



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE PROVIDERS

Emergency Leave

19/06/2020

Due to recent legislation changes, there is a new emergency leave provision. Permanent aged care residents can now take temporary leave from an aged care home during an emergency. This includes disasters (natural or otherwise), pandemics or epidemics.

In the event of an emergency situation the Government will decide:

- if an emergency exists
- the area of impact, and
- the duration of the emergency.

The new leave provision means that, in the event of an emergency situation, residents will not need to:

- use their social leave entitlements, or
- pay their aged care provider further fees to secure their place.

The Government has determined the COVID-19 pandemic is an emergency situation. The period of this emergency is from 1 April 2020 until 30 September 2020. Emergency leave is now available for permanent aged care residents during this period. This fact sheet explains these changes for aged care providers.

Emergency leave during COVID-19 pandemic

Residents can use the new emergency leave to take temporary leave from their aged care home.

The Government has decided this emergency leave:

- covers all permanent aged care residents from all services across Australia
- dates back to 1 April 2020
- is available until 30 September 2020.

Residents cannot take emergency leave for the COVID-19 pandemic outside of these dates.

Do residents have to pay any fees while on emergency leave?

When residents take emergency leave they must continue to pay their:

- basic daily fees,
- means tested care fees, and
- daily accommodation fees.

This is the same as when they take social leave.

The Government will continue to pay you residential care subsidies while a resident is on emergency leave. This ensures providers are not disadvantaged.

Can a resident take emergency leave now?

Yes. The COVID-19 pandemic is an emergency situation. Emergency leave is available from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020. If a resident takes non-hospital leave between these dates they will be on emergency leave.

Can a resident use emergency leave for a hospital stay?

No. Residents cannot use emergency leave for hospital stays. A resident admitted to hospital during the emergency leave period must take hospital leave for their time in hospital.

What if a resident has used their social leave and exceeded their allocated days during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A resident may have taken social leave because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They can use emergency leave for leave taken from 1 April 2020 until 30 September 2020.

Emergency leave does not apply to any leave taken before 1 April 2020.

This emergency leave period ends on 30 September 2020. After this date, all residents will have a full 52 day social leave balance for the 2020-21 financial year.

A resident has exceeded their social leave balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. What if they paid fees to the aged care home in order to keep their place?

You will need to reimburse residents for any fees they paid since 1 April 2020 for exceeding their social leave balance.

Emergency leave does not apply to any leave taken or fees paid before 1 April 2020.

The Government is encouraging providers to refund any fees paid by a resident as soon as practical. The Government will pay residential care subsidy to you for those days so you will not be out-of-pocket.

Claiming Emergency Leave

Services Australia are currently making changes to the payment and claim system. These changes will allow providers to claim the Government subsidy when residents take emergency leave. You should continue to code the resident as being on social leave.

Further advice on these changes will be provided soon. For general claiming and payment assistance please contact Services Australia on 1800 195 206 or email: aged.care.liaison@servicesaustralia.gov.au.