



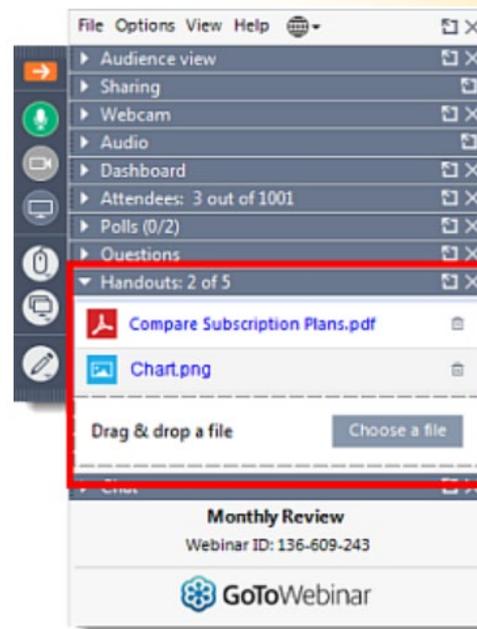
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**Welcome to the
ALF Provider
COVID-19 Webinar
with LTCR**

September 1, 2021

Handout

A pdf version of this presentation is available in the **Handout** section of your control panel. Save the file to your computer to view or print later.



ALF Portal

[ALF Provider Portal](#) - Find answers to most common questions

Resources and tools for ALFs:

- [COVID-19 Response Plan](#) Ver. 4.0
- COVID-19 Emergency Rules
 - [§553.2001](#) (eff. 8/6/21)
 - [§553.2003](#) (eff. 8/21/21)
 - [§553.2004](#) (eff. 7/9/21)
- Frequently Asked Questions
 - [ALF FAQ](#)
- [Provider Letters](#)



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COVID-19 Response Plan

Updated COVID-19 Response Plan for Assisted Living Facilities Available – Aug. 31

HHSC Long-term Care Regulation has published an updated version of the [COVID-19 Response Plan for Assisted Living Facilities \(PDF\)](#).

Make sure it is Version 4.0 revised 08/31/2021. Clear browser cache if needed.



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Updated §553.2001

HHSC LTCR has published a revised [ALF COVID-19 Response Emergency Rules \(PDF\)](#), for ALFs.

The updated rules require facilities to have policies and procedures regarding infection control and the use of PPE.

The rules also require a facility to screen residents for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at least once a day and upon admission or readmission.



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COVID-19 Reporting Process

REMINDER

ALFs are **only** required to report to HHSC Complaint and Incident Intake (CII) within 24 hours:

- a facility's first positive case of COVID-19 in a resident/staff member, **or**
- a new positive case of COVID-19 in a resident/staff member after a facility has been without a new case 14 days or longer.

Review [PL 2021-04 HHSC COVID-19 Reporting Process](#) for full policy details, provider responsibilities, and a decision tree on when to report.



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Updated §553.2003

HHSC Long-term Care Regulation has published revised [COVID-19 Response Expansion of Reopening Visitation Emergency Rules \(PDF\)](#), for assisted living facilities.

The rules address changes in response to Executive Order [No. GA-38 \(PDF\)](#) regarding facemasks and updated CDC guidance.

The rules are effective as of Aug. 21, 2021.



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Expansion of Reopening Visitation and Mitigation Response Rules

HHSC Publishes Guidance About Updated COVID-19 Emergency Rules for ALF Providers (PL 2021-31)

HHSC Long-term Care Regulation has published [Provider Letter 2021-31 \(replaces PL 2021-22\), COVID-19 Response – Expansion of Reopening Visitation and Mitigation Response Rules \(PDF\)](#).

This letter describes the requirements for visitation and mitigation in assisted living facilities.



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Key Changes

- All ALFs **must** offer a complete series of a one- or two-dose COVID-19 vaccine to residents/staff and document each resident's choice to vaccinate or not vaccinate.
- ALFs no longer submit attestation form or receive approved visitation designation and plexiglass barriers or booths no longer required for indoor visits.
- Visitors and residents are no longer required, by HHSC rule, to wear masks, face coverings or PPE.
- Visits no longer required to be scheduled in advance.



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Key Changes

<Continued>

- ALFs no longer required to have designated staff for each resident cohort (COVID-19 positive, COVID-19 negative, and unknown COVID-19 status).
- ALFs no longer required to keep a separate log for ECs or verify the identity of the EC at each visit.
- ALFs no longer required to maintain a separate record of salon visits or verify the identity of the salon services visitor at each visit.



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Expanded Visitation

ALFs **must** allow:

- Indoor visits
- Outdoor visits
- End-of-life visits
- Visits for persons providing critical assistance (including essential caregivers)



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Mask Guidance

Visitation rules continue to provide more flexibility, including:

- Visitors/residents not required to wear masks by HHSC rule
- ALF must develop and enforce policies/procedures that ensure infection control practices, including whether visitor/resident must wear a mask



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Scheduling Visits

- Visits no longer required to be scheduled in advance
- ALF can allow both scheduled and unscheduled visits
- Use of scheduled visits must not prohibit or limit visitation
- All visits must allow time for cleaning and sanitization



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Indoor Visitation

- Indoor visitation not limited to areas with a plexiglass barrier or booth.
- ALFs no longer required to submit attestation form or receive approved visitation designation.
- ALFs no longer required to have staff designated to work with only one resident cohort.
- ALFs must continue to have separate areas designated for COVID-19 positive, negative, and unknown status resident cohorts.



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Vaccination Status

ALF **must** offer a complete series of a one- or two-dose COVID-19 vaccine to residents and staff and document each resident's choice to vaccinate or not vaccinate.

"Offer":

Administer
or
Arrange/Assist
or
Educate/Give
Info

AND

Document the
resident's
choice to
vaccinate or
not vaccinate.



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Vaccination Status

An ALF may ask about a visitor's COVID-19 vaccination status but **must not** require a visitor to provide documentation of his/her vaccination status as a condition of visitation or to enter the facility.

A personal visitor may refuse to provide information about his/her vaccination status.



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Vaccination Status

Fully vaccinated:

Received the 2nd dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine

OR

Received one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine

AND

At least 14 days have passed since the person received the dose.



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Visitation Requirements

An ALF **must**:

- Develop and enforce policies and procedures ensuring infection control practices, including whether the visitor/resident must wear a mask
- Ensure equal access by all residents to personal visitors, End of Life visitor, Essential Caregiver
- Allow visitors of any age
- Ensure a comfortable and safe outdoor visitation area for outdoor visits



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Visitation Requirements

An ALF **must**:

- Inform visitors of the ALF's infection control policies and procedures related to visitation
- Limit the movement of the visitor through the facility to minimize interaction with other persons
- Provide hand-washing stations, or hand sanitizer, to the visitor and resident before and after visits



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Visitation Requirements

- Visits are permitted where adequate space is available as necessary to ensure physical distancing between visitation groups.
- Visits are permitted in the resident's room.
- Resident may have more than one person visit at a time, but the number of visitors is dependent on the size and space of the visit area.



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End of Life Visits

REMINDER

End of Life visits should not wait until death is imminent.



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Essential Caregiver Visits

ALFs must allow essential caregiver (EC) visits for all residents with any COVID-19 status.

- Up to two ECs can be designated per resident.
- Up to two ECs can visit each resident at the same time.
- EC visit is not allowed if the visitor has signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or an active COVID-19 infection.



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Essential Caregiver Visits

- EC visits can occur outdoors, in the resident's bedroom, or another area in the facility that limits visitor movement
- ECs do not have to maintain physical distancing between themselves and the resident but must maintain physical distance with other persons in the facility.
- ALF no longer required to keep a separate log for ECs or verify the identity of the EC at each visit.



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Essential Caregiver Visits

ALF must develop and enforce EC visitation policies/procedures including:

- Written agreement to follow applicable policies, procedures, requirements
- Training on infection control measures
- Expectations regarding designated entrances and exits
- Limiting visitation to designated area



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Salon Services Visits

ALF may allow salon services visits in accordance with [§553.2003](#).

ALF no longer required to maintain a separate record of salon services visit

ALF no longer required to verify the identity of the salon services visitor at each visit.



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Screening

- ALF must screen residents upon admission or readmission and at least once a day in accordance with HHSC guidance.
- Visitors must be screened in accordance with HHSC guidance.
- HHSC guidance follows the most current CDC guidelines for screening.



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Screening

At this time, screening includes:

- Fever, defined as 100.4° F and above
- Signs or symptoms of COVID-19 including chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea
- Any other signs and symptoms as outlined in [Symptoms of COVID-19](#)



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Screening

Screening (continued):

- Close contact with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, is under investigation for COVID-19, or is ill with a respiratory illness, regardless of vaccination status
- Has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 10 days



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HHSC Adopts Amended Rules for ALFs - Aug. 31

New ALF rules in 26 TAC, Chapter 553, Licensing Standards for Assisted Living Facilities, are now effective and can be found in the [Texas Administrative Code](#).

For a printable copy of the TAC, please follow the instructions for requesting the documents in [PL 2019-02 \(PDF\)](#).

The crosswalk to the new rules can be found in [PL 2021-28 \(PDF\)](#).

Previous rules that were in place prior to Aug. 31 are no longer effective.



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Key Changes to 26 TAC Chapter 553

All sections in Chapter 553 have been renumbered and reorganized to group similar requirements together in specific sections that make the chapter easier to read and navigate.

Changes to Chapter 553 implementing HBs 823, 1848, and 3329 of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session (2019):

- Expedited On-site Health Inspection
- New Requirements for Infection Prevention and Control Policies and Procedures
- Health Maintenance Activities



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Expedited Health Inspection

HB 823 allows applicants for an assisted living facility license to request that an expedited on-site health inspection be conducted not more than 21 days after the date of the request.



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Infection Prevention and Control

- A facility's infection prevention and control policies must describe how the facility will monitor key infectious agents, including multidrug-resistant organisms.
- A facility must have a policy that describes how it will make rapid influenza diagnostic tests available to facility residents who are exhibiting signs and symptoms of influenza.



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Infection Prevention and Control

- An assisted living facility that has a current Clinical Laboratory Improvement (CLIA) certificate can administer the rapid influenza diagnostic test.
- An assisted living facility that does not have a current CLIA certificate can arrange for the test to be administered by a third party that is authorized to administer the test, either at the assisted living facility or at another location such as a doctor's office or pharmacy



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Health Maintenance Activities

Health Maintenance Activity (HMA):

- A specific task for a specific resident that requires a higher level of skill to perform than personal care services, and that the resident could perform for themselves but for a functional disability that prevents it.
- Before a task can be designated as an HMA, an RN must conduct an assessment of the resident, the predictability of the resident's condition, and other elements as applicable and determine and document that the task qualifies as an HMA.



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Examples of HMAs

- administering oral medications through a permanently placed feeding tube with irrigation;
- administering topically applied medications;
- administering unit dose medication by way of inhalation (MDIs) including nebulizer treatments for prophylaxis and/or maintenance;
- routine administration of a prescribed dose of oxygen;
- noninvasive ventilation (NIV) such as continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) and bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) therapy;



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Examples of HMAs

- the administering of a bowel and bladder program, including suppositories, enemas, manual evacuation, intermittent catheterization, digital stimulation associated with a bowel program, tasks related to external stoma care including but not limited to pouch changes, measuring intake and output, and skin care surrounding the stoma area;
- routine preventive skin care and care of Stage 1 pressure ulcers;
- feeding and irrigation through a permanently placed feeding tube inserted in a surgically created orifice or stoma; and
- other tasks that an RN may reasonably conclude as safe to exempt from delegation based on the RN assessment.



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PL 2021-29

HHSC has published [Provider Letter 2021-29 \(replaces PL 2020-21 and 2020-26\) - End of Temporary Suspension of Certain LTCR Requirements During COVID-19 Outbreak \(PDF\)](#).

The letter describes the rule suspensions that ended, the rule suspensions that are still in place, and the rule suspensions that will be ended in the future.



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PL 2021-32

HHSC Publishes Guidance Related to the Implementation of LSC Rules for ALF Providers (PL 2021-32)

HHSC Long-term Care Regulation has published [Provider Letter 2021-32, Implementing ALF Life Safety Code Rules \(PDF\)](#), for assisted living facilities. The letter provides guidance on how to navigate and interpret the ALF life safety code rules.

The rules are effective as of Aug. 31.



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Capacity Increases During Severe Gulf Coast Weather

HHSC LTCR is reminding providers to be ready to implement emergency preparedness plans. If your facility is impacted by severe weather such as wind or flooding, or is in an area under mandatory evacuation orders, [contact the HHSC LTCR Regional Director](#) in the region where the facility is located.

In addition to contacting the HHSC LTCR RD, all requests to exceed licensed capacity due to an emergency must be approved by the director of survey operations. If your facility is projected to exceed its licensed capacity because it is accepting residents who have been evacuated from another facility, [email Renee Blanch-Haley](#) and include State Capacity Increase Request in the subject line.

If you have any questions, contact your HHSC LTCR RD, [email LTCR Policy and Rules](#) or call 512-438-3161.



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LTC Providers May Request COVID-19 Emergency Support

For Emergency Staffing Support, the Office of the Governor directed DSHS to use staffing agencies to provide medical personnel from out-of-state to Texas health care facilities to assist in COVID-19 operations.

Providers must demonstrate that they have exhausted all other options and have an urgent need for assistance before requesting emergency staffing support.

LTC providers are always required to provide services to residents or clients before, during and after an emergency. The emergency plan must include:

- Planning for staff shortages
- A back-up plan to ensure operations and care of residents continues



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LTC Providers May Request COVID-19 Emergency Support

For COVID-19 Vaccination, Testing Kits, PPE, Disinfection, and HAI/EPI Support LTC providers can request:

- COVID-19 mobile vaccine clinics for residents/staff
- BinaxNow test kits. [Read PL 2020-49](#) for details.
- PPE (providers should exhaust all other options before request)
- Facility cleaning and disinfection
- Healthcare-associated infection and epidemiological support

To initiate a request for COVID-19 support described above, [contact the HHSC LTCR Regional Director](#) in the region where the facility is located.

HHSC LTCR staff are responsible for initiating a State of Texas Assistance Request on behalf of the long-term care provider. HHSC LTCR staff may request supporting documentation to verify need.



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Upcoming Webinars

ALF COVID webinars are currently held once a month.

Upcoming webinar schedule:

- September 15



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Webinar Recordings and PDFs

Access recordings and PDFs of previous ALF webinars from the [ALF Portal](#).

Click on COVID-19 Resources to expand the accordion to access resources and webinars.

A recording of the August 11, 2021, ALF Provider COVID-19 Webinar with LTCR is available for those unable to attend.

- [Listen to the webinar recording here.](#)
- [Read the webinar slide presentation \(PDF\).](#)



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Stop the Spread of COVID-19 in Texas ALFs/DAHS Webinar

The purpose of this webinar is to help Texas ALFs/DAHS stop the spread of infection, including all variants of COVID-19, due to the recent surge in cases. We will review basic infection control principles, PPE, physical distancing, benefits of vaccination and revised Response Plan information.

- Thursday, Sept. 2
1:30-3 p.m.
[Register for the webinar.](#)
- Thursday, Sept. 9
9:30-11 a.m.
[Register for the webinar.](#)
- Tuesday, Sept. 14
1:30-3 p.m.
[Register for the webinar.](#)

[Email questions to Joint Training.](#)



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GovDelivery

Go to:

<https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXHHSC/subscriber/new>

- Enter your email address.
- Confirm your email address, select your delivery preference, and submit a password if you want one.
- At a minimum, select ALF or your preferred topics.
- When done click "Submit."



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Provider Alerts

- Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) Resources
- Assisted Living and Residential Care (ALRC) Resources
- Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) Resources
- Consumer Directed Services (CDS) Resources
- Consumer Managed Personal Assistance Services (CMPAS) Resources
- Electronic Visit Verification
- Local Authorities Resources
- Texas Minimum Data Set (MDS) Resources
- Day Activity and Health Services (DAHS) Resources
- Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Program Resources
- Employment First
- Family Care (FC) Resources

LTC Ombudsman



Patty Ducayet

State Long-term Care Ombudsman

Telework Phone: (737) 704-9075

https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/news_info/ombudsman/

Statewide Contact for an LTC Ombudsman:

Phone: (800) 252-2412 or

Email: ltc.ombudsman@hhs.texas.gov

Facebook Live Events

Bi-weekly Facebook Live Q&A for Families of LTC Residents:

Every Other Wednesday, 12:15 to 12:45

<https://www.facebook.com/texasltcombudsman?fref=ts>



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FAQ

How to Contact

Jennifer Morrison, Manager

Jennifer.morrison@hhs.texas.gov

LTCR Policy Mailbox

LTCRPolicy@hhs.texas.gov

COVID-19 Page

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19>

ALF Provider Portal

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/assisted-living-facilities-alf>



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Thank you!
