

# Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs News Release



**February 25, 2022**

**Statewide:**

WDVA will post weekly News Releases with the updates on COVID-19 Resident cases in our State Veterans Homes.

In addition, we are announcing updates to how Residents can visit with their loved ones and friends.

**Soldiers Home, Orting:** No change.

**Veterans Home, Port Orchard:** No change.

**Walla Walla Veterans Home:** No change.

**Spokane Veterans Home:** A total of fourteen Residents have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since December 29, 2021. Of those, ten have recovered and three remain in isolation.

Residents on the affected units are being proactively tested. We are working closely with the local health jurisdictions and following guidance from them, the Centers for Disease Control, Centers for Medicare, and Medicaid Services (CMS), and our State Department of Health to ensure we are safeguarding our residents and staff.

Staff are tested in accordance with guidance from local health jurisdictions as well as CMS and our State Department of Health. Staff are also paying close attention to whether they have any symptoms, including the presence of a fever. As part of our ongoing screening process, all staff are screened upon arrival at work each day. This process includes a series of questions around whether symptoms are present and a temperature check. In addition, staff are asked to report any symptoms that occur after coming to work.

All staff are wearing appropriate PPE and we have adequate supplies of all PPE. Additional environmental cleaning continues to take place.

As a part of our continued effort to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the State Veterans Homes are vaccine administrators and are providing COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots. We encourage all residents, staff, and community members to consider getting vaccinated and getting a booster for COVID-19.

**Visitation Updates for Families:** We're excited to share that both CMS and WA State Safe Start for Long Term Care have modified their visitation guidelines effective February 23, 2022. Below is a summary of the major changes, but you can read both pieces of guidance in full here: [CMS](#) and [WA State Safe Start for LTC](#).

What is staying the same?

- Visitors must sign in at the entrance to the facility and provide contact information.

- Visitors must be screened prior to entering the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Any items of concern for illness or exposure found during screening will result in restriction from visitation.
- Visitors must attest to COVID-19 status if known.
- Visitation, except for compassionate care and Essential Support Persons, may be restricted or paused if there is an outbreak or other clinical issue. We will follow guidance from the local health jurisdiction when making these decisions.
- Residents and visitors must wear masks while in communal areas and while in a resident's room if a roommate is present.

#### What is changing?

- Visitors must sign a new [Visitor Agreement](#) which includes a statement regarding the risks of engaging in close contact with the resident while not wearing a mask.
- Visits no longer need to be scheduled in advance and multiple visitors can attend, including children, as long as physical distancing can be maintained. If we determine that we have too many visitors at a given time, making physical distancing impossible, we may have to restructure this visitation policy.
- Residents and visitors may dine together, either in the resident's room or in the dining area if physical distancing (6' apart) can be maintained between other residents. Visitors must wear masks when not eating or drinking.
- When visiting in a resident room when a roommate is not present, both the visitors and the resident may choose to remove masks. (We do strongly recommend that you leave them on though!) If a roommate is present, visitors must keep masks on.

We have seen the positive impacts that in person visits have on your loved ones, and hope that these new guidelines will have an even greater impact.

In an effort to provide information as quickly and accurately as possible, we have developed a website to provide information to families and resident representatives, <https://www.dva.wa.gov/covid>.

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