

## HR Bulletin FAQ – COVID-19

### Single Site Order

**1. How long will the single site orders be in place?**

The Ministerial Orders put in place can only be removed by that office. No one knows when the Medical Officer of Health will determine it is safe to change or remove those orders.

**2. Why can some people/ some jobs still have two employers?**

The Ministerial Orders apply to specific occupations and specific types of workplaces. Others are excluded from the Orders, so some people properly have more than one employer.

**3. I have changed my mind, and wish to work for another employer. How can I make that change?**

If the site you are at is in active outbreak, and the MOH review finds that you have been exposed, or other reasons to be isolating, you will have to wait for the earlier of 14 days and or 10 days and a clear COVID-19swab test before starting your new job.

If the site you are at is not in active outbreak, and you are not ill with COVID-19, and are properly wearing all PPE, you can give your notice and start with the new employer.

If the new employer is to be your single site healthcare employer, notify both AgeCare and the new employer, so both organizations can update their records for Alberta Health Services.

**4. Will AgeCare grant me a LOA if I go to work for another employer now?**

No. When the single site orders came in to place, staff were required to



select their one employer. A commitment was made to provide LOAs to those who left, and to top up hours for those who gave up regular lines elsewhere. Staff choosing to change employers now are not entitled to a LOA or any top up hours.

**5. What safeguards are in place regarding AgeCare and/or Agency staff who work at more than one Community or Employer?**

- I. All operators under Single Site scope submit reports to the government each pay to validate who was paid. This is audited within government data systems and employees paid from more than one single-site operator are flagged for the employer to investigate.
- II. AgeCare has contacted all our staffing agencies to confirm that they have COVID-1919 protocols in place. Similar to AgeCare, they have taken proactive steps to inform and educate their staff about expectations and the management of risk. E.g. hand hygiene, masking and screening protocols. They are also limiting the staff assignments and requesting that staff also change their uniform between each employment assignment.

For AgeCare staff with multiple employers, the same advice applies:

- Ensure personal hygiene is maintained (e.g. hand washing)
- Change your clothes/uniform between shifts.
- Try to limit how many different places of employment you are picking up shifts.
- Keep all your employers up to date and informed if your health status changes or you are at risk. It is critical all your employers have timely information to manage the risk.

## Safety & Personal Fear

**6. I'm scared to come to work because of COVID-19. Do I have to?**

AgeCare appreciates this is a very stressful and tiring time, but our residents and families are counting on you to fulfill your duty of care and you are expected to report to work. AgeCare is following all the public health recommendations and



outbreak protocols to provide a safe work environment and living environment for residents.

Although it's natural to want the safety and security of staying at home, remember your work environment is also the residents home and they need you to help them feel safe and secure.

If you are anxious or have concerns please reach out to your supervisor and/or HR Advisor to discuss your specific concerns and to get accurate and timely information.

## **7. What is AgeCare doing to keep staff safe during an Outbreak?**

- All AgeCare communities have extra cleaning on all shifts.
- We are enforcing all IP&C protocols to ensure staff fulfill their responsibilities.
- We have more staff assisting with screening.
- We have hired extra staff in Housekeeping and Nursing (HCA, LPN and RN) to support care and service.
- When needed we have engaged with Agencies to supply additional staff.
- Management from other Communities/Corporate assist communities in outbreak.
- We track all swab testing and results and monitor those off for wellness and return to work dates. Ill staff are followed by our Wellness Advisor
- We update all stakeholders daily: staff, residents and families are given facts around the outbreak status.
- We send a weekly bulletin for staff with information on health, wellness, resources and other general information.

## **8. Can we bring food to share with our co-workers?**

No, we can't share food. During this pandemic staff must bring or buy food for themselves only. That means no sharing platters of food, or potluck meals. Sharing food can increase the risk of the virus spread, and many people becoming ill.

**9. I tested positive for COVID-19 and am feeling bullied and/or discriminated against by my co-workers. What is AgeCare's responsibility?**

AgeCare is committed to ensure we continue to do everything possible to maintain a respectful work environment, free from bullying and/or discrimination.

Timely and accurate information as well as education is our first intervention to eliminate harassment and bullying in the workplace. Staff should report any instances to their Manager and or Human Resources at their Community.

AgeCare will not tolerate any form of discrimination based on the protected grounds under Alberta Human Rights.

**10. What can I do to better protect myself and my family?**

On December 8, the Government of Alberta made masking mandatory for all indoor public spaces, workplaces and places of worship.

Make sure you practice proper physical distancing. Wear a mask in public when it is difficult to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres at all times. Masks should be used in addition to other public health measures to limit spread.

All Albertans should follow public health measures as determined by the Government of Alberta.

Adhere to the same practices we recommend for protecting against all respiratory illnesses:

- Wash your hands using an alcohol-based rub or soap and warm water for at least twenty seconds.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Get immunized against influenza.
- Get immunized against COVID-19 when eligible.

- If you do get sick, you should stay home and complete the COVID-19 online assessment tool to see if you should be tested.

Additionally, the Government of Alberta has prohibited all indoor and outdoor social gatherings. In public and private.

- Close contacts are limited to household members only
- People who live alone can have up to 2 close contacts:
- Must be the same two contacts throughout the duration of the restriction
- If the close contacts do not live alone, visits cannot be held at their home
- Single parents who only live with their children under 18 are permitted to have up to 2 close contacts.

This does not apply to:

- Co-parenting arrangements
- Service visits from caregivers, health or childcare providers
- Home maintenance and repairs
- Mutual support group meetings

[Source: <https://www.alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx#toc-1>]

## **11. I car pool to and from work with other employees, what should I know?**

Carpooling is not advised during pandemic. If you must ride with others, these tips help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home if you are sick or have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19. Always wear a mask when riding with others. Do not remove your mask to eat or drink.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your inner elbow
- Open windows to get the freshest air – even in winter (turn up the heater)
- Fully clean and disinfect all surfaces before and after each trip
- Wash or sanitize your hands before and after each trip
- Limit the number of riders and stay as far apart as possible
- Ride with the same people every day and no one else
- Stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others when waiting for a ride

[Source: *AHS Guidelines for Carpooling*]

## Family, Child Care & Schooling

### **12. I'm concerned about making alternative arrangement for my family because the school / daycare has been closed temporarily due to an outbreak; what can I do?**

- III. AgeCare recognizes the difficulty in making alternative child care arrangements on short notice. Please keep in touch with manager and your community Human Resources to explore your needs and options. We may be able to offer you flexible work hours and alternative work assignments while you secure alternative child care arrangements.
- IV. Please see the family focussed bulletin related to school / family issues.

## Time-Off

### **13. Is AgeCare approving vacation?**

AgeCare is committed to try and maintain full staffing levels during this time of uncertainty. If a community is in outbreak, time off requests may be limited or not able to be approved.

Communities not in active outbreak are considering all vacation and time off requests and approving as able. We want staff to be able to take time off.

## Planning a Trip Outside of Canada

### **14. If I'm planning a trip outside of Canada what should I know?**

AgeCare respects the right of staff to travel as they wish, but please note, this is against the advice of Public Health. There is an official global travel advisory in effect which states "we must avoid all non-essential travel outside Canada and all

cruise ship travel". [Source: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>]

You will be required to self-isolate for 14 days when you return. You will not be entitled to any pay for the 14-day period as your international travel is a personal choice, against the advice of Public Health.

Vacation requests must include the full amount of time off, including the required isolation period to allow AgeCare to consider and plan for the full absence.

## COVID-19 Vaccines

See also – COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout FAQ at [www.agecare.ca/Coronavirus](http://www.agecare.ca/Coronavirus)

### **15. When will vaccines be available at my site?**

AgeCare is not in charge of the vaccine roll out, and AHS is making it available in a priority order they have decided with Alberta Health. Continuing Care/ Front line workers are at the top of the list. We will share updated information as available.

### **16. How do we get the vaccination(s)?**

To start, staff included in the preliminary phase will be contacted directly by AHS and will travel to designated immunization sites as the (Pfizer) vaccine cannot be transported from the site where it is stored.

This may change as the second vaccine (Moderna) becomes available, as it has different storage and transportation needs.

### **17. Can we leave work to be immunized?**

Yes, we want to accommodate staff having the vaccination. Your Manager needs to be aware for coverage and there may be situations where we cannot have too many off at the same time and continue to provide care.

You continue to be paid for your missed time to have the vaccination.

**18. When does my vaccination become effective?**

The information we have from AHS and Pharmacy says that up to 95% protection against COVID-19 is achieved seven (7) days after the second injection.

**19. Will I still have to wear full PPE if I get a vaccination?**

Vaccination does not change PPE requirements.

Immunized staff are still required to adhere to existing PPE guidance, including continuous masking, continuous eye protection, and IPC recommendations for COVID-19.

Currently, there is insufficient evidence on the duration of protection and effectiveness of reducing transmission of COVID-19.

While the vaccines being delivered have shown very high effectiveness in clinical trials, no vaccines are 100 per cent protective.

**20. Is having a vaccination mandatory?**

No, the COVID-19 vaccine is voluntary for health care workers in Alberta. We encourage all staff to get the vaccine once they are eligible to receive it to help protect themselves, their families, and our residents and communities against COVID-19.

**21. Will I be in trouble if I choose to not have a vaccine? What will happen?**

No one will be in trouble (disciplined) for not having the COVID-19 vaccine.

We strongly encourage all eligible staff to have the vaccine.

All staff must continue to properly utilize all provided PPE, and continue to follow the screening protocols.

**For additional questions, email [COVID-19Support@agecare.ca](mailto:COVID-19Support@agecare.ca) or ask your Manager or AgeCare community Human Resources Advisor.**