

Guidance for persons in quarantine visiting residents receiving end-of-life care

Revised 20 November 2020

This advice has been prepared to assist residential aged care facilities, hospitals, hospices and shared disability accommodation services manage visits to residents/patients receiving end-of-life care from persons who are in government mandated quarantine because of travel from an area affected by COVID-19.

From 3 November 2020 a person from a COVID-19 hotspot or an overseas arrival can enter a residential aged care facility, hospital, hospice or shared disability accommodation service for an end-of-life visit if they have been given exemptions to:

- enter Queensland for an end-of-life visit under the
 - [Border Restrictions Direction \(No. 17\)](#) or its successor; or
 - [Self-quarantine for Persons Arriving in Queensland From Overseas Direction \(No. 6\)](#) or its successor

AND

- leave the end-of-life visit and return to their quarantine.

Both exemptions need to have been granted by the Chief Health Officer, Deputy Chief Health Officer or delegate. The operator of an aged care facility, shared disability accommodation service or hospice also must give permission for the end-of-life visit to occur; however, this does not apply to hospitals.

These visitors must comply with all the conditions given under the exemptions, which can be applied for on the [Queensland Health website](#).

For more information on the relevant Public Health Directions, visit the Queensland Health website:

- [Aged Care Direction \(No. 13\)](#)
- [Hospital Visitors Direction \(No. 7\)](#)
- [Disability Accommodation Services Direction \(No. 5\)](#)

Assumptions

People who are in quarantine are not confirmed to have COVID-19. However, they are at some risk of developing COVID-19 during their period of quarantine. Therefore, the precautions required for these visits should be determined prior to the visit(s) and strictly adhered to. Evidence of a negative COVID-19 test does not override these precautions; they must continue to be applied.

The advice in relation to people with **confirmed** COVID-19 infection is different. People who have COVID-19 should **not** be permitted into the facility until they have been released from isolation by the local public health unit.

This advice assumes that the:

- visitor does not have any symptoms of COVID-19

- visitor entering the facility has been granted an exemption to enter Queensland and to leave and return to their quarantine for the purpose of visiting the resident/patient of the facility
- facility and treating doctor are prepared to support the visit with infection control measures in place to minimise COVID-19 transmission risk
- visitor travels to the facility in a private vehicle, taxi or rideshare, wears a surgical mask and practices good hand and respiratory hygiene for the duration of the trip. Where a taxi or rideshare is used, the visitor must sit in the back seat diagonally from the driver, wear a mask and keep the windows down (weather permitting).
- visitor wears the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the duration of their visit to the facility. Refer PPE section for more detail.

Requirements

COVID-19 is spread by contaminated respiratory droplets either directly or indirectly via the environment from one person to another. Any measures taken to allow a quarantined person to enter the facility are designed to reduce the chance that they unknowingly spread the virus that causes COVID-19.

Prior to entry a person should be assessed for symptoms of COVID-19. If they display any symptoms, they should not enter and the local Public Health Unit (PHU) should be advised that they are symptomatic.

A person in quarantine who is planning to visit a residential aged care or other care facility must be able to:

- understand when and how to perform hand hygiene appropriately at the appropriate times
- don and doff a surgical mask and dispose of it safely
- be able to wear a surgical mask correctly and keep it on for the duration of the visit
- maintain physical distancing
- practice appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette.

The facility should:

- ensure the quarantined visitor is escorted when they are in the facility by a member of staff who is able to assist with PPE and ensure that the visitor does not come within 1.5 metres of anyone else
- ensure, where practicable, that the person enters the facility by an alternative entrance, e.g. not used by the public and not busy with staff
- ensure that the visitor avoids touching the environment unnecessarily. The member of staff escorting the visitor should open doors and press elevator buttons etc. from the point of entry through to the resident's/patient's room.
- ensure that the most direct route through the facility to the resident/patient is taken
- ensure the person who is being visited is in a single room and the visitor remains in the room for the duration of their visit
- assist the visitor with safe removal and disposal of the surgical mask and then escort the visitor out of the facility

- clean and disinfect the environment, including the room and any bathroom that was used by the visitor, after the visitor has left **and** before it is used by anybody else.

PPE

The visitor is required to wear a surgical mask at all times while in the facility. Additional precautions, e.g. wearing a gown, may be requested at the facility's discretion. Visitors should perform hand hygiene on entering and exiting the facility and the patient's room and at other times as appropriate or requested. Hand hygiene can be performed by using alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and running water.

The escort should wear a surgical mask when they are with the visitor. and should remain 1.5 metres away from the visitor. Hands should be cleaned after escorting the visitor to the patient's room.

Other considerations

In consideration of the mental well-being of the visitor and the resident/patient, the visitor should be allowed to visit in line with the facility's visitor policy for those receiving end-of-life care. Where this policy allows for overnight stays, this should be accommodated if practicable. For this to occur the resident/patient should be in a single room with an unshared ensuite and the door to the room closed. Alternatively, the visitor should be allowed to visit as often as circumstances allow.

The return to quarantine accommodation should be done in the same manner as transport to the facility – in a private vehicle, taxi or rideshare, wearing a surgical mask and practising good hand and respiratory hygiene for the duration of the trip.