

SA Health **Fact Sheet**

Keeping COVID Safe during the festive season

Important: This information is current as of **10 December 2021**

To protect aged care residents, staff and others from the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the State Coordinator has made a Direction under the Emergency Management Act 2004 to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in residential aged care facilities (RACF). For more information about the current Aged Care Direction, visit www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/emergency-declarations/aged-care.

This fact sheet aims to assist operators of RACF to comply with the requirements of the Direction while supporting residents and their families to enjoy the festive season. If circumstances change in South Australia, new Directions or restrictions may be imposed.

Visitor limits

In RACF where less than 70% of residents have received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, visits for the purpose of providing care and support to a resident (e.g. family and friends) are limited to a maximum of two visitors per day. This may be two visits of one person each time, or one visit of two people together.

In RACF where 70% or more of residents are vaccinated against COVID-19 (with at least a first dose), there are no restrictions on either the number of visitors a resident may receive or the duration visits.

Functions and activities during the festive season

Aged care homes can hold functions and other festive activities for residents, families and volunteers, noting that visitors must comply with the usual requirements of the Direction and any functions held on-site must align with the facility's approved COVID-19 Infection Control Plan.

Key principles

- > Everyone entering the RACF, including employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors, must check-in using COVID SAfe Check-In (QR Code) upon entry and show proof of their COVID-19 and influenza vaccination status. If they are not able to use the COVID Safe Check-In, they must sign in using a paper record.
- > All visitors should be screened upon entry based on the requirements of the current Direction using the [Visitor Screening Checklist](#).
- > Practice good hygiene – use alcohol-based hand sanitiser or wash hands regularly, and cover coughs or sneezes.
- > All staff and visitors over the age of 12 must wear a face mask (covering mouth and nose) at all times, except when eating and drinking.

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- > Visitors should keep 1.5 metres away from others where possible, in particular from other residents and members of other family groups.
- > The number of people in communal areas (e.g. dining rooms) must comply with the approved COVID-19 Infection Control Plan. Consider holding events outside or having a number of smaller events to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- > Residents, visitors, contractors and volunteers that are unwell must not attend any events.
- > Testing for COVID 19 amongst residents and staff should be sought if they develop any symptoms, no matter how mild

Performers and volunteers

People providing professional services and volunteers are permitted to attend a RACF, including people attending to provide performances for residents.

- > Performers should be made aware of entry requirements (e.g. requirement for influenza/COVID-19 vaccination) in advance.
- > Allow enough time to ensure all entry processes (screening check, signing in, verifying influenza/COVID-19 vaccination etc.) can be thoroughly undertaken.
- > Performers should maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres from residents, visitors and staff, where possible.
- > Events that include singing should be organised so there is adequate physical distancing and good ventilation.
- > All performers, staff, visitors and volunteers must wear masks (unless one of the exemptions applies).

Visits from Santa

- > Santa is subject to the same screening requirements upon entry as all other visitors, including mandatory COVID-19 and influenza vaccination requirements.
- > Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres from residents and other visitors, where possible.
- > Santa must wear a mask (unless one of the exemptions applies).
- > Ensure strict hand hygiene is observed — regular use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser may be the most convenient option

Cleaning

To reduce environmental contamination:

- > Provide regular reminders for staff, volunteers, performers, residents and visitors to follow hand hygiene practices throughout the event.
- > Provide hand sanitiser at appropriate locations such as entry and exit points and common areas.
- > Ensure high touch surfaces are wiped down throughout the event.
- > Plan for enhanced cleaning after the event.

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Christmas lights excursions

There are no restrictions on residents leaving the RACF, including excursions organised by the RACF such as bus trips to see Christmas lights. The following precautions are recommended:

- > Ensure the bus driver and any accompanying staff and/or volunteers undergo the usual COVID-19 screening processes and wear a mask.
- > Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres wherever possible, for example only one person per two-person seat.
- > Provide hand sanitiser for residents, staff (including the bus driver) and volunteers on entry and exit of the bus.
- > Ensure physical distancing is maintained if residents leave the bus to view the Christmas lights, and encourage them to wear masks in public places if possible.
- > Ensure no external groups enter the bus (for example, to sing to the residents).

Returning from external events

There are no restrictions on residents leaving the RACF to attend community events and family gatherings over the festive season.

All residents re-entering a RACF should undertake the usual [Screening Checklist for Residents](#) upon their return. If they indicate 'yes' to any identified risk factors, appropriate strategies should be put in place to mitigate any risks to other residents. Refer to the [COVID-19 Guideline for management in Residential Aged Care Facilities flowchart](#).

Further information

For further information, visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidagedcare.

For more information

Office for Ageing Well
Department for Health and Wellbeing
SA Health

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019

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www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons