to wear or be assisted to wear a medical mask when receiving direct care from staff, when in common areas with other residents (exception of meal times), and when receiving a visitor, as tolerated.
- Masking requirements set out in this section must be applied to social gatherings, organized events, communal dining, recreational activities, and tours. Visitors who accompany a resident for meals may remove their mask when seated at the table with the resident.

Outdoors

- Masks are not required outdoors for staff, residents, students, volunteers or visitors. However, masks are still recommended as an added layer of protection when in close proximity to others.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Exemptions

- Exceptions to the masking requirements include:
 - Children who are younger than two years of age;
 - Any individual (staff, student, volunteer, visitor, or resident) who is being accommodated in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 or the Ontario Human Rights Code; or
 - If entertainment provided by a live performer requires the removal of their mask to perform their talent.
- Rubidge will have procedures for individuals (staff, students, volunteers, visitors, or residents) who:
 - Have a medical condition that inhibits their ability to wear a mask; or
 - Are unable to put on or remove their mask without assistance from another person.

Eye Protection

From an occupational health and safety perspective, regardless of their COVID-19 vaccination status, appropriate eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield) is required for all staff and Essential Visitors when providing care to residents with suspect or confirmed COVID-19. In all other circumstances, the use of eye protection is based on the point-of-care risk assessment when within 2 metres of a resident.

Screening

Passive Screening means that those entering Rubidge will review screening questions themselves, and there is no verification or attestation of screening required by staff (e.g., signage at entrances as a visual reminder not to enter if symptomatic).

Active Screening means there is some manner of attestation or confirmation of screening. The confirmation or attestation can be in person or through a pre-arrival online screening submission that is verified by staff prior to entry.

Anyone entering Rubidge is required to participate in **passive screening**, independently, prior to entry. Active screening is not required.

- Rubidge will communicate to staff, students, volunteers, and visitors that they are not to enter Rubidge if they are feeling ill or would fail screening (e.g., they have tested positive in the last 10 days or are symptomatic)

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

- Rubidge has posted signage that lists the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for self monitoring and steps that must be taken if COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed.

Daily Symptom Assessment of Residents

Rubidge will ensure that all residents are assessed at least once daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, as part of its regular daily monitoring of residents. Temperature checks are not required as part of the assessment. However, daily temperature checks are still recommended for residents who are symptomatic, COVID-19 cases, and close contacts as per the MOH's COVID19 Guidance: LTCH/RH/CLS for PHUs.

Rubidge is aware that elderly individuals may present subtle or atypical signs and symptoms of COVID-19. As much as possible, it is important for staff to understand a resident's baseline health and functioning and ensure routine monitoring of their status to facilitate early identification and management of ill residents. Any resident who presents with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 must be immediately isolated, placed on Additional Precautions and tested for COVID-19 as per the Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario.

Social Gatherings and Organized Events

Rubidge is no longer required to keep attendance records for social gatherings, organized events, and other recreational activities, unless directed to do so by their PHU during an outbreak.

Social gatherings and organized events include activity classes, performances, religious services, movie nights, and other recreational and social activities (e.g., bingo, games). Social gatherings and organized events are permitted at all times unless otherwise advised by the local PHU. Rubidge will maintain activities which promote resident strength, mobility, and mental health to mitigate resident health from deteriorating.

Participants of social gatherings and organized events are subject to the masking protocols. Residents who are in isolation or experiencing signs and symptoms of COVID-19 must not engage in social gatherings or organized events until they are no longer experiencing symptoms and have been cleared from isolation. Rubidge will offer residents in isolation individualized activities and social stimulation.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Communal Dining

- Unless otherwise advised by the local PHU, communal dining is permitted at all times with the following public health measures in place:
 - Participants of communal dining are subject to masking requirements.
 - Frequent hand hygiene is recommended for staff, residents, and visitors.
- Rubidge will ensure that residents who are experiencing signs and symptoms of COVID-19 do not participate in communal dining until the resident has tested negative for COVID-19, is no longer symptomatic and has been cleared from isolation. This must not interfere with providing a meal during the scheduled mealtime to the resident.

Note: PHU has discretion to pause communal dining and activities in a Rubidge wide outbreak, based on severity and risk of transmission.

Rubidge Tour Requirements

Prospective residents may be offered in-person, targeted tours of suites at any time unless otherwise advised by the PHU. These tours must adhere to the following precautions:

- All tour participants are subject to the General Visitor screening and masking requirements.
- Tours may continue during an outbreak; however, outbreak areas should be avoided.

Discontinuation of Visits

Non-compliance with Rubidge's policies could result in the discontinuation of visits for the non-compliant visitor when risk of harm from continual non-compliance is considered too high. Refusal of entry will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the General Manager.

Rubidge will endeavor to provide the necessary education, information and awareness to ensure visitor compliance.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Complaints Process

Should a visitor have a complaint about the administration of Rubidge's visiting policy, they may contact the General Manager by phone at 705-748-4000 or email ehewitt@rubidge.ca and the complaint will be responded to in a timely manner. If your concern is not resolved to your satisfaction with Rubidge's management, visitors may contact the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) by email (info@rhra.ca) and/or phone (1-855-275-7472).

Accessibility Considerations

Rubidge will meet all applicable laws such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Appendices

Appendix A - COVID-19 Information

Appendix B - Visitor Screening Tool

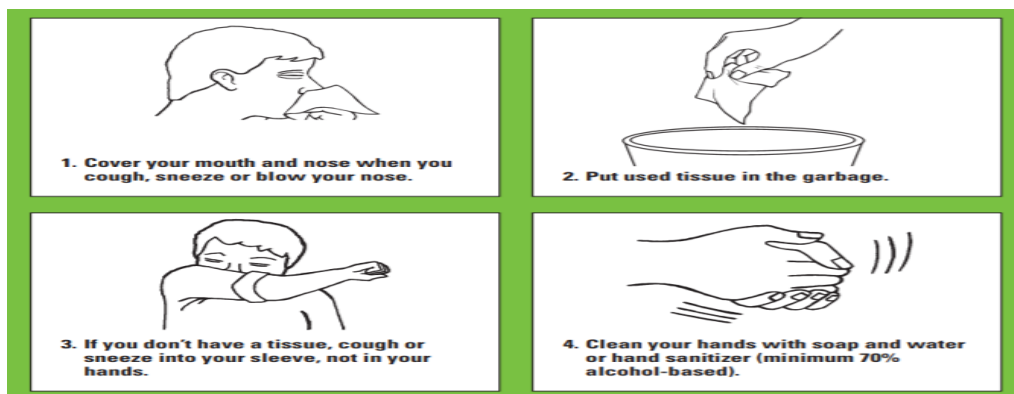
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|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Appendix A COVID-19 Information

Respiratory Etiquette

It is important to help reduce the spread of illnesses by using proper respiratory etiquette. This means that instead of covering your mouth with your hands when coughing or sneezing, use your sleeve or a tissue. This reduces the number of germs on your hands, though it is still important to wash your hands after coughing and sneezing.

Respiratory etiquette must be practiced during all visits on Rubidge's property to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.



Following these steps is important:

1. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose.
2. Put used tissue in the garbage.
3. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not in your hand.
4. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is a general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and running water.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Touching your eyes, nose or mouth without cleaning your hands or sneezing or coughing into your hands may provide an opportunity for germs to get into your body. Keeping your hands clean through good hygiene practice is one of the most important steps to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Prior to beginning each visit with a resident, visitors must perform hand hygiene. Additionally, any time your hands become soiled for any reason during the visit, you must perform hand hygiene. Wash or sanitize your hands at the end of the visit as well.

A. Handwashing

Handwashing with soap and running water, as opposed to using hand sanitizer, must be done when hands are visibly soiled. Hand hygiene with soap and water – done correctly – removes organisms.

Follow these steps for hand washing: (hand wash for at least 15 seconds)

1. Wet hands with warm water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Lather soap and rub between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, under nails.
4. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands well with paper towel.
6. Turn taps off with paper towel.

B. Hand Sanitizing

Hand sanitizers are very useful when soap and water are not available. When your hands are not visibly dirty, then a 70-90% alcohol-based hand sanitizer/rub should be used. It has been shown to be more effective than washing with soap (even using an antimicrobial soap) and water when hands are *not* visibly soiled.

Hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand sanitizer – correctly applied – kills organisms in seconds.



| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

It is important when using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to apply sufficient product such that it will remain in contact with the hands for a minimum of 15 seconds before the product becomes dry.

Follow these steps for sanitizing your hands: (rub hands for at least 15 seconds)

1. Apply 1-2 pumps of product to palms of dry hands.
2. Rub hands together, palm to palm, between and around fingers, back of hands, fingertips, under nails.
3. Rub hands until product is dry. Do not use paper towels.
4. Once dry, your hands are clean.



Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Practices

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) refers to evidence-based practices and procedures that, when applied consistently in health care settings, can prevent or reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms to residents, staff and visitors.

All visitors must follow Rubidge's infection and prevention control protocols (IPAC), including proper use of masks.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |



| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |



| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

Appendix B – Visitor Screening Tool

COVID-19 ACTIVE SCREENING TOOL – VISITORS

Please have the visitor answer the following questions:

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| 1. | <p>In the last 10 days, have you experienced any of the following symptoms that are new or worsening, and not related to other known causes or conditions that you already have.</p> <p>Select "No" if all of these apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since your symptoms began, you tested negative for COVID-19 on one PCR test or rapid molecular test or two rapid antigen tests taken 24 to 48 hours apart; and You do not have a fever; and <p>Your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if you have nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea).</p> | | | |
| | <p>Do you have one or more of the following symptoms?</p> | Yes | No | |
| | Fever and/or chills - <i>Temperature of 37.8° Celsius/100° Fahrenheit or higher</i> | | | |
| | Cough or barking cough (croup) - <i>Not related to asthma, post-infectious reactive airways, COPD, or other known causes or conditions you already have</i> | | | |
| | Shortness of breath - <i>Not related to asthma or other known causes or conditions you already have</i> | | | |
| | Decrease or loss of smell or taste - <i>Not related to seasonal allergies, neurological disorders, or other known causes or conditions you already have</i> | | | |
| | Sore throat Painful or difficulty swallowing (not related to post-nasal drip, acid reflux, or other known causes or conditions you already have). | | | |
| | Runny or stuff/congested nose Not related to seasonal allergies, being outside in cold weather, or other known causes or conditions you already have. | | | |
| | Headache New, unusual, long-lasting (not related to tension-type headaches, chronic migraines, or other known causes or conditions you already have. If you received a COVID-19 and/or flu vaccination in the last 48 hours and are experiencing a headache that only began after vaccination, select "NO") | | | |
| | Fatigue, lethargy, malaise and/or myalgias - <i>Unusual tiredness, lack of energy (not related to depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, or other known causes or conditions you already have)</i> If you received a COVID-19 vaccine in the last 48 hours and are experiencing mild fatigue that only began after vaccination, select "No." | | | |
| | Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea - <i>Not related to irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety, menstrual cramps, or other known causes or conditions you already have</i> | | | |
| 2. | <p>In the last 10 days (regardless of whether you are currently self-isolating or not), have you been identified as a "close contact" of someone (regardless of whether you live with them or not) who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19?</p> | Yes | No | |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY | SECTION: F – COVID 19 |
| POLICY NO: F-2 | RHA REGULATION: |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020 | REVISED DATE: March 2023 |

| | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 3. | <p>In the last 10 days (regardless of whether you are currently self-isolating or not), have you tested positive for COVID-19, including on a rapid antigen test or a homebased self-testing kit?</p> <p>If you have since tested negative on a lab-based PCR test, select “NO”</p> | Yes | No |
| 4. | <p>Have you been told you that you should currently be quarantining, isolating, staying at home, or not attending a highest risk setting (e.g., LTCH or RH)?</p> <p>Could include being told by a doctor, health care provider, public health unit, federal border agent, or other government authority.</p> <p>Please note: there are federal requirements (https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid) for individuals who travelled outside of Canada, even if exempt from quarantine.</p> | Yes | No |