

**Policies and Procedures during COVID 19**  
**Washington State LTC Ombudsman Program**



**VISTITING LTC RESIDENTS**

**Section 2.0 Preparing for a visit**

Prior to visiting a LTC facility, Ombuds must:

1. Be aware that you must obtain “same-day, prior approval” by your supervisor on the day of visitation. (This will be explained in Section 2.1).
2. Contact the facility to introduce or reintroduce yourself to the administrator. This is part of your preparation to re-entry.
3. Determine the current COVID-19 activity in the facility. Please check for the most current information on COVID activity in facilities by visiting the DSHS website at: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/famhelp-facility-status-and-information>
4. Check with your supervisor to learn about recent COVID activity. Information changes daily.
5. Communicate with the Facility in advance or upon arrival. Coordinate with your supervisor as to who will communicate with the facility administrator (will it be you or program staff?) to ask for the following information:
  - a. What is the facility’s wellness screening process?
  - b. Is it okay for you to wear goggles and a face mask? Or do they require face shields with face masks?
  - c. A printed Resident Roster for the day. If you are visiting an AFH, a handwritten roster is OK.
  - d. What is the current COVID activity in the building and where are the residents cohorted or located in the building? The names and room numbers for all residents who are currently positive for COVID, or are assumed positive for COVID. This information is to be kept confidential and secured when not in use. Old rosters can be turned into your supervisor.
  - e. What type of signage is being used? Is the facility using any special “symbols” to identify the restricted areas?
  - f. What is the layout of the facility or home? Request a facility map. Nursing homes and assisted living facilities may be more likely to have a map available than an Adult Family Home.
  - g. Is there a visiting area outdoors to meet with residents? What are the PPE requirements for outdoor visits?
  - h. What is the facility’s window visit policy? Is there an option to meet with residents by window?

- i. Does the facility have a designated area for visiting residents, instead of the resident's room? Is the area for visiting disinfected between meetings?
- j. Is there anything else the facility would like you to know before you arrive?

## **2.1 Same-Day Prior Approval and LTCOP Self-Screening and Affirmation Form**

There are two requirements for visitation that must occur on the day of visitation:

1. The ombuds must self-screen and affirm the form on the day they plan to enter.
2. The ombuds must submit the form to their supervisor, who must review their answers, and approve the visit. All on the same day.

Complete the LTCOP "Self- Screening and Affirmation" form. (See the following page). Every ombuds must submit the form to their supervisor on the same day as the visit to the facility, in order to obtain same-day prior approval to visit.

**If an ombuds has symptoms of COVID-19, or does not pass the self-assessment, they are not allowed to visit with residents, indoors or outdoors.**

Once you have completed the "Self- Screening and Affirmation" form you can submit it through the LTCOP website private portal at [www.waombudsman.org](http://www.waombudsman.org). Or by email to your local program (your supervisor will give you instructions as which email address to use). They will be advised to contact their doctor and local public health jurisdiction for instructions. When finished, the ombuds must submit the form to a program supervisor for approval. Regional LTC Ombuds must turn in their screening form to the State LTCOP.

The self-screening must be completed and approved on the same day and prior to your visit to the facility. Verbal affirmation over the phone is acceptable.

If you require assistance with the form, please contact your supervisor.

## **Section 2.2 Screening for COVID by the Facility**

Once you enter the building, you will be screened for COVID by the facility, per their policies. Do not enter resident rooms and common areas until you have passed the facility screening. As a LTC Ombuds you are NOT subject to COVID-19 testing, but you should complete the facility's screening process.

Ombuds must always wear a face mask when they enter the facility and keep it on until exiting. Once you are in the building, show your Ombuds ID certification card and your badge. Leave your business card with front desk staff or the administrator.

You must sign the facility visitor's log. Completing the log is required for contact tracing.

If the facility doesn't screen you as required, do not enter resident areas. Instead, step outside the facility and call your supervisor for guidance. All visitors are required to be screened.



## SECTION 2.3 Understanding Precautions for COVID-19 in Long-term Care Facilities

1. Ombuds are restricted from meeting with residents who have tested positive for COVID or are suspected to have COVID-19. It is important for ombuds to be informed about which areas of the facility are designated for residents who are positive for COVID19, areas that are designated for residents who are presumed positive and those who have tested negative. This is known as “Cohorting”.
2. Ombuds must document the names of who they visited while in the facility by using the attached “Visitation Log” form. Turn in the form to your supervisor with your monthly activity report.
3. At this time, Volunteer ombuds shall not visit more than one facility in a day. Staff ombuds and supervisors may need to visit more than one facility in a day, and should take precautions for cross-contamination. This policy may change in the future.
4. Ombuds should try to visit during weekdays, during normal business hours (between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.) If an ombuds needs to make a visit outside of normal business hours, the ombuds must obtain permission in-advance from the State LTC Ombuds, Patricia Hunter can be reached at [stateombuds@multi-servicecenter.com](mailto:stateombuds@multi-servicecenter.com) or by cell phone at (253)263-6573. Or the Ombuds can make the request through their supervisor. This policy may change in the future.
5. Ombuds should limit the amount of time spent in any one resident’s room and practice social-distancing the entire time. Social distancing means to be at least 6 feet from others at all times. This is to reduce the risk of transmission. Prepare to make the most of your time with each resident. It may be difficult to limit your time, especially with residents who have not had visitors for so long. However, for your health and safety as well as the resident’s you must be prepared to end visits with a firm but kind statement.
6. Ombuds may visit multiple residents within a facility, at this time, while being aware of restricted areas in the building. Ombuds may participate in resident or family councils but only by wearing proper PPE, maintaining social distance and following infection control precautions (frequent hand hygiene).
7. Follow the facility’s policy on doffing (taking off) your PPE. Follow the CDC guidelines for infection control steps for properly removing your PPE. Disposable masks can be placed in the garbage. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for disinfecting of face-shields and goggles, and storage.
8. To avoid cross-contamination, ombuds can obtain resident permission verbally as long as the ombuds documents it in writing on the program disclosure and permission form (include the date, time, name of ombuds, and the ombuds initials.). Ombuds must provide a copy of the permission form to the resident.

## **2.4 Ombuds Readiness Checklist**

The following checklist tool is for ombuds to use in their preparation for visiting a resident. The list is for your own use. If you answer “yes” to all of the questions, you are ready to make a visit. If you have questions or want assistance, please contact your supervisor. This checklist is for your own use and we encourage you to use it before every visit.

See following page for sample form.

## LTC Ombuds Personal Readiness Check List for Visiting Residents

I have completed the required reading and review of policies and training?  YES or  NO

I have collected or received information about (recent) COVID activity in the facility from the DSHS website, and/or communicated with my supervisor or spoke with facility administrator?

YES or  NO

Completed the "Self-Assessment and Affirmation Form" on the day of visitation?  YES or  NO

Approval to visit received from my supervisor on the day of visit?  YES or  NO

PPE Toolkit supplies are ready:

- Assembled my face shield and followed manufacturer's instructions.  YES or  NO
- Have two types of masks, cloth and medical surgical masks.  YES or  NO
- Hand sanitizer.  YES or  NO
- Practiced donning and doffing PPE according to CDC guideline.  YES or  NO
- Baggies for separating clean and dirty items.  YES or  NO
- Disinfectant for cleaning items.  YES or  NO

I (or my supervisor) communicated with the facility administrator about Ombuds visits.

YES or  NO

I have the following items prepared and with me:

- Memo for Ombuds Authority to enter facilities- have a few copies on hand.  YES or  NO
- Business cards and program brochures?  YES or  NO
- Ombuds Certification ID card?  YES or  NO
- Name badge?  YES or  NO
- Personal organizers and supplies- optional fanny pack or tote bag, notebook portfolio or notepads, pens, etc.  YES or  NO

I am prepared to speak with the facility administrator to request a resident roster, directions about COVID-19 positive residents and areas that are for Cohorting of positive or presumed positive residents?

YES or  NO

LTCOP VISITOR LOG

Date:

Name of the facility:

Name of Ombuds:

Ombuds Phone number:

Resident Name	Room #
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6	

07.28.2020

This form is confidential and the property of the WA State LTC Ombudsman Program

## Resources for COVID-19 Activity in Washington State LTC Facilities

### Facilities with Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 – Department of Health and Social Services

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/famhelp-facility-status-and-information>

A list of skilled nursing homes and assisted living facilities reports confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff and/or residents. The list was developed from provider self-reporting and public reporting to Residential Care Services (RCS) Complaint Resolution Unit (CRU). Providers remain listed until RCS receives a report that the facility no longer has any confirmed cases of COVID-19.

DSHS cannot fully guarantee the accuracy nor the currency of this report. This is the best information available to DSHS and ALTSA. Please call the provider of interest for current status.

*Excerpt Example from the FAMHELP website:*

*Of note is a significant drop in the count on May 22. Long-term care facilities are asked to complete COVID-19 reporting surveys twice per week. Many facilities have reported that they are now free of known infections of COVID-19. These clearances were reviewed and confirmed during the week of May 15-22, and cleared facilities were dropped from the count. The count now reflects ALTSA's current understanding of facilities with confirmed reports of open COVID-19 cases.*

- [\(July 28, 2020\) - List of Skilled Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities with Confirmed Reports of Staff/Resident Case of COVID-19](#)

### COVID By County, Department of Health Risk Assessment Dashboard:

<https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/covid-19-risk-assessment-dashboard>

This dashboard provides an overview of data used to decide whether it's safe for a county to enter a new phase of reopening.

\*\*\*\*\*