COVID-19 advice for retirement village operators

The intent of this factsheet is to provide directions and guidance on limiting or removing activities/events that contribute to the transmission of COVID-19 in retirement villages based on the most current information.

This information is based on current directions and guidelines from the National Cabinet and SA Health. It is important that operators of retirement villages stay informed as directions and guidelines may change regularly due to the rapidly evolving status of the COVID-19 across the community.

To slow the spread of coronavirus and to save lives, retirement villages must immediately implement the following directions and strongly consider the guidance provided by the Australian and South Australian Governments.

Immediately implement the following:

DO NOT: (direction)

> **Conduct any** face to face group meetings e.g. annual meetings, budget meetings (i.e. all mandatory meetings), including any resident committee meetings regardless of meeting group size.

> **Allow any** community gatherings or group activities within the retirement village, including gyms, health clubs, fitness centres, pools, saunas, libraries, yoga, BBQ areas, reading groups, church services, in any common area used for group or community gatherings.

> **Allow any** of the following activities in on-site established areas: beauty therapy, tanning, waxing, nails, tattoos spa and massages (excluding allied-health-related services such as physiotherapy).

DO: (direction)

> **Close all** playgrounds, skate parks and outside gyms in public places.

> **Ensure all** hairdressers and barber shops implement the one person per four square metre rule.

> **Advise residents and support** - National Cabinet’s direction to limit both indoor and outdoor gatherings to two persons only. Exceptions to this limit include:

  - people of the same household
  - funerals - a maximum of 10 people
  - wedding - a maximum of 5 people.

Strongly consider the following: (advice)

> **Advise residents and support** - National Cabinet’s strong advice that all Australians stay home unless they are:
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- shopping for what they need - food and necessary supplies
- accessing medical or health care needs, including compassionate requirements
- exercising in compliance with the public gathering requirements
- undertaking work and study if they can’t work or learn remotely.

> **Advise residents and support** - National Cabinet’s strong advice that the following groups of people self-isolate at home to the maximum extent practicable:
  - 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.

> That retirement villages offering a meal service in a dining hall consider offering the option of residents picking up meals or having them delivered to eat in their own units. If this is not possible then dining halls must adhere to the 1 person per 4 square metre rule.

**Additional Strategies**

> Operators of retirement villages should **support and advise** residents of the National Cabinet's strong advice.

> Advise residents that additional information can be obtained via the official government “Coronavirus Australia” app available from the Apple App Store or Google Play, or join our WhatsApp channel on iOS or Android if applicable.

> Encourage the use of mobile phones, video call systems such as Skype or FaceTime to preserve resident contacts and conduct group meetings.

> Residents should be encouraged to keep visitors limited to immediate family only and to practise social distancing at all times.

> No group visits should occur in any retirement village especially by school children.

> Providing information and brief all workers, including domestic and cleaning staff, on relevant information and procedures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

> Family and friends should be encouraged to maintain contact with residents by phone and other social communication apps, as appropriate.

> Providing clear information to residents and families regarding cough/sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene; and what to do if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 or another respiratory illness (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath, cough, sore throat). See [https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-older-australians](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-older-australians)

> Advising all visitors and staff to monitor themselves for symptoms of respiratory illness and to stay away from the village while they are unwell. Visitors and staff must not enter the village if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

> Make phone or video calls accessible to all people living in the village where possible, to enable regular communication with family members. Family and friends should be encouraged to maintain contact with residents by phone and other social communication apps, as appropriate.

> Operators of retirement villages can put up signs around the village (e.g. common areas and shared facilities) to ensure residents are aware of the health warnings and messages.
> Operators of retirement villages should ensure they have processes in place to limit the number of non-essential visitors to retirement villages.
> Introducing a delivery service or takeaway for meals.
> Advise residents who are aged over 70 (or over 50 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) or people with chronic conditions that they are able to seek medical support from their GPs through bulk-billed telehealth (videolink) and telephone services. e.g. FaceTime and Skype. Medical practitioners must be satisfied that the services they use to video link with their patients meet current standards and laws regarding privacy and information security.

NOTE: The intent of the FACT SHEET is to highlight strategies for limiting opportunities for the transmission of COVID-19.

Should a specific group activity or event not be captured in the descriptions above and occurs in your retirement village then please add this to your individual retirement village advice.

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

> visit Australian Government Department of Health www.health.gov.au
> if a resident suspects they have COVID-19, call the 24/7 National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080
> for South Australian enquiries relating to COVID-19 call 1800 253 787
> for translating or interpreting services, call 131 450
> if the resident is deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech or communication impairment, contact National Relay Service on 1800 555 677 and ask them to call the COVID-19 infection hotline
> 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
> Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) at www.opan.com.au, or call 1800 700 600
> Dementia Australia at www.dementia.org.au or call 1800 100 500.
> If Residents have concerns about their health, they should speak to their doctor.

Training for operators and staff
> A new online training module providing information on COVID-19 infection control has been released by the Government. This includes signs and symptoms of the virus, how to keep safe and myth busting. A specific training program for aged care workers is being developed and may have relevant information for you and your facility. The training offers practical
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information on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and measures to take when visitors attend, which could be of relevance to your facility. Go to: www.covid-19training.gov.au.

For more information