



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION FOR PERMANENT AGED CARE RESIDENTS

Emergency Leave

19/06/2020

Recent legislation changes have introduced a new emergency leave provision. Permanent aged care residents can now take temporary leave from an aged care home during an emergency situation. This could include disasters (natural or otherwise), pandemics or epidemics.

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

- that 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 additional fees to secure their place.

The Government, through the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, 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 is to assist permanent residents and their families to understand the impact of these changes.

Use of emergency leave during the COVID-19 pandemic

You can use the new emergency leave to take temporary leave from your aged care home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government has determined this emergency leave:

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

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

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

When you take emergency leave you must continue to pay your:

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

This is the same as when you take social leave.

During this time, the Government will continue to pay the aged care subsidy to your provider. You won't pay further fees to retain your place at the aged care home.

Discuss with your aged care home any concerns around paying these fees, including if you experience financial hardship.

Can I take emergency leave now?

Yes. If you feel safer staying with family who can provide you with care, you can take emergency leave. The current pandemic is an emergency situation. Emergency leave is available from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

If you wish to take leave from your aged care home you should:

- speak with your aged care provider, and
- tell them that you wish to take emergency leave.

Can I use emergency leave for a hospital stay?

No. Emergency leave does not cover hospital stays. If you are admitted to hospital during the emergency leave period you must take hospital leave while in hospital.

What if I have used my social leave and exceeded my allocated days during the COVID-19 pandemic?

You may have taken social leave because of the COVID-19 pandemic. You 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.

The 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.

I have exceeded my social leave balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. What if I have paid fees to the aged care home in order to keep my place?

You may have taken social leave due to the pandemic and exceeded your allocated 52 days. You may then have paid fees to retain your place within the aged care home.

Your aged care home must reimburse you for any fees you have paid for this purpose since 1 April 2020.

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

You should discuss the reimbursement of these fees with your aged care home. Providers should refund these fees as soon as practical.