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Title 42 – Public Health

Chapter IV – Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services

Subchapter G – Standards and Certification

Part 483 – Requirements for States and Long Term Care Facilities

Subpart B – Requirements for Long Term Care Facilities

Source: 54 FR 5359, Feb. 2, 1989, unless otherwise noted.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1302, 1320a-7, 1395i, 1395hh and 1396r.

§ 483.90 Physical environment.

The facility must be designed, constructed, equipped, and maintained to protect the health and safety of residents, personnel and the public.

(a) *Life safety from fire.*

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this section—

- (i) The LTC facility must meet the applicable provisions and must proceed in accordance with the Life Safety Code (NFPA 101 and Tentative Interim Amendments TIA 12-1, TIA 12-2, TIA 12-3, and TIA 12-4.)
- (ii) Notwithstanding paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section, corridor doors and doors to rooms containing flammable or combustible materials must be provided with positive latching hardware. Roller latches are prohibited on such doors.
- (iii) If a facility is Medicare- or Medicaid-certified before July 5, 2016 and the facility has previously used the Fire Safety Evaluation System for compliance, the facility may use the scoring values in the following Mandatory Values Chart:

Table 1 to paragraph (a)(1)(iii) -- Mandatory Values—Nursing Homes

Zone Location	Containment (Sa)		Extinguishment (Sb)		People Movement (Sc)	
	New	Exist.	New	Exist.	New	Exist.
1 st story	11	5	15(12)*	4	8(5)*	1
2 nd or 3 rd story	15	9	17(14)*	6	10(7)*	3
4 th story or higher	18	9	19(16)*	6	11(8)*	3

* Use () in zones that do not contain patient sleeping rooms.

- (2) In consideration of a recommendation by the State survey agency or Accrediting Organization or at the discretion of the Secretary, may waive, for periods deemed appropriate, specific provisions of the Life Safety Code, which would result in unreasonable hardship upon a long-term care facility, but only if the waiver will not adversely affect the health and safety of the patients.

- (3) The provisions of the Life safety Code do not apply in a State where CMS finds, in accordance with applicable provisions of sections 1819(d)(2)(B)(ii) and 1919(d)(2)(B)(ii) of the Act, that a fire and safety code imposed by State law adequately protects patients, residents and personnel in long term care facilities.
- (4) A long-term care facility may install alcohol-based hand rub dispensers in its facility if the dispensers are installed in a manner that adequately protects against inappropriate access.
- (5) A long term care facility must:
 - (i) Install, at least, battery-operated single station smoke alarms in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations in resident sleeping rooms and common areas.
 - (ii) Have a program for inspection, testing, maintenance, and battery replacement that conforms to the manufacturer's recommendations and that verifies correct operation of the smoke alarms.
 - (iii) Exception:
 - (A) The facility has system-based smoke detectors in patient rooms and common areas that are installed, tested, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm Code*, for system-based smoke detectors; or
 - (B) The facility is fully sprinklered in accordance with NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*.
- (6) A long term care facility must:
 - (i) Install an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system in accordance with the 1999 edition of NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, as incorporated by reference, throughout the building by August 13, 2013. The Director of the Office of the Federal Register has approved the NFPA 13 1999 edition of the *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, issued July 22, 1999 for incorporation by reference in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. A copy of the Code is available for inspection at the CMS Information Resource Center, 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD or at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/code_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html. Copies may be obtained from the National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02269.
 - (ii) Test, inspect, and maintain an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system in accordance with the 1998 edition of NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, as incorporated by reference. The Director of the Office of the Federal Register has approved the NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, 1998 edition, issued January 16, 1998 for incorporation by reference in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. A copy of the Code is available for inspection at the CMS Information Resource Center, 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD or at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/code_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html. Copies may be obtained from the National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02269.

- (iii) Subject to approval by CMS, a long term care facility may be granted an extension of the sprinkler installation deadline for a time period not to exceed 2 years from August 13, 2013, if the facility meets all of the following conditions:
 - (A) It is in the process of replacing its current building, or undergoing major modifications to improve the living conditions for residents in all unsprinklered living areas that requires the movement of corridor, room, partition, or structural walls or supports, in addition to the installation of a sprinkler system; or, has had its planned sprinkler installation so impaired by a disaster or emergency, as indicated by a declaration under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, that CMS finds it would be impractical to meet the sprinkler installation due date.
 - (B) It demonstrates that it has made the necessary financial commitments to complete the building replacement or modification; or pursuant to a declared disaster or emergency, CMS finds it impractical to make reasonable and necessary financial commitments.
 - (C) Before applying for the deadline extension, it has submitted plans to State and local authorities that are necessary for approval of the replacement building or major modification that includes the required sprinkler installation, and has received approval of the plans from State and local authorities.
 - (D) It agrees to complete interim steps to improve fire safety, as determined by CMS.
- (iv) An extension granted under paragraph (a)(8)(iii) of this section may be renewed once, for an additional period not to exceed 1 year, if the following conditions are met:
 - (A) CMS finds that extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the facility will prevent full compliance with the provisions in paragraph (a)(8)(i) of this section by the end of the first waiver period.
 - (B) All other conditions of paragraph (a)(8)(iii) of this section are met.
- (7) Buildings must have an outside window or outside door in every sleeping room, and for any building constructed after July 5, 2016 the sill height must not exceed 36 inches above the floor. Windows in atrium walls are considered outside windows for the purposes of this requirement.
- (8) When a sprinkler system is shut down for more than 10 hours, the LTC facility must:
 - (i) Evacuate the building or portion of the building affected by the system outage until the system is back in service, or
 - (ii) Establish a fire watch until the system is back in service.
- (b) **Standard: Building safety.** Except as otherwise provided in this section, the LTC facility must meet the applicable provisions and must proceed in accordance with the Health Care Facilities Code (NFPA 99 and Tentative Interim Amendments TIA 12-2, TIA 12-3, TIA 12-4, TIA 12-5 and TIA 12-6).
 - (1) Chapters 7, 8, 12, and 13 of the adopted Health Care Facilities Code do not apply to a LTC facility.
 - (2) If application of the Health Care Facilities Code required under paragraph (b) of this section would result in unreasonable hardship for the LTC facility, CMS may waive specific provisions of the Health Care Facilities Code, but only if the waiver does not adversely affect the health and safety of residents.

(c) **Emergency power.**

- (1) An emergency electrical power system must supply power adequate at least for lighting all entrances and exits; equipment to maintain the fire detection, alarm, and extinguishing systems; and life support systems in the event the normal electrical supply is interrupted.
 - (2) When life support systems are used, the facility must provide emergency electrical power with an emergency generator (as defined in NFPA 99, Health Care Facilities) that is located on the premises.
- (d) **Space and equipment.** The facility must—
- (1) Provide sufficient space and equipment in dining, health services, recreation, living, and program areas to enable staff to provide residents with needed services as required by these standards and as identified in each resident's assessment and plan of care;
 - (2) Maintain all mechanical, electrical, and patient care equipment in safe operating condition; and
 - (3) Conduct regular inspection of all bed frames, mattresses, and bed rails, if any, as part of a regular maintenance program to identify areas of possible entrapment. When bed rails and mattresses are used and purchased separately from the bed frame, the facility must ensure that the bed rails, mattress, and bed frame are compatible.
- (e) **Resident rooms.** Resident rooms must be designed and equipped for adequate nursing care, comfort, and privacy of residents.
- (1) Bedrooms must—
 - (i) Accommodate no more than four residents. For facilities that receive approval of construction or reconstruction plans by State and local authorities or are newly certified after November 28, 2016, bedrooms must accommodate no more than two residents.
 - (ii) Measure at least 80 square feet per resident in multiple resident bedrooms, and at least 100 square feet in single resident rooms;
 - (iii) Have direct access to an exit corridor;
 - (iv) Be designed or equipped to assure full visual privacy for each resident;
 - (v) In facilities initially certified after March 31, 1992, except in private rooms, each bed must have ceiling suspended curtains, which extend around the bed to provide total visual privacy in combination with adjacent walls and curtains;
 - (vi) Have at least one window to the outside; and
 - (vii) Have a floor at or above grade level.
 - (2) The facility must provide each resident with—
 - (i) A separate bed of proper size and height for the safety and convenience of the resident;
 - (ii) A clean, comfortable mattress;
 - (iii) Bedding appropriate to the weather and climate; and
 - (iv) Functional furniture appropriate to the resident's needs, and individual closet space in the resident's bedroom with clothes racks and shelves accessible to the resident.

- (3) CMS, or in the case of a nursing facility the survey agency, may permit variations in requirements specified in paragraphs (d)(1) (i) and (ii) of this section relating to rooms in individual cases when the facility demonstrates in writing that the variations—
 - (i) Are in accordance with the special needs of the residents; and
 - (ii) Will not adversely affect residents' health and safety.
- (f) **Bathroom facilities.** Each resident room must be equipped with or located near toilet and bathing facilities. For facilities that receive approval of construction from State and local authorities or are newly certified after November 28, 2016, each resident room must have its own bathroom equipped with at least a commode and sink.
- (g) **Resident call system.** The facility must be adequately equipped to allow residents to call for staff assistance through a communication system which relays the call directly to a staff member or to a centralized staff work area from—
 - (1) Each resident's bedside; and
 - (2) Toilet and bathing facilities.
- (h) **Dining and resident activities.** The facility must provide one or more rooms designated for resident dining and activities. These rooms must—
 - (1) Be well lighted;
 - (2) Be well ventilated;
 - (3) Be adequately furnished; and
 - (4) Have sufficient space to accommodate all activities.
- (i) **Other environmental conditions.** The facility must provide a safe, functional, sanitary, and comfortable environment for the residents, staff and the public. The facility must—
 - (1) Establish procedures to ensure that water is available to essential areas when there is a loss of normal water supply;
 - (2) Have adequate outside ventilation by means of windows, or mechanical ventilation, or a combination of the two;
 - (3) Equip corridors with firmly secured handrails on each side; and
 - (4) Maintain an effective pest control program so that the facility is free of pests and rodents.
 - (5) Establish policies, in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, regarding smoking, smoking areas, and smoking safety that also take into account non-smoking residents.
- (j) The standards incorporated by reference in this section are approved for incorporation by reference by the Director of the Office of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. You may inspect a copy at the CMS Information Resource Center, 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD or at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/code_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html. If any changes in this edition of the Code are incorporated by reference, CMS will publish a document in the FEDERAL REGISTER to announce the changes.

- (1) National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169, www.nfpa.org, 1.617.770.3000.
 - (i) NFPA 99, Standards for Health Care Facilities Code of the National Fire Protection Association 99, 2012 edition, issued August 11, 2011.
 - (ii) TIA 12-2 to NFPA 99, issued August 11, 2011.
 - (iii) TIA 12-3 to NFPA 99, issued August 9, 2012.
 - (iv) TIA 12-4 to NFPA 99, issued March 7, 2013.
 - (v) TIA 12-5 to NFPA 99, issued August 1, 2013.
 - (vi) TIA 12-6 to NFPA 99, issued March 3, 2014.
 - (vii) NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 2012 edition, issued August 11, 2011;
 - (viii) TIA 12-1 to NFPA 101, issued August 11, 2011.
 - (ix) TIA 12-2 to NFPA 101, issued October 30, 2012.
 - (x) TIA 12-3 to NFPA 101, issued October 22, 2013.
 - (xi) TIA 12-4 to NFPA 101, issued October 22, 2013.
- (2) [Reserved]

[56 FR 48876, Sept. 26, 1991, as amended at 57 FR 43925, Sept. 23, 1992; 68 FR 1386, Jan. 10, 2003; 69 FR 49268, Aug. 11, 2004; 70 FR 15238, Mar. 25, 2005; 71 FR 55340, Sept. 22, 2006; 73 FR 47091, Aug. 13, 2008; 79 FR 27155, May 12, 2014; 81 FR 26899, May 4, 2016; 81 FR 42548, June 30, 2016. Redesignated and amended at 81 FR 68861, 68870, Oct. 4, 2016; 82 FR 32259, July 13, 2017; 86 FR 42524, Aug. 4, 2021; 87 FR 47618, Aug. 3, 2022]