

# A Day in the Life of a PSW

Presented by the Ontario  
PSW Association

**OPSWA**

ONTARIO  
PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS  
ASSOCIATION



# The Personal Support Worker (PSW)

- The Personal Support Worker plays a pivotal role in the delivery of health care across all settings and as such a description of a daily routine presents some difficulties.



# Personal Support Worker & LTC

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Health care professionals' routines are shaped by patient needs and care requirements and, when applicable, regulatory and legislative requirements.



For the benefit of this presentation, we will be providing a general overview of the pattern of the daily life of the PSW based on the care setting of the patient.



# Long Term Care in Ontario




## Daily Life of a PSW in Long-Term Care (LTC)

- Highly time-sensitive work environment
- Day typically begins with waking up residents

## Main Shifts in LTC:

- Morning Shift
- Afternoon Shift
- Overnight Shift

## Additional Roles/Shifts (varies by facility):

- **Bath Nurse** – Responsible for resident hygiene and bathing
  - **Float PSW** – Assists where needed throughout different units or tasks
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# Morning Shift – Early/mid

## Morning

### Morning Shift Routine – PSW Duties

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before shift begins
- Shift debrief with overnight staff

### **Morning Resident Care:**

- Wake up residents and assist with the morning routine
- Help dress
- Assist with toileting
- Change incontinence products
- Wash face, underarms, and peri area
- Brush teeth or clean dentures
- Apply body lotion
- Brush hair

### **Additional Duties:**

- Assist fellow PSWs with lifts and transfers
- Load residents into the dining room
- Assist with feeding residents who need help
- Return residents to their rooms after meals
- Toilet if needed
- Shower residents on the designated list for the day

# Morning shift – late morning/early afternoon

- **Snack cart:** Comes around late morning

- **Restock personal care carts:**

- Replenish required briefs and peri cloths in each resident's room

- **Documentation:**

- Fill out daily care reports for each resident

- **Resident support:**

- Assist residents who want to attend events in the common area

- **Prepare for lunch:**

- Get residents ready

- Bring all residents to the dining room

- Assist with feeding as needed

- **Post-lunch care:**

- Take residents back to their rooms

- Transfer them to bed or toilet

- Perform personal care tasks

- **Final documentation:**

- Complete daily care reports for each resident

- **Shift handoff:**


- Debrief with Afternoon Shift staff

# Afternoon – early evening shift

- Ensure all residents have the required incontinence products/pre-clothes
- Take the snack cart around to all residents
- Assist residents with toileting and transfers
- Escort residents to events or back to their rooms afterward
- Begin preparing residents for dinner
- Assist residents to the dining room
- Help feed residents as needed
- Return residents to their rooms.
- Escort interested residents to event in common area.
- Begin bedtime preparations.
- Shower residents on your list. Put residents to bed, one at a time.
- Assist coworkers with lifts/transfers.
- Complete daily care documentation.
- Complete secondary checks and brief changes
- Restock personal care carts.
- Stock resident rooms with briefs and peri cloths.
- Retrieve residents from common area and assist to bed.
- End-of-shift report and debrief with overnight staff.



# Overnight Shift

- Do rounds in each resident's room
  - Answer call bells as needed
  - Reposition residents every 2 hours (Q2H)
  - Help residents who wander or experience sundowning
  - Restock carts and the utility closet
  - Complete daily care reports (In some homes).
  - Fold and put away laundry
  - Clean 5 or 6 wheelchairs nightly
  - Early rising residents – help get them ready for the day
  - Debrief with morning staff
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# The Other Side of PSW Duty

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- The majority of PSWs are women, often single mothers aged 30 and older.
- Many PSWs are employed in multiple part-time roles to earn a livable income.
- PSWs report working short-staffed in 91% of their shifts.
- The profession experiences a high rate of physical and emotional burnout.
- PSWs often face competition from agency staff, who may not be held to the same training or qualification standards.
- Inconsistent staffing and pay disparities between agency and in-house workers contribute to job dissatisfaction and retention challenges.





# Random Events: What Can Happen and What Does Happen



- Family members visiting residents
- Families requesting immediate attention or care
- Families interrupting staff duties
- Resident death
- Communication from hospitals
- Staffing shortages
- Infectious disease outbreaks
- Security breaches or unauthorized individuals on the premises
- Fire emergencies
- Changes in medications or adverse drug reactions
- Admission of new residents
- Interpersonal conflicts between residents

# The Ontario PSW Association

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# PSW WEEK

May 18 - 24, 2025

Stay tuned on OPSWA's social media pages for exciting information, celebrations, and livestreams, all about YOU- the PSWs!

