

COVID-19 Fact Sheet

Information for Residential Aged Care Facilities

Guidelines for a Precautionary Response to a Community Outbreak

As part of their COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan (OMP), each Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) should identify a range of escalating prevention and response strategies based on the risk and severity of a potential COVID-19 outbreak.

The OMP should include the precautionary steps which need to be implemented in the event of a community outbreak. A community outbreak is defined as one or more positive COVID cases occurring in the general community (excluding cases being managed through medi-hotels and similar specialised COVID accommodation for returning travellers).

In the event of a community outbreak RACFs must act promptly to implement a comprehensive range of COVID-19 safeguards to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of residents and staff. Precautionary responses should be activated when a community outbreak is declared by the SA Public Health officials. There is no need to await the formal announcement of an upgraded *Emergency Management (Residential Aged Care Facilities COVID-19) Direction* or other Emergency Management Direction issued for the general South Australian community.

Safeguards and precautions

When a community COVID-19 outbreak occurs, the following safeguards are essential:

1. compliance with the relevant *Emergency Management (Residential Aged Care Facilities COVID-19) Direction* and other relevant *Emergency Management Direction* e.g. 'Stay at Home' Direction if in place;
2. compliance with relevant public health unit requirements;
3. compliance with instructions to quarantine as advised on the [SA Health contact tracing website](#);
4. if a resident or staff member subsequently is suspected or test positive for COVID-19, the RACF must implement their Outbreak Management Plan (OMP), including notification of relevant public health agencies and the Commonwealth Department of Health;
5. convene the Outbreak Management leadership group to determine the scope of the response, and the roles and responsibilities for implementation;
6. update entry signage;
7. undertake the detailed screening of staff and visitors to include all community alert locations named by SA Health;

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8. promptly advise the Communicable Disease Control Branch (1300 232 272) if any staff are quarantined by the RACF due to the SA Health contact tracing alerts;
9. commence contact tracing within the RACF of any staff who meet the SA Health contact tracing alerts;
10. strictly enforce infection control precautions, including social distancing and PPE within staff tea rooms;
11. ensure that visitor restrictions required under the *Emergency Management Direction* are in place, and that practices are aligned with the *Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged care Homes during COVID-19*;
12. communicate on a regular basis with residents, families and representatives about the escalated precautions;
13. commence strategies to maintain each resident's social connections;
14. communicate with staff about the additional measures;
15. review the workforce plan to prepare for potential quarantining or isolation of staff;
16. review the PPE inventory;
17. provide an infection control education refresher for staff and volunteers;
18. provide continuous monitoring of flu-like and respiratory symptoms in residents, staff and visitors;
19. commence increased cleaning in communal areas;
20. regularly audit compliance with the OMP, and evaluate its effectiveness;
21. monitor the SA Health website for updated outbreak information.

The following precautions should be considered:

22. suspension of resident outings (excluding for health emergencies) if warranted by risk assessments;
23. prior to the updated *Emergency Direction* being issued, promptly implement additional PPE wearing and restricted movement of staff between RACFs (single site);
24. implement 'containment zone' rosters to minimise the movement of staff across the RACF;
25. implement 'resident service and lifestyle zones' to minimise their movement across the RACF.

Aged care funders and regulators

Due to the risk to RACFs in the event of a community COVID-19 outbreak, the Commonwealth Department of Health and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will increase their support and monitoring of individual RACFs, particularly those located close to the community outbreak clusters. This may include on-site visits, phone calls, risk assessments, additional training and testing of staff and residents, if required. The focus by the Commonwealth in these instances will be on ensuring the RACF's have an effective outbreak management plan, are managing resident risk, assessing management capacity to implement IPC precautionary measures, monitoring staff IPC practices, and identifying the need for surge workforce.

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Further information

For information about any hotspots in South Australia, visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidcontacttracing.

For PPE guidelines for RACFs during a community outbreak visit the [Australian Government Department of Health website](http://www.health.gov.au).

For more information

Office for Ageing Well
Department for Health and Wellbeing
SA Health, Government of South Australia

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019

Version 1.0

