



Healthcare Facilities Visitation Policy

Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), is recommending that all healthcare facilities consider implementing visitor restrictions. This recommendation is made in response to the increasing number of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 globally, the patients diagnosed in Rhode Island, and the ongoing influenza respiratory illness season.

In light of the US Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention's (CDC) guidance, and in concert with infection control professionals, RIDOH has implemented a three-phase approach to visitation restrictions. Each level becomes increasingly more restrictive. It is the hope that upon recommendation of the Director of Health, all healthcare agencies will operate at the same level of visitor restriction (see attached).

Other considerations when implementing your facility-specific visitor policy might include:

- Single point or controlled access to the healthcare facility
- Visitor identification

The Director of Health recognizes that this policy may cause a hardship for patients and their families. We ask for patience and understanding as we take steps that we believe will help minimize the spread of both the seasonal flu and COVID-19.

Special circumstances may warrant case-by-case exceptions to these recommendations in an effort to meet the needs of the patient and their family while maintaining the health and safety of healthcare workers and the general public.

Senior leadership should be involved in the decision-making for any exception requests. If members of senior leadership have non-clinical questions related to the exception request, they should call the Center for Facilities Regulation at 401-222-2566. For questions about the clinical elements of the exception, they should call RIDOH's Center for Acute Infectious Disease Epidemiology (CAIDE) at 401-222-2577 Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m. (after hours and on weekends: 401-276-8046).

These restrictions may change as more information becomes available during this evolving and dynamic COVID-19 response.

Effective Today, March 5, 2020: Visitor Restriction Recommendation is Level 1.

Visitor Restrictions are in Place in this Location

LEVEL 1 - Reducing visitation to protect vulnerable populations

Anyone who meets the conditions listed below are restricted from visiting staff or patients in the facility:

- Under the age of 18 years
- Feeling sick or having any of these symptoms:
 - Cough
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Runny nose
 - Stuffy nose
 - Sore throat

LEVEL 2 - Limiting visiting hours

For healthy individuals, visiting hours are now limited to a single three-hour block in the morning and again in the evening.

Anyone who meets the conditions listed below remain restricted from visiting staff or patients in the facility:

- Individuals in the categories below are prohibited from visiting at all.
 - Under the age of 18 years
- Feeling sick or having any of these symptoms:
 - Cough
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Runny nose
 - Stuffy nose
 - Sore throat

LEVEL 3 – No visitation allowed other than those essential to care and who are free of the exclusion criteria in Levels 1 and 2.

Caution: Individuals with underlying serious health conditions, although not strictly prohibited from visiting, may want to utilize an alternative mechanism to connect with the intended patient.