

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Guidance for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

How to Keep your Residents and Buildings Safe and Clean During a Pandemic

July 15, 2020

People living in multi-unit residential buildings may find it challenging to avoid contact with other residents. Avoiding contact with others in the same building is difficult due to having to access common areas like entrances and elevators and using shared facilities such as laundry rooms.

Landlords, property owners, and building managers have a responsibility to implement measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread among residents and staff.

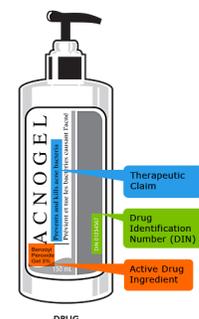
Key Points

- Routine cleaning and disinfection in common areas and high-touch areas are best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Post share information regarding laundry facilities, swimming pools, indoor fitness areas and playgrounds
- Ask residents to limit social gatherings within the building, maintain physical distance with those outside of their household/social circle
- Communicate important messages with residents using signs and materials from public health officials

What you should do:

Cleaning and Disinfection of Common Areas

- Routine cleaning and disinfection are a best practice to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Residential buildings should follow their protocols for routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Be sure to check the expiry date before using cleaners and disinfectants, and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use to ensure their



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effectiveness. Products that have a drug identification number are effective and have been approved for use in Canada.

- Gloves should be worn when handling cleaning and disinfectant products.
- In addition to routine cleaning, high-touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty. Examples of high-touch surfaces in multi-unit residential buildings include enter phones/touch pads, elevator panels and buttons, indoor and outdoor handrails, mailboxes, door handles, recycling and garbage chute handles, and laundry machines.
- Placing hand sanitizer stations in high-traffic areas may be useful for tenants and staff.

Refer to [Public Health Ontario: Cleaning and Disinfection Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

Special Use Areas

- Frequently clean all common areas including elevators, stairwells, and laundry facilities.
- Post [signage](#) by elevators to remind residents and staff to maintain physical distancing.
- Share information with residents on [tips for using shared laundry facilities](#). A schedule or sign-up sheet could be used to minimize the number of people in the laundry room at one time.
- Multi-purpose/community rooms, if regularly cleaned and disinfected, can remain open for gatherings of social circles or of 50 or less people as long as there is a distance of at least 2 metres between members of different households (with the exception of social circles). The use of multipurpose and games rooms should only occur if gathering and physical distancing requirements are met and there are no shared items required.
- Indoor and outdoor swimming pools may open after an opening inspection has been completed by a Public Health Inspector. High-contact aquatic features such as slides and climbing structures and hot tubs must remain closed. Change rooms and showers can be available to the public if operators are able to adequately sanitize and disinfect the facilities. To ensure physical distancing is possible, pool must be reduced to 75% less of the maximum bather capacity, and pool-side seating must be limited/removed and distanced appropriately. See our guidance document on splash pads, pools, and wading areas for more information on maintaining pools during COVID-19. To notify public health of your planned reopening, complete this form.
- [Indoor fitness: See our guidance document on gyms and indoor fitness facilities.](#)
- [Playgrounds: See our guidance document on play structures.](#)

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Building Ventilation

- Changes to building ventilation, temperature, and humidity are currently not recommended in response to COVID-19. However, it is important that these systems in multi-unit residential buildings as functioning as intended. Additional information on building ventilation is below:
 - Ensure mechanical ventilation is working as intended in order to supply its designed ventilation rates.
 - Ensure corridor pressurization is enough to prevent air in infected units from flowing out into hallways.
 - Make sure filters are clean.
 - Suggest that residents increase natural ventilation in units by opening windows.
 - Consult with an HVAC professional prior to making any changes.

Visitor Restrictions

- Ask residents to limit social gatherings to people in their social circle. Although gatherings of up to 50 people are allowed indoors, physical distancing in apartment settings is likely to be difficult and therefore gatherings with people outside one's social circle should be limited.
- The viewing of units for rent or for sale should be done virtually.
- Ensure the needs of vulnerable residents are taken into consideration when restricting visitors, especially those who may require outside assistance such as grocery delivery, medication delivery, and home care.
- Post an “[attention visitors](#)” sign

Residents Positive for COVID-19

- If someone is positive for COVID-19, they must isolate for 14 days. It is important that building management protects the privacy residents, including individuals positive for COVID-19.
- Southwestern Public Health will identify close contacts of someone who tests positive for COVID-19.

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Health Promotion Messaging

- Communicate important messages with residents. There are many materials for your use that have been created by public health officials.
 - What you need to know to keep you and your family healthy
 - Practice physical distancing
 - Coping with stress
 - Wash your hands
 - COVID-19: What to do in Oxford County, Elgin County, and St. Thomas
 - Food access in Elgin St. Thomas
 - Food access in Oxford

**For more information on COVID-19 from Southwestern Public Health,
please visit our website: www.swpublichealth.ca**