

SUBJECT: COVID-19-Protocols for Resident Absences	SECTION: Environment-Infection Control-Pandemic
POLICY NO: E-ICP9	RHRA-27
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 22, 2021	REVIEWED/REVISED DATE: July 20, 2021

### Introduction

St. Andrew's Residence will allow residents to leave the property for short absences within the parameters outlined in this document, provided all requirements are met.

If anything in this policy conflicts with applicable legislation or regulations or any other provincial requirements, those requirements prevail, and retirement homes must follow all applicable provincial legislation, regulations and requirements.

On May 20, 2021, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, announced its [Roadmap to Reopen \(O. Reg 344/21\)](#), a three-step plan to reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures based on the province wide vaccination rate and improvements in key public health and health care indicators.

The Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) has confirmed that beginning at midnight on Friday, July 16, 2021, residents are allowed to leave their homes for the day for social outings, and temporary absences that involve two or more days and one or more nights away from the home regardless of immunization status.

For the purposes of this document, an individual is considered fully immunized when they have received the total number of required doses of a vaccine approved by Health Canada and it has been at least 14 days since they received their final dose.

### Requirements for Absences:

For all types of absences, residents must be provided with a medical mask free of charge if they are unable to source one and reminded to practice public health measures, such as physical distancing and hand hygiene, while they are away from the home. Additionally, all residents on an absence, regardless of type or duration of the absence, must be actively screened upon their return to the home.

### Types of Absences:

There are four types of absences:

1. **Medical Absences**- are absences that include, but are not limited to, absences for the purposes of visiting a dying loved one.
2. **Compassionate/palliative absences**-are absences that include, but are not limited to, absences for the purposes of visiting a dying loved one.
3. **Short term (day) absences**-can be split into:
  - a. **Essential outings**-absences for reasons of groceries, pharmacies, and outdoor physical activity; and
  - b. **Social outings**-absences other than for medical, compassionate/palliative, or essential outings that do not include an overnight stay outside of the home.
4. **Temporary (overnight) absences**-refer to absences that involve two or more days and one or more nights away from the home for non-medical purposes.

### Absence Requirements

In alignment with Directive #3, absences that are permitted at all times irrespective of immunization status include:

- A resident going for a walk either on or off the premises of the property belonging to the home.
- Medical or compassionate / palliative absences.
- Essential outings.
- Social outings

Residents are permitted to go on Essential Outings, including walks either on or off the premises, at all times except when that resident is self-isolating and on Droplet and Contact Precautions, or as directed by the local PHU.

Residents may not be permitted to start term (day) absences and Temporary absences if the resident is in an area of the home that is in outbreak, or when advised by public health.

The table below outlines requirements for short term (day) absences and temporary (overnight) absences.

Absences	Requirements
<p><b>Short term (day) absence</b></p> <p>Essential outing and Social Outing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permitted unless the resident is self-isolating</li> <li>- Residents must follow public Health measures during the absence</li> <li>- Active screening on return</li> <li>- Testing or self-isolation not required upon return</li> </ul>
<p><b>Temporary (overnight) absence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permitted unless the resident is self-isolating</li> <li>- Residents must follow public health measures during the absence</li> <li>- Active screening on return</li> <li>- <b>Fully immunized residents</b> do not require testing or self-isolation upon return</li> <li>- <b>Partially immunized or unimmunized residents</b> require a negative lab-based PCR test upon return to the home. The individual must be placed in isolation on Droplet and Contact Precautions if their test result is pending. If their test result is negative, isolation on Droplet and Contact Precautions can be discontinued.</li> </ul>

Homes cannot restrict or deny outings for medical, compassionate/palliative or essential reasons at any time. These absences are also the only type of absences that are permitted when:

- A resident is in isolation on Droplet and Contact Precautions (due to symptoms, exposure, and/or diagnosis of COVID-19);
- A resident has been newly admitted/readmitted to the home and is in isolation;
- A home is in an outbreak; and/or
- During times of local/provincial restrictions (e.g., stay at home order).

In these situations, the Residence must consult local public health for further advice.

**Expectations for Residents:**

1. The resident should try to give the Residence 24 hours' notice if able to do so by notifying Reception
2. The resident must add their name to the **Sign Out Book** when leaving the Residence.

3. If a family member or friend wishes to book a short absence with a resident, please call the Residence (519-354-8103 ext. 243) or follow this link:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040449A9A72FA6F94-resident1>.
4. Please click if you need to book a [Temporary Overnight Absence](#).
5. The resident **must pass active screening every time they re-enter** the Residence and also **confirm** that they are not experiencing any of the typical and atypical symptoms of COVID-19. Reception will keep a log of this information.
  - Active screening will include the following questions;
    - where the resident has been to facilitate contact tracing.
    - who the resident was with or visited while they were out.

The resident must adhere to the safe physical guidelines while outside of the Residence at all times.

- Hand Hygiene is to be practiced frequently while out and upon return to the residence.
- The resident must **wear a face covering/mask while outside the residence**. Cloth masks are acceptable.
  - The Residence will supply face covering/masks for short absences.

### References and Related Policy and Procedures:

1. [Information Package for Visitors](#)
2. [Retirement Homes Policy to Implement Directive # 3](#)
3. [Ministry of Health \(MOH\) Directive #3](#)
4. [Ref. Infection Prevention and Control Section]
5. [Ref. E-ICP3 COVID-19]
6. [Ref. E-ICP4 Outbreak protocol for COVID-19]
7. [Ref. E-ICP5-Resident Transfer To/From Hospital During a Pandemic]

Date	Revision	Effective
Dec. 9, 2020	Reference to PHU Response Levels and update links	Dec. 11, 2020
May 21, 2021	Policy renamed-removed Short Stay. Policy rewritten to follow the new Directive # 3 and RHRA recommendation made on May 20, 2021	May 21, 2021
July 21, 2021	Policy updated to follow the new Directive # 3. Added the ability of residents to go out for overnight absences.	July 23, 2021

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