

Health Services

Florida: In-Person Visitation Policy

“No Patient Left Alone Act”

A. Policy Statement:

It is the policy of Watermark Retirement Communities, LLC (WRC) and its affiliates to promote resident visitation, while maintaining prudent infection control practices in compliance with the regulations set forth in Chapter 408.823, Florida Statutes.

B. Procedure:

A resident may designate a visitor who is a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual as an Essential Caregiver. The following are the procedures to be followed relating to visitation and to identify Essential Caregivers for residents as well as the expectations of both General Visitors and Essential Caregivers. Essential Caregiver visitors provide emotional support to help a resident deal with a difficult transition or loss, upsetting event, making major medical decisions, needs cueing to eat and drink, stops speaking, or end-of-life ("Essential Caregiver"). At a minimum, the Community must allow an Essential Caregiver in-person visitation for at least 2-hours daily under the above referenced circumstances. The 2-hour visitation will be between 9:00a.m. – 9:00p.m. The Executive Director of the Community may make exceptions to the 2-hour visitation on a case-by-case basis.

All visitors who do not meet the requirements of an Essential Caregiver shall be considered General Visitors ("General Visitors").

I. For compliance with Florida Statute Chapter 408.823, designation and utilization of essential caregiver visitors and rules of visitation.

1. No visitor may be compelled to provide proof of vaccination status to gain entry for the purposes of visitation.
2. The community will provide the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) with a copy of the Community's visitor policy and procedure, with the initial licensure application, renewal application and/or change of ownership application.
3. The visitation policy and procedure for the Community, including Essential Caregiver designation and visitation, shall be available on the home page of Community website.
4. The Executive Director or Designee shall be responsible for infection prevention and control training.
5. The Executive Director may set a limit on the total number of visitors allowed in the Community at any given time based on the ability of staff to safely screen and monitor and the space to accommodate General Visitors and/or the Essential Caregiver visitors. Visitation by Essential Caregivers will always be allowed to occur. Efforts to continue General Visitation shall be made, and protocols shall be implemented along the lines of the following (when practical):

- a. Identify locations for visitation/care to occur planning for residents in shared spaces and facilities with minimal common space to identify maximum time availability.
 - b. Provide outdoor visitation spaces that are protected from weather elements, such as porches, courtyards, patios, or other covered areas that are protected from heat and sun, with cooling devices, if needed
 - c. Create indoor visitation spaces for residents in a room that is not accessible by other residents or in a resident's private room if the resident is bedbound and for health reasons cannot leave his or her room.
 - d. Visitors and residents may have close contact (including touch, hugs, assisting with activities of daily living, etc.) while both the visitor and the resident perform hand hygiene before and after contact and are wearing a well-fitted face mask with good filtration
6. All residents and/or POA/Guardian, if appropriate, will be asked if they want to identify an Essential Caregiver.
 7. All residents will be allowed to update as requested the named Essential Caregiver of record within 2 business days of request.
 8. Residents are allowed in-person visitation by the Essential Caregiver in all the following circumstances, unless the resident, client, or patient objects:
 - a) End-of-life situations.
 - b) A resident, client, or patient who was living with family before being admitted to the provider's care is struggling with the change in environment and lack of in- person family support.
 - c) The resident, client, or patient is making one or more major medical decisions.
 - d) A resident, client, or patient is experiencing emotional distress or grieving the loss of a friend or family member who recently died.
 - e) A resident, client, or patient needs cueing or encouragement to eat or drink which was previously provided by a family member or caregiver.
 - f) A resident, client, or patient who used to talk and interact with others is seldom speaking.
 9. The Community shall maintain a visitor log.
 10. No more than two Essential Caregiver visitors may be designated per resident.
 11. Essential Caregiver visitor visits may still continue even if the specific resident to be visited is quarantined or is showing symptoms of a communicable disease so long as the visits can be conducted safely, and all infection control protocols are followed by the Essential Caregiver and resident. Visits in these circumstances will likely require a higher level of PPE than standard surgical masks. The general visitation requirement that the facility has no new facility-onset cases of a communicable disease is not applicable to visitation by Essential Caregiver visitors.

12. Essential Caregiver visitors must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) per Community's Infection Control Policies. The PPE required must be consistent with the most recent CDC guidance for healthcare workers.
13. General Visitors must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) per the Community's Infection Control Policies at the time of their visit.
14. Any changes to this Community's Essential Caregiver visitor policies must be promptly communicated to affected residents and Essential Caregiver visitors.
15. Executive Director or designee shall be responsible for staff and visitor compliance with this policy and procedure.

II. To facilitate visits by General Visitors and Essential Caregiver visitors upon a request from a resident or friend/family member:

1. The resident (or their representative) will read and sign the visitation policy and procedures. The acknowledgement of the signature represents that the resident (or their representative) understands that both General Visitors and Essential Caregiver visitor must abide by the policies set forth in this document.
2. The Essential Caregiver visitor will sign an acknowledgement of their receipt and understanding of the visitation policies and procedures. The Essential Caregiver's signature represents that they have received the policies and procedures, they understand the policies and procedures, and they agree to abide by said policies and procedures.
3. The visitor will complete training on infection prevention and control including the use of PPE, use of masks, hand sanitation, and social distancing when requested by community due to residents infectious status or community outbreak status.
4. The Essential Caregiver visitor must immediately inform the facility if they develop symptoms consistent with a communicable disease within 24-hours of their last visit at the facility.
5. Essential Caregiver visits may take place in the resident's room or a designated area determined by the Executive Director at the time the visitation scheduled is developed and agreed upon.
6. General Visitor visits may take place in accordance with the infection control protocols at the time of the visit.

III. When an Essential Caregiver visitor is scheduled to visit, the Community will:

1. The Community designee will thoroughly screen the visitor per the Community's infection control policy and procedure. Just as with staff entering the building, if the visitor fails the screening, the visitor CANNOT be allowed entry.
2. The Executive Director will ensure that the required consents, and training and policy acknowledgements are in place.

3. The Community designee will ensure that the Essential Caregiver visitor has appropriate PPE if applicable.
4. The Community designee will require the Essential Caregiver visitor to sign in and out on the visitor tracking system.
5. The Community staff will monitor the Essential Caregiver visitor's adherence to policies and procedures.
6. If the Essential Caregiver visitor fails to follow the Community's infection prevention and control requirements, after attempts to mitigate concerns, the Executive Director shall restrict or revoke visitation.
7. In the event the Essential Caregiver visitor's status is revoked due to the individual following the Community's policy and procedures, the resident may select a different Essential Caregiver visitor who will be granted visitation rights upon proper vetting and agreeing to policies and procedures.

IV. When a General Visitor is scheduled to visit, the Community will:

1. The Community designee will require the General visitor to adhere to screening requirements consistent with posted signage. This guidance requires reporting of symptoms of illness, exposure to illness, or positive testing for known illness, and delay of visitation until illness episode concludes.
2. The Community designee will ensure that the General Visitor has appropriate PPE (if applicable).
3. The Community designee will require the General Visitor to sign in and out on the visitor tracking system.
4. The Community designee will notify the General Visitor of any restrictions in place relating to visitation, or requirements relating to infection control, at that time of the visit.
5. The Community staff will monitor the General Visitor's adherence to policies and procedures.
6. If the General Visitor fails to follow the Community's infection prevention and control requirements, after attempts to mitigate concerns, the Executive Director shall restrict or revoke visitation.

C. Definitions:

Essential Caregiver - *Visitors providing emotional support to help a resident deal with a difficult transition or loss, upsetting event, making major medical decisions, needs cueing to eat and drink, stops speaking, or end-of-life.*

General Visitor - *All visitors who do not meet the requirements of an Essential Caregiver shall be considered General Visitors.*