COVID-19 advice for retirement village operators

This factsheet provides information and advice to operators of retirement villages in South Australia. It outlines the measures that operators should take to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to retirement village residents and others.

Whilst the State Coordinator has made a Direction under the Emergency Management Act 2004 to limit entry into residential aged care facilities, these restrictions do not apply to retirement villages.

Older South Australians living in retirement villages are subject to the same restrictions that apply to the rest of the community. Retirement village operators should not impose additional restrictions on retirement village residents that are not required of other community members, including:

- Restricting the frequency or number of visitors residents receive
- Directing people to self-isolate when returning from hospital or other appointments
- Requiring residents to be tested for COVID-19
- Preventing residents from re-entering their accommodation.

For information about residential aged care facilities co-located with other facilities, including retirement villages, visit the SA Health website.

It is important that operators of retirement villages stay informed as directions and guidelines change due to the evolving status of COVID-19. The South Australian roadmap has been developed to detail the stages of easing of restrictions, with Step 1 implemented from 11 May 2020. Additional fact sheets about each restriction are available on the SA Government COVID-19 website.

The following requirements currently apply to all retirement villages:

DO:

- Ensure that on re-opening, community centres adhere to the following directions and guidelines:
  - Gatherings are limited to 10 or less people in any common area used for group or community gatherings and meetings.
  - Limit 1 person per 4 square metres
  - Continue to conduct larger group meetings using technology where appropriate
  - Encourage record of attendees upon entry
  - Ensure no food or beverages are served
  - Ensure frequent disinfection cleaning
- Ensure social distancing is followed by maintaining 1.5 metres distance from others.
- Consider delivering meals to units or offering pick up for residents (if Village offers a meal service in a dining hall)
  - If this is not possible then dining halls must adhere to the 1 person per 4 square metre density requirement.
- Ensure all hairdressers and barber shops implement the 1 person per 4 square metre rule.
DO (CONTINUED):

> **Ensure** any funerals conducted on the premises are limited to a maximum of 20 people (indoor) and 30 (outdoor).
> **Ensure** any weddings conducted on the premises are limited to a maximum of 10 people.
> **Ensure** places of worship, religious gatherings are limited to maximum of 10 attendees.
> **Ensure** no indoor sport activities are played
> **Ensure** outdoor training (exercise) in groups does not exceed 10 people and those present do not exceed 1 person per 4 square metres.
> **Ensure** swimming pools adhere to the following directions and guidelines:
  - Keep communal showers and change rooms closed.
  - Limit the number of people in each separate pool to 1 person per 4 square metres.
  - For lap swimming, limit of one swimmer per lane.
  - Minimise use of communal facilities that are not closed, for example toilets.
  - Encourage swimmers to shower with soap at home before swimming.
  - Minimise unnecessary co-mingling, especially outside of the pool.

DO NOT:

> **Allow any** of the following activities to take place in on-site established areas:
  - Beauty therapy
  - Tanning
  - Waxing
  - Manicures/pedicures
  - Tattoos
  - Indoor gyms
  - Saunas, spa and massages *(excluding allied-health-related services such as physiotherapy)*
> **Allow any** contact sports *(only non-contact skills training / exercise may be undertaken)*.

Retirement village residents should be advised to:

> Stay at home and contact their GP for advice if they are unwell
> Continue to stay connected to their doctor about existing health concerns
> Wash their hands regularly, practise good cough/sneeze etiquette and wipe down frequently touched surfaces
> Get their annual flu vaccination – free for people over the aged of 65
> Observe social distancing wherever possible
> Minimise the use of shared equipment
> Follow the advice of National Cabinet to continue to stay at home if they fall into one of the following groups:
  - those over 70 years of age
  - those over 60 years of age who have existing health conditions or comorbidities
  - Indigenous Australians over the age of 50 who have existing health conditions or comorbidities
  - People with compromised (weakened) immune systems
Additional resources for retirement village operators and residents

Please check the following websites or contact the SA COVID-19 Information Line on 1800 253 787 for more information.

- **SA COVID-19 Information Line** (up to date information on COVID-19 and roadmap to recovery) [covid-19.sa.gov.au](covid-19.sa.gov.au)
- **SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line** (8am-8pm, 7 days) 1800 632 753 [SACOVIDMentalHealth.org.au](SACOVIDMentalHealth.org.au)
- **Older Person’s COVID-19 Support Line** 1800 171 866 (advice, support, referrals and connection for Older Australians)
- **National Coronavirus Health Information Line** (24 hours, 7 days) 1800 020 080
- **Aged Rights Advocacy Service** 1800 700 600 (free, confidential service to older people, or their representatives, living in a retirement village) [sa.agedrights.asn.au](sa.agedrights.asn.au)
- **COTA SA** [cota.org.au/information/covid19](cota.org.au/information/covid19)

If the resident is deaf, hard of hearing, or has a speech or communication impairment, contact [National Relay Service](https://www.nrs.gov.au) on 1800 555 677 and ask them to call the COVID-19 infection hotline.

For **Translating or interpreting services**, call 131 450

The **Australian Department of Health** has released COVID-19 factsheets for:

- Older Australians
- Retirement villages

Anyone experiencing potentially life threatening symptoms should call **Triple Zero (000)**.

If you know of someone who is breaching the quarantine or isolation directions put in place, please call **Crime Stoppers** on 1800 333 000.

**Training for operators and staff**

A [new online training module](https://www.health.gov.au) providing information on COVID-19 infection control has been released by the Australian Government. This includes signs and symptoms of the virus, how to keep safe and myth busting. The training offers practical information on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and measures to take when visitors attend, which may be of relevance in the retirement village setting.

For more information

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

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