

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

How to keep your residents and buildings safe and clean during a pandemic

April 17, 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.

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 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.

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Special Use Areas

- Building management must close non-essential areas in residential buildings like gyms, pools, saunas, playgrounds, and recreation rooms to ensure gathering do not occur. The closure of these areas can help maintain physical distancing and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- It is necessary to keep some common areas open such as elevators, stairwells, and laundry facilities. Frequent cleaning and disinfection should be maintained in these areas.
- [Signage](#) can be posted by elevators to remind residents and staff to physical distance.
- Share information with residents on [tips for using shared laundry facilities](#).

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 are 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 refrain from social gatherings and having visitors during the pandemic.
- 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

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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.

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
 - Practicing social 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**