RHRA Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority

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GUIDELINE: Qualifications and Training

Introduction

This Guideline summarizes the requirements of the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* (the Act) and Ontario Regulation 166/11 (the Regulation) with respect to qualifications and training of staff and volunteers in the home.

Some additional information to support licensees is provided in *italic font*. Licensees and operators may also find the information provided in the "Sample Resources" section helpful.

QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING FOR STAFF

Qualifications

Section 65(1) of the Act provides that homes are responsible for ensuring that members of their staff have the proper qualifications and skills needed to perform their duties.

Specifically, homes are required to ensure that:

- If the Regulation requires or permits a member of a College[1] to perform an act, that person holds a current certificate of registration issued by their College that is not subject to a term, condition or limitation — *Reg s. 4(2)*
- All individuals involved in providing any of the following care services have the appropriate, current certificate of registration issued by their College: — *Reg s. 28*
  i. Any service that a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario provides while engaging in the practice of medicine
  ii. Any service that a member of the College of Nurses of Ontario provides while engaging in the practice of nursing
  iii. Any service that a member of the Ontario College of Pharmacists provides while engaging in the practice of pharmacy

Training for New Staff Members

All new staff members must receive training in the following areas before they can begin to work in the home: — *Act s. 65(2)* *Reg s. 14(1)*

- The Residents' Bill of Rights, set out in s. 51 of the Act
- The home's policy to promote zero tolerance of abuse and neglect, as mentioned in s. 67(4) of the Act and described in s. 67(5) of the Act and s. 15 of the Regulation
- Whistle-blowing protection as described in s. 115 of the Act
- The home's policy for use of personal assistance services devices (PASDs), as mentioned in s. 68(3) of the Act and s. 52(1) of the Regulation

[1] The term 'member of a College' is defined in the *Regulated Health Professionals Act, 1991* and includes physicians, nurses and pharmacists.

- Injury prevention

Topics may include safe methods for resident transfers and lifts, strategies to reduce the risk of falls (see s. 22(1) of the Regulation), common medications that may increase the risk of falls, and how to identify, assess and monitor residents who are more likely to sustain an injury in the home.

- Fire prevention and safety

Topics may include:

- *instruction of staff members in their responsibilities for fire safety and the measures to be taken in case of a fire;*
- *content of the home's emergency plan that deals with fires and related risks; and*
- *the evacuation plan posted in the home as required by paragraph 3. of s. 11(1) of the Regulation.*

Licensees should also consider training requirements that apply to 'supervisory staff' under the Fire Code[2].

- The home's emergency evacuation plan, as mentioned in s. 60(3) of the Act
- The home's emergency plan, as mentioned in s. 60(4) of the Act
- The home's infection prevention and control program, as mentioned in s. 60(4) of the Act, including the following specific training requirements set out in s. 27(9) of the Regulation:
  i. the need for and method of proper hand hygiene;
  ii. the method for preventing cross contamination (proper handling of soiled linens, protection of uniforms, separation of clean and dirty items); and
  iii. the need for and process of reporting, documenting and providing surveillance of incidents of infectious illness
- The home's complaints procedure, as described in s. 59 of the Regulation.
- Any legislation, policies of the RHRA and similar documents, including policies of the home, that are relevant to an individual staff member's duties at the home.

  For example, the home's policy for the management of trust accounts for residents required under s. 57(7) of the Regulation.

Training in an Emergency Situation

If a staff member is employed or retained by the home in an emergency, or due to exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, they may need to begin performing their duties before they receive their training. The staff member must receive their training within one week of beginning to perform their duties in the home. *Act s. 65(3)*

This exception applies to unplanned situations only. The regular practice of using an agency nurse or 'borrowing' a nurse from a long-term care wing to cover shifts does not fall under this exception.

[2] Ontario Regulation 213/07 made under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*

Additional Training - Food Preparation

In addition to the training received by all staff, whenever food is prepared in the home, at least one person involved in preparing food must hold a current certificate in food handling from the local public health unit (or have recently successfully completed an equivalent food handling training program). *Reg s. 20(4)*

Contact your local Public Health Unit for information on food handling programs, and any accredited, equivalent programs in your area.

Staff members involved in food preparation services **must** receive adequate training and on an annual basis in the procedures related to the following: *Reg s. 20(3)*

- safe handling and storage of food, including how to maintain food at an appropriate temperature and how to practice good hand hygiene;
- safe operation, cleaning and sanitizing of dishes, utensils and other equipment involved in food preparation;
- separation of clean and dirty dishes during food service;
- the safe disposal of leftover food; and
- appropriate cleaning schedules and sanitation practices.

Additional Training - Direct Care Staff Members

In addition to the training received by all staff, staff members who provide care services directly to residents require training in the following areas as a condition of continuing to have contact with residents: *Act s. 65(5)*

- Abuse recognition and prevention *Act s. 65(5)1.*
- Mental health issues, including caring for persons with dementia *Act s. 65(5)2.*
- Behaviour management *Act s. 65(5)3.*

Including the home's behaviour management strategy as required by s. 23(1) of the Regulation. Topics may include behaviours such as wandering/exit seeking or aggressive residents, and any specific protocols used in the home (for example P.I.E.C.E.S. or the Gentle Persuasive Approach). Some of the training may be provided by external organizations - refer to the Sample Resources section.

- Ways to minimize the need of residents for PASDs and, if a resident needs a PASD, ways of using it in accordance with manufacturer operating instructions, the Act and Regulations *Act s. 65(5)4.*
- Ways to encourage and provide mental stimulation of residents, and the positive effects of doing so *Reg s. 14(3)(a)*

Staff should learn about the benefits of mental stimulation for residents, as well as techniques for providing mental stimulation and encouraging resident participation in the activities offered. For more guidance, refer to the Sample Resources section.

- All care services offered in the home, so that the staff member understands the general nature of those care services, the applicable standards under the Act and Regulation and the aspects of those care services that may be applicable to the staff member's own duties in the home. The RHRA's expectation is that if there is a specific care service for a resident, *Reg s. 14(3)(b)*

staff members working with that resident should be trained on how to provide appropriate care, in accordance with the plan of care.

Note: a member of a College who supervises the home's dementia care program must have specific training in dementia care and the care of older adults. Reg s. 41(4).

Direct care training must be provided as soon as possible, and in any event, within six months of employment. *Reg s. 14(4)*

The persons who are required to receive the training described in subsection 65 (5) of the Act, which is highlighted earlier in this section, must receive that training on an ongoing basis, namely at least annually *Reg s. 14(5)*

A staff member may be exempt from some or all of the training required by s. 14(3) of the Regulation (mental stimulation of residents and all care services offered in the home) if the licensee can demonstrate that the staff member has already received it through an educational program (for example, a nurse who has completed an education program approved by the College of Nurses of Ontario).

Additional Training - Administration of a Drug or other Substance

In addition to the training received by all staff, the licensee or a staff member may not administer a drug to a resident in the home unless they have received training in the procedures applicable to the administration of the drug. *Reg s. 29(c)*

The licensee or any staff member involved in the administration of the drug or other substance at the home must be trained in: *Reg s. 29(e)*

- ways of reducing the incidence of infectious disease, including maintaining proper hand hygiene,
- the safe disposal of syringes and other sharps, and
- recognizing an adverse drug reaction and taking appropriate action.

Ongoing Training for all Staff

All staff members require ongoing training. The home is required to re-train all staff members in each of the areas applicable to them as outlined above, at least once each year. *Act s. 65(4)* *Reg s. 14(2)* *Reg s. 14(5)*

Ongoing training may happen at any time in the year - its timing does not depend on the date of the initial training or the training provided during the preceding year. There are no exemptions from ongoing training.

TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Homes are responsible for ensuring that any volunteer who is allowed to participate in the lives and activities of residents in the home is trained in: *Act s. 66*

- Applying the home's emergency plan
- Applying the home's infection prevention and control program
- The home's policy to promote zero tolerance for abuse and neglect of residents

The terms 'staff' and 'volunteer' are defined in s. 2 of the Act. Generally, students (including co-op students) working in the home, whether paid or unpaid, are considered staff of the home and require all the applicable training. High school students completing community service hours in the home would generally be considered volunteers. If you require assistance to determine whether an individual working in the home is a staff member or volunteer, call the RHRA at the number provided below.

INFORMATION FOR EXTERNAL CARE PROVIDERS

The licensee shall ensure that as soon as is practical after the licensee is made aware that an external care provider is or will be providing care services to a resident in the retirement home, the external care provider is provided with information with respect to the home's policy to promote zero tolerance for abuse and neglect of residents. *Reg s. 14.1*

At a minimum, licensees must provide documentation to external care providers which includes:

- Definitions of abuse and neglect as per the Act, and a statement that abuse or neglect will not be tolerated;
- The person's responsibility to immediately report incidents of abuse and/or neglect, and to whom;
- The licensee's procedures for reporting and responding to suspicions, allegations, and witnessed incidents of abuse and/or neglect;
- Consequences for those who have abused or neglected a resident.

"External care provider" (ECP) means a person who provides care services to a resident of a retirement home and who is not the licensee of the home, the staff of the home or a volunteer with respect to the home. ECPs may be employees of other healthcare agencies or someone else who is contracted and paid directly by the resident or their substitute decision maker.

DOCUMENTATION OF TRAINING

Licensees are required to keep a record proving that they have met the requirements related to staff skills, qualifications and training, and the training of volunteers. *Reg s. 55(5) (c) & (d)*

EXEMPTIONS

If someone who is to perform work at the retirement home meets the below criteria, the licensee is exempt from s. 65 (2) and (4) of the Act, which outlines onboarding training and annual retraining requirements, and s. 14 (1) and (2) of the Regulation, which outlines requirements relating to the home's complaints procedure and annual training obligations:

1. The person falls under clause (b) or (c) of the definition of "staff" in subsection 2 (1) of the Act.

2. The person is only to provide occasional maintenance or repair services to the home or entertainment or religious or recreational services in the home.

3. The person is not to provide direct care to residents.

4. The person is to be monitored and supervised by the licensee in accordance with written policies that the licensee has prepared to monitor and supervise persons who provide occasional maintenance or repair services to the home or entertainment or religious or recreational services in the home.

This exemption, set out in s. 14 (2.1) of the Regulation, only applies if the licensee provides the person described in that subsection with information, before the person performs work at the retirement home, with

respect to the home's **policy to promote zero tolerance for abuse and neglect of residents**, **emergency plan** and **infection prevention and control program,** outlined below:

Policy to promote zero tolerance of abuse and neglect

At a minimum, licensees must provide documentation to persons who fall under section (2.1) which includes:

- Definitions of abuse and neglect as per the *RHA*, 2010;
- The person's responsibility to immediately report incidents of abuse and/or neglect, and to whom;
- The licensee's procedures for reporting and responding to suspicions, allegations, and witnessed incidents of abuse and/or neglect;
- Consequences for those who have been found to have abused or neglected a resident.

Emergency plan

At a minimum, licensees must provide documentation to persons who fall under section (2.1) which includes:

- An internal contact person for emergencies, or who at the home to report an emergency to in order to initiate a response.
- A list of potential emergencies, risks and hazards that are considered in the overarching plan;
- How the person will be made aware if there is an emergency in the home;
- Steps the home will take in case of a fire and/or evacuation of the home;

Infection prevention and control program

At a minimum, licensees must provide documentation to persons who fall under section (2.1) which includes:

- Information about appropriate hand hygiene, including where to access hand sanitizer in the home;
- Information about the importance of physical distancing where possible;
- Information about PPE, including availability in the home and, if applicable, expectations for use while the person is in the home;
- A statement about not attending the home if the person is ill or symptomatic;
- A statement about the person's responsibility to adhere to any other IPAC measures applicable to the home and the person, any time they are in the home.

RHRA expects that the above information would be provided prior to or at the start of the person's work in the home. This can be provided as a factsheet.

RHRA guidelines are not a substitute for the Act and Regulations, and licensees and others should consider the guidelines in light of the relevant provisions of the Act and Regulation, taking account of any changes to them that may occur after the RHRA issued a guideline. RHRA guidelines do not provide legal advice and they do not fetter the discretion of Registrar in making statutory decisions. Licensees should review the following sections of the Act and Regulation which relate to Qualifications and Training:

	Act	Regulations
Obligations of licensees re staff	65(1)	
Information for external care providers		14.1
Staff training	65(2)	14
Training of volunteers	66	
Food preparation		20(3)-(4)
Emergency Plans		25-26
Infection prevention and control program training		27(9)
Administration of a drug or another substance		29(c) & 29(e)
Dementia care program		41(4)
Records		55-56

The Act and the Regulation are available at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

For more information contact the RHRA:

By Mail: 55 York St.
Suite 700
Toronto, ON
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Telephone: **1-855-ASK-RHRA** (1-855-275-7472)
Fax: **1-855-631-0170**
Email: info@rhra.ca
Website: www.rhra.ca

SAMPLE RESOURCES

The RHRA is providing links to these websites to assist licensees to meet requirements related to qualifications and training. The RHRA has no control over these websites and is not responsible for their privacy practices. You should review the privacy policies of these websites before navigating them. The RHRA makes no representation about the accuracy or any other aspect of the information on any of these websites. The RHRA does not endorse these websites or the information on them. The RHRA assumes no responsibility for the results of the use of these websites by anyone.

Professional associations and accreditation bodies may provide additional resources for licensees in connection with the topics covered in RHRA Guidelines.

Injury Prevention

RNAO's best practice guideline for prevention of falls: Preventing Falls and Reducing Injury from Falls | RNAO.ca

Fire Prevention and Safety

The Office of the Fire Marshall offers an online training course for Staff in Retirement Homes: PSHSA - Improving Fire Safety for Vulnerable Ontarians: Training for Supervisory Staff of Care Occupancies, Care and Treatment Occupancies and retirement Homes

Infection Prevention & Control

For further guidance on infection prevention & control, refer to the RHRA's guideline available at: https://www.rhra.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/RHRA-IPAC-Guidelines-FINAL-Sept-2024-EN.pdf

Information on proper hand hygiene: Hand Hygiene | Public Health Ontario

Food Preparation and Handling

As an example of programs offered, the Toronto Public Health program can be found here: Food handler training and certification | ontario.ca

CIFS Food Handler Certification

Canadian Food Safety: Food Safety Certification

Food Handler Training Ontario | 5* Reviews | Train Food Safety

Abuse recognition and prevention

Elder Abuse Ontario provides a variety of educational tools, including interactive resources to increase recognition of abuse: Home - Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario

RNAO's practice guidelines for:

- promoting awareness of elder abuse: http://rnao.ca/bpg/initiatives/promoting-awareness-elder-abuse-longterm-care
- Preventing and Addressing Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults: Person-Centred, Collaborative, System-Wide Approaches: http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/abuse-and-neglect-older-adults

Mental Health and Dementia

The RNAO e-learning course on Delirium, Dementia and Depression: http://elearning.rnao.ca/

A range of professional development resources are provided by the Alzheimer's Society of Canada: I'm a health-care provider | Alzheimer Society of Canada

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario Fact Sheet "On your way to brain health" provides information about the benefits of exercise and social and mental stimulation: 2012 Walk Sponsorship (full package)

The U-First! dementia education and training program for healthcare professionals in Ontario: http://u-first.ca/

Behavioural Supports Ontario: Home | brainXchange

Skin and Wound Care

Wounds Canada offers opportunities for health care professionals to advance their wound management knowledge and skills: Home - Wounds Canada