



## COVID-19 Preparedness Self-Assessment for Retirement Homes

### **Introduction**

As the pandemic progresses, the preparedness of retirement home operators is key to essential high-quality care for residents.

### **Methodology**

This self-assessment tool is designed to complement PHO's [COVID-19 Self Assessment Audit Tool](#) and to help retirement homes assess their readiness to prevent or effectively respond to a COVID-19 outbreak of and take steps to address any gaps. The Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) strongly recommends operators complete the self-assessment checklist and take immediate steps to address any gaps identified. The RHRA will take a reasonable compliance approach when assessing a home's actions in preventing crisis. We trust this checklist will assist you in your efforts to protect your residents.

**You are not required to submit this self- assessment checklist to the RHRA.**

Please see go to [rhra.ca](http://rhra.ca) for COVID-19 information and resources available to retirement home operators.

### **How to Complete the Self-Assessment**

Answer 'Yes' or 'No' to the series of questions regarding your home's preparedness for an outbreak of COVID-19. After answering the questions, you will need to make a judgment on your preparedness. Completion of the self-assessment in an accurate manner can help you identify gaps in your processes and to take steps to address them. Therefore, think about how each item is currently being achieved and how you plan to address any gaps identified.

## Judgment Descriptors

The table below shows the judgment descriptors retirement homes should use to assess their preparedness for a COVID-19 outbreak.

Prepared	Substantially Prepared	Not Prepared
This means the operator has taken the necessary steps to prepare for an outbreak of COVID-19.	This means that the operator has most of the elements of an effective plan, but some action is required.	This means the operator has not taken the necessary steps to prepare for an outbreak of COVID-19. Urgent action is required.
<b>A. Written Policies and Procedures</b>		
Has the operator ensured that staff have access to up-to-date COVID-19 guidance or direction issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health Ontario, and local public health unit?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Has the operator ensured that staff have access to up-to-date COVID-19 guidance or direction issued by the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Has the outbreak management policy and procedures as outlined in Directive #3 (including staffing contingency) been updated and tested?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Has the operator completed the PHO COVID19: Self-Assessment Audit Tool for Long Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes? <a href="https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ltrh/2021/12/covid-self-assessment-audit-tool-ltc.pdf?sc_lang=en">https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ltrh/2021/12/covid-self-assessment-audit-tool-ltc.pdf?sc_lang=en</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>		
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>B. Staffing</b>	
Is there a human resources plan in place to ensure staffing levels are appropriate to deliver necessary services? This includes plans to ensure continuity of care to residents and adequate environmental services in the event of a significant shortfall of staff attending work due to required self-isolation or an outbreak of COVID- 19?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Things to consider when planning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What if HCCSS cannot provide staff?</li> <li>• What if external agencies contracted by the home cannot provide staff?</li> </ul>	

- What if home staff refuse to work?
- Have staff been provided mental and emotional supports to keep them healthy prior to and during an outbreak
- Consider specific tasks per department that would need to be covered in a staffing shortage

**Some options that might be considered if appropriate to the home:**

- 12-hour shifts rather than 8 hour shifts
- Cross training staff to work in multiple departments – find out which staff have other skillsets/training and their comfort level
- Train managers, and appropriate staff in advance for medication administration in case of emergency
- Assign staff to resident cohorts
- What could essential caregivers assist with? Proactively reach out to them to identify specialized skillsets, ability to help with their loved one’s care in an in emergency, or other ability to help
- What could volunteers assist with?
- Are there family members of residents who are familiar with the home who may consider volunteering or working as temporary staff
- Can agreements be made with volunteer agencies, local hotels/other re staffing options
- Security company staff may do screening, redirect residents
- Could local colleges/universities with applicable programs or PSW programs provide support?

**Volunteers**

Volunteers cannot give medications. However, there are many tasks volunteers can assist with. (see RHA s.66 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/10r11#BK84> and O. Reg s.13 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110166#BK21> for requirements for volunteers). When homes are in crisis the RHRA supports the use of volunteers and takes a flexible approach to compliance. Volunteers should understand what steps to take in an emergency, be informed of the abuse and neglect policy and fully understand good IPAC and PPE practices. Preservation of life and resident mental and physical well-being should be at the forefront of staffing contingencies.

**Examples of things volunteers can assist with:**

- Screening
- redirecting residents, including memory care areas
- wellness check calls to residents
- activities: 1:1 by phone, online games, set up virtual connections

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with family, set up takeaway activity kits for residents</li> <li>answer phones</li> <li>high touch cleaning, common areas</li> <li>dining: serve tea/coffee/beverages (if dining room open, depending on resident diets), set tables, deliver meals/beverages to floors, serve snacks</li> </ul>	
Is the operator aware of “test to work” protocols for staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there measures in place to enable physical distancing by staff including break time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there on-call staffing arrangements for key management positions?  Are there regional resources (if chain home)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the operator reviewed the effectiveness of these on-call systems to ensure staff always have 24/7 access to managerial advice and support related to care services and do they meet current needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are staff aware of the requirements for reporting and managing confirmed/suspected cases of COVID-19 in any residents or staff and is someone able to assist with contact tracing if required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>	
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>C. Governance and Management</b>	
In the absence of key management staff, does someone in the home have the experience and training to effectively implement all public health directions and maintain oversight of the operations during an outbreak?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the operator know who to contact to support them if their contingency plans prove insufficient? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other staffing agencies</li> <li>Corporate Head Office</li> <li>HCCSS</li> <li>OH Lead</li> <li>RHRA (RHRA cannot provide staffing, however, may be able to give suggestions or escalation for rapid intervention)</li> <li>Retirement Home Associations</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the operator spoken with staff to alleviate fears of COVID-19 and understands which staff may leave if the home goes into outbreak?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Does the operator know how to contact their local PHU or IPAC Hub for advice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the operator maintain an adequate supply of rapid antigen point of care testing and PCR supplies? In the absence of the operator, is there someone else who can maintain and access this supply?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the operator have staff qualified to perform PCR testing, and if not, a provider that can do so?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the operator reviewed each unit and floor and identified areas that operate as discrete zones to allow for appropriate isolation or cohorting of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 residents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there a clear policy that outlines who must be notified in the event of an outbreak? For example, all mandatory notifications are reported to the public health unit (PHU) and RHRA.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there a current vaccination policy in place?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is a record of COVID-19 vaccination status kept and updated for all residents, staff, volunteers, students, and contractors and reported to the RHRA as required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Has the operator ensured that eligible, volunteers, students, and contractors are undergoing rapid antigen testing as directed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the operator identified a staff person to be a family liaison to ensure that families are communicated with (in line with residents' wishes) while visiting is restricted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>	
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>D. Additional Contingencies</b>	
Are there additional plans in place in case of the following:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply chain breakdown – what if there is a disruption of supplies due to delayed deliveries (food, medication, other supplies)</li> <li>Service breakdown – MD services, lab visits, etc</li> <li>Hospital capacity issues</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Meal options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider options in case food delivery is delayed due to illness at the supplier/delivery end</li> <li>prepare a pandemic menu</li> <li>purchase or make frozen meals</li> </ul> agreements with local caterer/restaurants/hotels	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>	
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>E. Individual Assessment and Care Plans</b>	
Has the operator assessed the impact of the current or future precautions related to: physical distancing and potential isolation on residents, including the potential impact on their psychological wellbeing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the person in charge discussed with residents/POA their wishes should they become critically ill?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the person in charge ensured that the resident plans of care are current with clear direction to those who may provide care to a resident in a time of crisis and inclusive of changes that have occurred?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have behaviour management strategies been implemented to address any required changes including strategies to maintain public health prevention measures such as physical distancing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Are there arrangements in place for medical advice and review for end-of life care?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>	
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>F. Healthcare</b>	
Are there arrangements in place for residents to be medically or mentally assessed in person or virtually by a physician or nurse practitioner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there arrangements in place to facilitate the transfer of residents to acute care services if necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>	
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>G. Residents' Rights</b>	
While observing physical distancing measures, is the operator ensuring that each resident still has opportunity to participate in activities in accordance with their interests and capacities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can all residents communicate and remain in contact with their families and significant others, even when in isolation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are residents informed about the public health measures that affect their daily lives?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the operator consulted with residents in the event they may be asked to cohort or isolate in a different suite?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>	
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>H. Communication</b>	
Are residents/families/SDM kept informed of the public health measures being taken in the home and the reasons for these measures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the operator put measures in place to facilitate residents to maintain their social and family contacts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the operator established partnerships with community resources (e.g., Regional IPAC Hub, Ontario Health, local public health units, hospitals, primary care, other retirement homes, other)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Based on your answers to the questions above does your home:</b>	
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>I. Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)</b>	
Is there a dedicated onsite IPAC lead	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there an onsite outbreak management team in place?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are residents educated about hand and respiratory hygiene?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<b>Based on your answers to the questions above is your home:</b>		
<b>Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substantially Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not Prepared</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

Now that you have completed the self-assessment, take some time to reflect on any identified gaps and create a plan to close to close any gaps.

If you have any questions regarding the self-assessment tool, please contact RHRA at [info@rhra.ca](mailto:info@rhra.ca) or call 1-855-275-7472.