

County of Essex Policy and Procedures Manual

Visitor Policy

Policy Number:	2023-002
Policy Type:	Corporate Policy
Approval Authority:	Essex County Council
Office of Responsibility:	Administration
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Replaces Policy:	N/A

1.0 Introduction

The Corporation of the County of Essex (the "**County**") is committed to taking all reasonably necessary measures to ensure the safety of those who work, visit, or do business at County facilities.

In support of that commitment, the County requires that all Visitors to its facilities go through a security screening process and follow check in procedures in place from time to time, prior to being granted access to the County's facilities.

2.0 Scope

This Visitor Policy pertains to all visitors to buildings owned by the County, including, but not limited to the County's administration building, located at municipal address 360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex, Ontario (the "**Administration Building**") and any and all other properties owned by the County. Further, this Visitor Policy applies not just to "visitors" of the County, but also to any and all "visitors" to any tenant in buildings owned by the County, including, but not limited to, the Administration Building.

3.0 Definitions

Facilities:	Means all properties owned by the County.
Prohibited Item(s):	Means any object that may compromise safety and security, including, but not limited to the items listed in Section 5.3 below.
Visitor:	Means an individual who does not have officially authorized access to employee areas of buildings owned by the County. Notwithstanding the above definition of "Visitor", the term "Visitor" does not apply to any employee of a tenant of the Administration Building. Further, notwithstanding the above, employees and contractors may be treated in the same manner as a "Visitor" to County facilities where they do not normally work.

4.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Visitor Policy is to attempt to provide safety to visitors and employees at the County's Facilities, and to provide compliance with the County's obligations to take such steps as are necessary to provide a safe work environment.

5.0 Procedures

5.1 Visitors by Appointment

Except as otherwise provided for in this Policy, all Visitors to County Facilities are expected to make an appointment in advance, attend at the designated reception area prior to their appointment, follow the direction of such County employee or delegate assigned to the reception area, and comply with the security measures in place from time to time for Visitors, which measures shall, at a minimum, include:

- 1) Signing in by providing their full name and the individual they are visiting in the County Facilities;

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- 2) Wearing the Visitor badge provided to them;
- 3) Waiting in the reception area until they are retrieved by the individual and/or a staff member of the Department they are visiting;
- 4) In addition to any Public Conduct Policy in place, as may be updated from time to time by the County, Visitors shall obey the following rules of conduct at all times, and failing compliance will be required to immediately leave the County Facilities:
 - (a) Follow all verbal instructions and signs;
 - (b) Remain with your designated host;
 - (c) Do not touch or attempt to touch or operate any machine, device, or equipment of the County without direct and clear authorization to do so by your designated host;
 - (d) Do not engage in any rough or boisterous conduct, or interrupt the work of County employees; and
- 5) At the conclusion of their visit, Visitors will be walked back to the reception area by their designated host and/or a staff member of the Department the Visitor was visiting, at which time the Visitor will be signed out and will return their Visitor badge.

Visitors may attend at the County Facilities without an appointment in advance, but they may be denied entry if the individual they wish to meet with is not available to meet at the date and time they attend at the County Facilities without an appointment. Should an unscheduled appointment be able to be accommodated by the County the same security measures as described above for scheduled appointments shall apply.

5.2 County Council and other Public Meetings

Meetings of County Council and other meetings open to the public are held at the County's Administration Building from time to time. Visitors to the County's Administration Building (or such other venue as may be designated by the County from time to time for a public

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meeting to be held) for a public meeting, shall come to the designated reception area, follow the direction of such County employee/delegate assigned to the reception area, and comply with the security measures in place from time to time for Visitors at public meetings, which measures may include:

- 1) Signing in and obtaining a Visitor badge;
- 2) Wearing the Visitor badge provided to them;
- 3) Proceeding directly to Council Chambers, or such other room designated for the public meeting, and remaining there until the conclusion of the meeting except to utilize the designated public restroom or to leave the Administration Building or such other venue selected by the County from time to time for a public meeting;
- 4) In addition to any Public Conduct Policy in effect, as may be updated from time to time by the County, Visitors at public meetings shall obey the following rules of conduct at all times, and failing compliance will be required to immediately leave the Administration Building, or such other venue selected by the County from time to time for a public meeting:
 - (a) Follow all instructions on signage or as provided verbally by County staff;
 - (b) Remain in the designated public areas and not access, or attempt to access restricted areas;
 - (c) Do not touch, or attempt to touch any item on display, such as signage, artwork, or equipment;
 - (d) Do not intentionally damage any property of the County, or such other venue selected by the County from time to time for a public meeting;
 - (e) Do not engage in boisterous conduct and/or horseplay;
 - (f) Do not interrupt the public meeting and only speak when permitted to by the Chair of the meeting;

- (g) Follow all instructions provided by the Chair of the meeting.
- 5) At the conclusion of their attendance at the public meeting, Visitors shall proceed to the reception area to return their Visitor badge, sign-out, and shall exit the Council Chambers, the Administration Building, or such other venue selected by the County from time to time for a public meeting.

Council Chambers in the County's Administration Building (or such other venue as may be selected by the County from time to time for a public meeting) is subject to capacity limits. Notwithstanding the provisions of the County's By-law to Provide Rules Governing the Order and Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex (as may be amended from time to time), once the capacity limits of any venue used by the County for public meetings have been reached, Visitors will be denied entry and will be provided with any alternate viewing instructions, such as a livestream option, being made available to said Visitors that cannot be granted entry due to capacity limits being reached.

5.3 Prohibited Items

During any visit to any of the County Facilities, any object that is deemed by County staff, in their sole and absolute discretion, to compromise safety and security is strictly prohibited. Visitors attempting to enter any of the County Facilities with any Prohibited Item(s) will be required to leave, and will have to confirm disposal of the Prohibited Item(s) off of County property prior to being granted entry to any of the County Facilities.

These Prohibited Items include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Firearms and Imitation Firearms
- 2) Blades, Edged or Sharp Objects, Sticks, and Striking Devices
- 3) Compressed Gas Cylinders, Aerosol Cans, or Powders
- 4) Explosive and/or Flammable Substances
- 5) Noisemakers, megaphones, and/or Air Horns

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- 6) Large placards or signs, **unless** made of paper or cloth and not attached to a rigid object, such as a wooden or metal stake.
- 5.4 Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 5.3 of this Visitor Policy above, kirpans in a sheath are permitted by initiated Sikhs, providing that they do not exceed a maximum length of 19 centimeters, and remains concealed and sheathed while at any of the County Facilities. However, any kirpan must be identified by the individual to the County staff conducting the screening.
- 5.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 5.3 or 5.4 above, any other individual who wishes to obtain an exemption to bring any otherwise Prohibited Item(s) into County Facilities, must seek an exemption on a permitted ground as identified in the *Human Rights Code* in writing directed to the Clerk of the County. Unless and until an exemption is granted by the Clerk of the County, a Visitor, except in accordance with Section 5.4 above, may not bring any Prohibited Item(s) into County Facilities.
- 5.6 Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5 above, this Section 5 does not apply to law enforcement and other emergency personnel who are on-duty, or any other person engaged by the County to perform contract services that require the use of any Prohibited Item(s).
- 5.7 To make the screening and security process described in this Section 5 proceed as quickly as possible Visitors are encouraged to do the following:
 - 1) Leave bags and purses at home or in their vehicle;
 - 2) If a metal scanning device is used, remove your phone, keys, and any other metal object from pockets, and open any bags and/or purses preparing them for inspection; and
 - 3) Dispose of any Prohibited Items prior to attending at any County Facilities.

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- 5.8 Contravention of this Visitor Policy by any Visitor may lead in the removal of the Visitor from County Facilities, and, if deemed necessary by the County, in its sole and absolute discretion, the barring of the offending Visitor from County Facilities for such period of time as the County may deem appropriate, which period may be permanently. Any barring of a Visitor from County Facilities shall comply with the County's Trespass to Property Policy, and is subject to the review provisions provided for therein.

6.0 Responsibility

- 6.1 The CAO is responsible for ensuring that this Visitor Policy is reviewed and updated as required.
- 6.2 Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that persons under their direction and/or supervision are made aware of and comply with this Visitor Policy. Managers and supervisors are further responsible for investigating any breach of this Visitor Policy by those persons under their direction and/or supervision, and taking such corrective and/or disciplinary action as may be required.
- 6.3 All employees are responsible for ensuring their own adherence to this Visitor Policy and not allowing entry to any Visitor to any of the County's Facilities unless the Visitor's entry is compliant with this Visitor Policy.

7.0 Related Documents

- County of Essex Procedure By-law
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Public Conduct Policy
- Trespass to Property Policy

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8.0 Summary of Amendments

Date	Amendment(s)
2023-05-03	Council report 2023-0503-LCS-R07-MB adopts policy. Resolution 114-2023
2026-09-02	Report 2026-0902-LLS-R49-KH Council Procedure By-Law and Governance Review outlined amendments to the policy including softening the language and allowing placards and signs within certain parameters. Adopted by Essex County Council on September 2, 2026, under resolution 266-2026.

Appendices

None