



Infection Control Spot Checks

Under the Aged Care Quality Standards (Quality Standards) in the Aged Care Act 1997, every aged care provider is responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide safe, respectful and quality care and services. Providers are also responsible for ensuring that staff have the necessary training, including in infection control practices and procedures, and in the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves, face masks, face shields and gowns.

The Commission is currently working with state and territory governments, and local health authorities across the nation to monitor and test preparedness of aged care services to respond to a COVID-19 outbreak.

The Commission is undertaking unannounced monitoring visits with residential aged care services nationally to observe infection control defences at the service to prevent transmission and to recognise and respond to symptoms of COVID-19; this is to ensure that everyone is adhering to infection control arrangements including safe PPE protocols.

Officers conducting the visits use a range of tools including a review against best practice based on the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) guidelines for COVID-19 Outbreaks in Aged Care Facilities and in some instances, an infection control monitoring checklist to guide the visit.

Additional questions are also asked to understand how the provider is applying the public health directives relating to infection control applicable in their state or territory.

The site visit is a monitoring visit, not a performance assessment. Where issues or concerns are identified, such as staff not applying correct PPE or adhering to other infection control practices, the Commission will consider further regulatory action to ensure that the provider is meeting their quality and safety obligations. This may include a performance assessment against the Quality Standards or imposing sanctions.

The Commission will not undertake these infection control site visits with services that have known positive cases of COVID-19.

The infection control site visits will be made by officers authorised by the Commissioner. The officers:

- have **authority to enter services**, with consent, under Part 8 of the Commission Act; and officers will show relevant identification when seeking consent
- in visiting residential aged care facilities, are exercising functions and powers of the Commission under Commonwealth legislation that are **recognised by State and Territory Health Authorities**
- have undertaken **PPE training** to meet best practice and state-based requirements
- have completed a declaration to confirm their participation and understanding of the PPE training; agreement to use PPE as instructed; and their **influenza vaccination in 2020**



- will undergo **daily screening by the Commission** regarding any fever or symptoms of acute respiratory infection; contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or persons awaiting test results; and a temperature check based on expert medical advice
- will comply with the **infection control processes and screening required of workers of the service** on entry to the service such as complying with any entry requirements consistent with public health directions, infection control requirements. Officers will confirm that they have not been to sites with confirmed cases of COVID-19 or had any known contact with COVID-19. (Please note: in doing so, the officers are not able to disclose the names of any services visited as this is protected information under the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018)
- will **comply with the PPE required at the service** in accordance with the public health direction of the relevant state; required PPE have been supplied to the officers.
- will **comply with current inter-state travel restrictions, and quarantine requirements** and with the current restriction levels in place in any restricted areas
- will follow **Commission notification and response protocols** if a service has any COVID-19 positive cases after the officers have left the service.

A record of the regulatory official's observations of the service environment, consumers and staff practices will be emailed to the provider of the service following the site visit.

Queries in relation to these site visits can be made to the relevant Regional office of the Commission or by phoning **1800 951 822** (free call).

