

# novel coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance

## Admissions to Shelters during COVID-19 Outbreaks

Consider no restrictions on admissions of new clients for shelters under investigation for a COVID-19 outbreak unless there are overarching concerns (e.g. excessive number of individuals ill all at once, site is already at or over capacity, staffing inadequate to manage additional clients.).

In general, for a shelter with a confirmed COVID outbreak, admissions should be on hold until isolation is complete in the last reported case. Refer to the most recent [Alberta Health Public Health Disease Management Guidelines for Coronavirus – COVID-19](#) for the recommendations on when an outbreak can be declared over.

Admissions may be considered before the outbreak is declared over, but ideally only during the 14-day period after isolation is completed in the last reported case. **NOTE:** if a staff member is the only confirmed case, the outbreak is declared over 14 days following their last day at work.

### **Considerations to inform this decision should include an inspection by a Public Health Inspector to assess:**

- Adequacy of screening of staff and clients.
- Consistency and effectiveness of enhanced cleaning protocols.
- Ability to separate ill clients from others; cohorting of staff between ill and healthy clients as applicable.
- Appropriate use of PPE and hand hygiene by staff and clients (including mask use).
- Physical layout – separate areas for clients; sleeping space (distance between clients).
- Organizational aspects – appropriate scheduling and physical distancing for meals, showers, other activities.

Also the MOH should consider communication channels between shelter and MOH/designate, availability of healthcare staff on site, testing arrangements, client risk factors for severe disease (how many, can they be cohorted/protected), occupancy status (i.e. are they at or over-capacity).

The rationale for and decisions made regarding admissions should be documented by the MOH in their own records and within CDOM – the MOH should email their considerations and decisions to the CD investigator for that outbreak, who will then upload the email into the Electronic Filing Cabinet in CDOM for easy reference.