



**City of Fort Saskatchewan  
Facility / Program Reopening Plan  
COVID-19 Pandemic  
Home Support Services**



## **Home Support Service Relaunch Plan**

### **Background**

Home Support provides in home cleaning & laundry assistance to seniors the chronically ill and those recovering from surgeries. For the most part, clients remain in the home during service although some do prefer to leave while the staff member cleans. Cleaning may be weekly, bi weekly or monthly depending on client's needs and all services are individualized. Staff are matched with clients so there is consistency in service from the same staff member each time. The majority of our clients are 75+ putting them in the highest risk bracket for COVID-19.

### **Pre-COVID-19 Risk Mitigation**

Hazard Assessments are in place that outline all aspects of Home Support work. These are created with staff and reviewed annually.

Universal Precautions or Infection Control training is required training for all Home Support staff. Due to the nature of the work where staff may be in contact with bodily fluids all staff are trained in Universal Precautions or Infection Control. They are trained in the transmission of illness and work with the expectation that all surfaces are contaminated so they are experienced in infection control measures, use of PPE and hand-washing procedures. Alberta Health Services includes related online information at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-routine-practices-info-community.pdf>.

Minimizing transmission during Cold & Flu Season is critical to ensuring the health & safety of our clients. Due to the nature of the work we do, moving from one home to another, it is imperative that we minimize the transmission of any illness from one household to the next. As many of our clients have compromised immune systems or co-morbidities the importance becomes magnified. Staff always phone clients 48 hours ahead of their appointment. There are several reasons why this is done. A client may cancel without financial penalty and I can change a staff members schedule in alignment with the collective agreement. Secondly it alerts us to when a client is ill so we can postpone service until they are well again. Staff members that are sick are not expected to work, we have casual staff in place to allow for business continuity.

### **COVID-19 Symptoms and Screening Protocols:**

The City of Fort Saskatchewan COVID-19 Screening Protocols document (May 25, 2020) includes a daily self-screening protocol staff are to use prior to reporting to work. Staff must know the symptoms of COVID-19, how to identify if they or another person is ill, and what should be done if illness is likely. In all cases, the screening process must protect the medical privacy of the person.



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## COVID-19 Symptoms:

The list of COVID-19 symptoms has been expanded by AHS and now includes:

- Fever\*
- Cough (new cough or worsening chronic cough)\*
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (new or worsening)\*
- Runny nose\*
- Sore throat\*
- Stuffy nose
- Painful swallowing
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell in general, or new fatigue or severe exhaustion
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pink eye

\* Public Health Orders in effect at the time of publication stipulate individuals having a fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat are legally required to isolate for 10 days from the onset of those symptoms, or until the symptoms resolve, whichever is longer. Persons with any of the other listed symptoms should stay home and minimize their contact with others until their symptoms resolve.

## COVID-19 Screening Questions:

Pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission of the COVID-19 virus or other communicable disease is possible; i.e., not all COVID-19 patients will have symptoms of infection such as elevated temperatures. Likewise, an individual may have an elevated body temperature for reasons other than illness, i.e., physical exertion or environmental exposure to high temperatures.

Clarifying questions to a positive response for questions 1 or 2 may eliminate benign causes (e.g., ongoing medical condition or seasonal allergies).

1. Are you or any other person in your household / cohort experiencing any of the listed COVID-19 symptoms?
  - a. A positive response would be cause to preclude staff providing home support services.
2. Have you experienced any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days?
  - a. If yes, determine when.
  - b. If the onset of symptoms occurred within last 10 days, do not enter.
  - c. If the onset of symptoms occurred between 10-14 days prior, confirm the individual is symptom free and if so, staff may enter.

Positive responses to questions 3 through 5 will not automatically exclude home support services being offered but will require clarifying questions to assess the risk of transmission.



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3. Have you or any other person in your household / cohort tested positive for COVID-19 or been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?
  - a. If yes, determine when.
  - b. If the individual tested positive within 10 days, the individual must self-isolate. Staff will not enter.
  - c. If 10 days or more since the date of the test and the individual is symptom free, staff may enter.
  - d. If a member of the individual's family or cohort tested positive, or was in close contact with someone who tested positive:
    - i. inquire what direction the individual who tested positive was given by Alberta Health Services
    - ii. inquire if AHS gave direction to others in the household or cohort
    - iii. confirm the client has not had symptoms in the past 10 days.
  - e. If they are not under direction by AHS and have been symptom free for 10 days or more, staff may enter the household.
4. Have you or any other person in your household had contact with anyone from outside of Alberta?
  - a. If yes, determine where and when.
    - i. International travelers are required to isolate for 14 days.
    - ii. Interprovincial travel may be indicative of greater risk.
    - iii. Who did the person travel with (same household? Same cohort? Etc.)
    - iv. Who did they visit while away?
    - v. Did they stay with friends or family?
5. Have you or any other person in your household been in contact with an international traveler in the past 14 days?
  - a. If yes, did they display any signs or symptoms of illness or have they been diagnosed COVID positive?
  - b. If yes, did the traveler quarantine as required by Public Health Order?

**Enhanced Risk Mitigation Required for Relaunch**

The following considerations pertain to distancing measures, cleaning and disinfecting, screening for symptoms, PPE and responsibilities to ensure precautions are followed:

1. The Home Support Hazard Assessment will be updated to include COVID-19 measures.
  - a. All staff will review and acknowledge the changes.
2. An In-house review will be scheduled for all Home Support staff (PPT & Casual) that will cover Home Support Hazard Assessment, Universal Precautions, Daily Fit for Work screening procedure and new cleaning standards for COVID-19.



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3. Once a Relaunch date has been established, clients will be called by the Home Support Coordinator who will outline the new safety measures that need to be in place for work to resume.
  - a. Clients will be requested to have approved disinfectant on site for staff's use (e.g. Lysol disinfecting spray or Clorox wipes). Health Canada offers an [online listing of products approved for disinfecting COVID-19](#).
  - b. The Home Support Coordinator will explain that if these safety measures are not followed by the client their service may be suspended or even permanently cancelled.
4. Service expectations & priorities will be discussed with clients. With homes not being cleaned for 3+ months there will be backlog issues that may lead to wait times for certain things to be addressed.
5. All staff will be required to check for symptoms daily and complete the Alberta Health Services Daily Fit for Work Screening- Healthcare Worker Questionnaire before their shift begins.
  - a. The Home Support Coordinator will collect all questionnaires and act as screener.
  - b. Management of information will be in accordance with privacy requirements related to health information. If "Fit for Work" the employee will report to their shift as scheduled, if "Not Fit for Work" they will remain home and self-isolate.
6. Should staff develop any symptoms while at work that are not related to pre-existing conditions or allergies they will be required to go home and self-isolate. Staff will complete the Healthcare Worker Self-Assessment Tool to determine the need for COVID-19 testing.
7. Any clients or staff members that may have had contact with the staff member exhibiting symptoms will be notified immediately with their recommended course of action. All contact information for staff & clients is up to date.
8. We will switch from the 48hr reminder call to a **Client pre-visit COVID-19 Health Check** call to clients 24 hours before the scheduled Home Support visit. A digital copy of the completed checklist for each client will be submitted electronically to the Home Support Coordinator prior to the home visit.
9. Clients who report symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat) are subject to mandatory isolation for 10 days from onset of symptoms or until symptoms resolves whichever is longer. Staff should refer the client to Alberta Health Services where they may complete a COVID assessment and be afforded medical advice.
  - a. The Home Support visit will be rescheduled for an appropriate future date.
  - b. Grocery service may continue during this time, if required, as zero personal contact is involved.



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10. Should staff observe clients who communicated they were symptom free experiencing any of the aforementioned symptoms that can't be explained by benign causes, they will report to their Supervisor immediately and vacate the premises.
  - a. The client will be billed for the full service time and service will be postponed to allow for self-isolation (as outlined above).
  - b. If the client can't provide a good reason for the non-compliant behavior service may be suspended or permanently cancelled.
11. Casual staff will be utilized as necessary to back fill any vacancy as a result of staff illness.
12. Staff will practice 2m physical distancing at all times while in the client's home. Should a situation occur where this is not possible, staff will wear a face mask.
  - a. Staff will carry a stock of gloves, hand sanitizer and masks with them at all times. (Alberta Health Guidance for senior's centres and senior serving organizations).
13. To assist with distancing and reduce the likelihood of respiratory droplets passing between clients and staff, staff will request that clients leave the room that is being cleaned (Guidance for senior's centres and seniors serving organizations).
  - a. Clients that have historically vacated during cleaning will be encouraged to do so if they can do it without endangering themselves.
  - b. Many of the senior's only residences have a coffee room residents can retire to.
  - c. Family will be utilized to assist in cases of clients with Dementia where they may be incapable of understanding or following distancing protocols. Family may take the client out or remain with the client so staff can work undisturbed.

**PPE and Hand Hygiene**

1. Refer to the City's Guide of How and When to Disinfect, Wash or use Personal Protection Equipment (April 2, 2020) and the COVID-19 Response Guide for the Proper Use of Personal Protective Equipment (April 15, 2020).
2. The How and When to Disinfect, Wash or use Personal Protection Equipment guide includes excellent information about proper hygiene, cleaning/disinfecting procedures, COVID-19 appropriate products, and the hierarchy of controls to protect against infection, including the proper use of PPE. The COVID-19 Response Guide for the Proper Use of Personal Protective Equipment aligned the City's PPE protocols with those of Alberta Health Services. Both include instructions for proper hand hygiene.
3. PPE is the last option one should utilize to stay healthy. In order of precedence, the controls are:



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- a. Elimination - Isolate to eliminate the opportunity for exposure.
  - b. Substitute - Not applicable for COVID19.
  - c. Engineering Controls - Physical barriers and shields to prevent contact
  - d. Administrative Controls - Procedures that enhance safety (e.g., Increased cleaning cycles, personal decontamination, work from home, physical distancing, limiting the number of people in a building, education on use and understanding of PPE limitations, enforcing symptomatic people to don a mouth and nose cover, and mandatory hygiene standards.)
  - e. PPE – PPE is the last line of defence. If you must engage with someone known or suspected of having COVID-19, use PPE.
4. Staff will practice proper hand hygiene including handwashing and/or use of hand sanitizer on entry and exit from the home. Staff will don gloves and replace as necessary during the course of cleaning. Multiple pairs of gloves are used & disposed of in the homes garbage. Staff will sanitize hands before driving to the next home. Keys, phone and other personal items should also be sanitized.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**

1. Refer to the City's Guide of How and When to Disinfect, Wash or use Personal Protection Equipment (April 2, 2020).
2. Staff will clean the home as per Home Support cleaning guidelines. In addition, high touch points such as equipment, doorknobs, light switches will be cleaned and disinfected. Due to the inconsistency of cleaning products available to staff in each home, staff will be provided with disinfecting wipes to use for those households that don't have any disinfectant on site.
3. To reduce the potential for spread of infection, Home Support schedules will be emailed to staff and clients will no longer be expected to sign. Staff may record any changes on their schedule as before and will initial each visit as completed. Schedule will be sent electronically to the Home Support Coordinator as completed.



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**Plan Approval**

**Names:**

**Date & Signatures:**

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Submitted Electronically  
June 2, 2020

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Brad Ward  
Director of Emergency Management

Submitted Electronically  
June 4, 2020

**General Manager Review and Recommendation:**

Heather Cowie  
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Submitted Electronically  
June 10, 2020

**COVID-19 Task Force Approval:**

Troy Fleming  
City Manager

Signed Electronically  
June 10, 2020