



Social Assistance Act/Regulations Reg. 5(1)	Division	Social Programs	
	Subject	Home Visits	Policy #
Effective Date: November 3, 2020		Authorized by:	
Revised Date:		Deputy Minister David Keedwell	

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To identify when a home visit is required with applicants of a program provided by the Social Programs Division.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 **Applicant:** a person who applies for a program under the Social Programs Division, on whose behalf an application is made, or a person who receives benefits under a program of the Social Programs Division.

2.2 **Home Visit:** a meeting between the applicant and Social Programs staff which occurs in the place where the applicant resides.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Home visits allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the needs and circumstances of applicants requiring assistance and enables reaching out to applicants who are unable to attend office appointments.

3.2 Reasons for conducting a home visit may include one or more of the following:

- a) A need for a more comprehensive assessment of initial or ongoing eligibility;
- b) when an applicant is unable to come for an office appointment;
- c) if a home visit is requested by the applicant;
- d) to verify information shared by the applicant; or
- e) to assess requests for special needs items that may be best assessed in the context of the applicant’s physical environment.

3.3 Home visits may be waived by Social Programs staff in situations such as:

- a) When meaningful contact with the applicant can be established by an alternative manner such as via telephone conversations, during office visits, through community-based meetings, and/or by digital solutions (e.g. video conferencing, e-mailing, texting);
- b) when a home visit is not considered necessary to assess the needs and supports for the applicant;
- c) when a home visit presents an undue risk;
- d) if the applicant has a known history of violence or inappropriate behavior; or

- e) in the case of a public health emergency and to comply with public health protocols.
- 3.4 If an applicant has a valid reason to refuse a request for a home visit, the visit may be rescheduled or home visits could be waived.

4.0 PROCEDURE STATEMENT

- 4.1 Social Programs staff may conduct home visits as they deem necessary, based on the applicant's circumstances, and if a need arises. The applicant is to be notified in advance of a home visit to facilitate information gathering prior to the visit. All home visits need to be scheduled.
- 4.2 Following a home visit, the Social Programs staff will document the purpose of the home visit, the major areas discussed during the visit, and any follow-up action required in the applicant's file.
- 4.3 If required, and in consultation with the supervisor, Social Programs staff may be accompanied by a colleague to a home visit to reduce safety concerns.
- 4.4 Social Programs staff may consult with their supervisor in making the decision to waive home visits to an applicant, if it is due to a reason beyond the situations presented above and/or if they require validation for the decision being made. A decision to waive home visits must be documented in the applicant's file, including the reason for waiving the home visits. This decision should be re-assessed during the annual review.
- 4.5 If an applicant refuses a request for a home visit for any reason, it must be documented in the applicant's file, including reason for refusal as well as decision to reschedule or waive home visits. Valid reasons may include:
- a) illness in the home,
 - b) mourning,
 - c) religious observance,
 - d) visitors in the home, and/or
 - e) safety concerns.
- 4.6 If an applicant refuses to allow entry to their home for any reason after a home visit is scheduled, or if the Social Programs staff feels threatened, they are to withdraw from the visit and leave the home. Any difficulties encountered must be documented in the applicant's file and reported to the appropriate supervisor.
- 4.7 Home visits conducted both during and after office hours will follow all internal safety procedures of each office for tracking staff conducting home visits.
- 4.8 Social Programs staff required to do home visits will follow the Public Service Commission Working Alone Policy and departmental Working Alone Procedures.

5.0 REFERENCES

- 5.1 Public Service Commission Working Alone Policy
https://psc.gpei.ca/sites/psc.gpei.ca/files/HRPolicy/HRManual_9.04.pdf;
- 5.2 Department of Social Development and Housing – Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations - Human Resources - Working Alone Procedures
<https://insite.gov.pe.ca/documents/64504/273165/CSS+Working+Alone+Procedures>

HISTORY:

November 3, 2020 - Was previously a Social Assistance policy only but has been expanded to apply to all programs of the Social Programs division. It has been updated to reflect the change from requiring home visits with almost all clients, to providing home visits based on specific criteria.